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Author of "When Men Grew Tall or The Story of Andrew Jackson"

Illustrated

D. Appleton And Company New York

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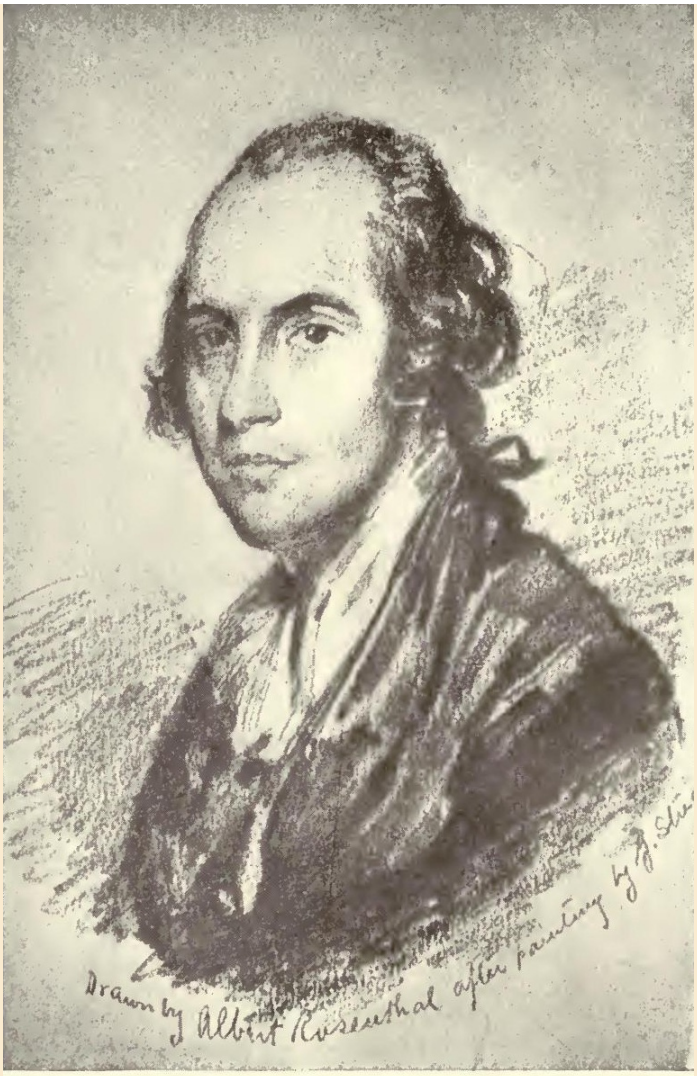

AARON BURR

From a crayon drawing of a portrait by Gilbert Stuart.

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TO

ELBERT HUBBARD

FOR THE PLEASURE HIS WRITINGS HAVE GIVEN ME, AND AS A MARK OF ADMIRATION FOR THE GLOSS AND PURITY OF HIS ENGLISH, THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED
A. H. L.

CONTENTS

AN AMERICAN PATRICIAN

CHAPTER I—FROM THEOLOGY TO LAW

THE Right Reverend Doctor Bellamy is a personage of churchly consequence in Bethlehem. Indeed, the doctor is a personage of churchly consequence throughout all Connecticut. For he took his theology from that well-head of divinity and metaphysics, Jonathan Edwards himself, and possesses an immense library of five hundred volumes, mostly on religion. Also, he is the author of "True Religion Delineated"; which work shines out across the tumbling seas of New England Congregationalism like a lighthouse on a difficult coast. Peculiarly is it of guiding moment to storm-vexed student ones, who, wanting it, might go crashing on controversial reefs, and so miss those pulpit snug-harbors toward which the pious prows of their hopes are pointed.

The doctor has a round, florid face, which, with his well-fed stomach, gives no hint of thin living. From the suave propriety of his cue to the silver buckles on his shoes, his atmosphere is wholly clerical. Just now, however, he wears a disturbed, fussy air, as though something has rubbed wrong-wise the fur of his feelings. He shows this by the way in which he trots up and down his study floor. Doubtless, some portion of that fussiness is derived from the doctor's short fat legs; for none save your long-legged folk may walk to and fro with dignity. Still, it is clear there be reasons of disturbance which go deeper than mere short fat legs, and set his spirits in a tumult.

The good doctor, as he trots up and down, is not alone. Madam Bellamy is with him, chair drawn just out of reach of the June sunshine as it comes streaming through the open lattice. In her plump hands she holds her sewing; for she is strong in the New England virtue of industry, and regards hand-idleness as a species of viciousness. While she stitches, she bends appreciative ear to the whistle of a robin in an apple tree outside.

"No, mother," observes the doctor, breaking in on the robin, "the lad does himself no credit. He is careless, callous, rebellious, foppish, and altogether of the flesh. I warrant you I shall take him in hand; it is my duty.". "But no harshness, Joseph!"

"No, mother; as you say, I must not be harsh. None the less I shall be firm. He must study; he is not to become a preacher by mere wishing."

Shod hoofs are heard on the graveled driveway; a voice is lifted:

"Walk Warlock up and down until he is cooled out. Then give him a rub, and a mouthful of water."

Madam Bellamy steps to the window. The master of the voice is swinging from the saddle, while the doctor's groom takes his horse—sweating from a brisk gallop—by the bridle.

“Here he comes now,” says Madam Bellamy, at the sound of a springy step in the hall.

The youth, who so confidently enters the doctor’s study, is in his nineteenth year. His face is sensitive and fine, and its somewhat overbred look is strengthened and restored by a high hawkish nose. The dark hair is clubbed in an elegant cue. The skin, fair as a girl’s, gives to the black eyes a glitter beyond their due. These eyes are the striking feature; for, while the eyes of a poet, they carry in their inky depths a hard, ophidian sparkle both dangerous and fascinating—the sort of eyes that warn a man and blind a woman.

The youth is but five feet six inches tall, with little hands and feet, and ears ridiculously small. And yet, his light, slim form is so accurately proportioned that, besides grace and a catlike quickness, it hides in its molded muscles the strength of steel. Also, any impression of insignificance is defeated by the wide brow and well-shaped head, which, coupled with a steady self-confidence that envelops him like an atmosphere, give the effect of power.

As he lounges languidly and pantherwise into the study, he bows to Madam Bellamy and the good doctor.

“You had quite a canter, Aaron,” remarks Madam Bellamy.

“I went half way to Litchfield,” returns the youth, smiting his glossy riding boot with the whip he carries. “For a moment I thought of seeing my sister Sally; but it would have been too long a run for so warm a day. As it is, poor Warlock looks as though he’d forded a river.”

The youth throws himself carelessly into the doctor’s easy-chair. That divine clears his throat professionally. Foreseeing earnestness if not severity in the discourse which is to follow, Madam Bellamy picks up her needlework and retires.

When she is gone, the doctor establishes himself opposite the youth. His manner is admonitory; which is not out of place, when one remembers that the doctor is fifty-five and the youth but nineteen.

“You’ve been with me, Aaron, something like eight months.”

The black eyes are fastened upon the doctor, and their ophidian glitter makes the latter uneasy. For relief he rebegins his short-paced trot up and down.

Renewed by action, and his confidence returning, the doctor commences with vast gravity a kind of speech. His manner is unconsciously pompous; for, as the village preacher, he is wont to have his wisdom accepted without discount or dispute.

“You will believe me, Aaron,” says the doctor, spacing off his words and calling up his best pulpit voice —“you will believe me, when I tell you that I am more than commonly concerned for your welfare. I was the friend of your father, both when he held the pulpit in Newark, and later when he was President of Princeton University. I studied my divinity at the knee of your mother’s father, the pious Jonathan Edwards. Need I say, then, that when you came to me fresh from your own Princeton graduation my heart was open to you? It seemed as though I were about to pay an old debt. I would regive you those lessons which your grandfather Edwards gave me. In addition, I would—so far as I might—take the place of that father whom you lost so many years ago. That was my feeling. Now, when you’ve been with me eight months, I tell you plainly that I’m far from satisfied.”

“In what, sir, have I disappointed?”

The voice is confidently careless, while the ophidian eyes keep up their black glitter unabashed.

“Sir, you are passively rebellious, and refuse direction. I place in your hands those best works of your mighty grandsire, namely, his ‘Qualifications for Full Communion in the Visible Church’ and ‘The Doctrine of Original Sin Defended,’ and you cast them aside for the ‘Letters of Lord Chesterfield’ and the ‘Comedies of Terence.’ Bah! the ‘Letters of Lord Chesterfield’! of which Dr. Johnson says, ‘They teach the morals of a harlot and the manners of a dancing master.’”

“And if so,” drawls the youth, with icy impenitence, “is not that a pretty good equipment for such a world as this?”

At the gross outrage of such a question, the doctor pauses in that to-and-fro trot as though planet-struck.

“What!” he gasps.

“Doctor, I meant to tell you a month later what—since the ice is so happily broken—I may as well say now. My dip into the teachings of my reverend grandsire has taught me that I have no genius for divinity. To be frank, I lack the pulpit heart. Every day augments my contempt for that ministry to which you design me. The thought of drawing a salary for being good, and agreeing to be moral for so much a year, disgusts me.”

“And this from you—the son of a minister of the Gospel!” The doctor holds up his hands in pudgy horror.

“Precisely so! In which connection it is well to recall that German proverb: ‘The preacher’s son is ever the devil’s grandson.’” The doctor sits down and mops his fretted brow; the manner in which he waves his lace handkerchief is like a publication of despair. He fixes his gaze on the youth resignedly, as who should say, “Strike home, and spare not!”

This last tacit invitation the youth seems disposed to accept. It is now his turn to walk the study floor. But he does it better than did the fussy doctor, his every motion the climax of composed grace.

“Listen, my friend,” says the youth.

For all the confident egotism of his manner, there is in it no smell of conceit. He speaks of himself; but he does so as though discussing some object outside of himself to which he is indifferent.

“Those eight months of which you complain have not been wasted. If I have drawn no other lesson from my excellent grandsire’s ‘Doctrine of Original Sin Defended,’ it has taught me to exhaustively examine my own breast. I discover that I have strong points as well as points of weakness. I read Latin and Greek; and I talk French and German, besides English, indifferently well. Also, I fence, shoot, box, ride, row, sail, walk, run, wrestle and jump superbly. Beyond the merits chronicled I have tried my courage, and find that I may trust it like Gibraltar. These, you will note, are not the virtues of a clergyman, but of a soldier. My weaknesses likewise turn me away from the pulpit.

“I have no hot sympathies; and, while not mean in the money sense, holding such to be beneath a

gentleman, I may say that my first concern is not for others but for myself."

"It is as though I listened to Satan!" exclaims the dismayed doctor, fidgeting with his ruffles.

"And if it were indeed Satan!" goes on the youth, with a gleam of sarcasm, "I have heard you characterize that arch demon from your pulpit, and even you, while making him malicious, never made him mean. But to get on with this picture of myself, which I show you as preliminary to laying bare a resolution. As I say, I have no sympathies, no hopes which go beyond myself. I think on this world, not the next; I believe only in the gospel according to Philip Dormer Stanhope—that Lord Chesterfield, whom, with the help of Dr. Johnson, you so much succeed in despising."

"To talk thus at nineteen!" whispers the doctor, his face ghastly.

"Nineteen, truly! But you must reflect that I have not had, since I may remember, the care of either father or mother, which is an upbringing to rapidly age one."

"Were you not carefully reared by your kind Uncle Timothy?" This indignantly.

"Indeed, sir, I was, as you say, well reared in that dull town of Elizabeth, which for goodness and dullness may compare with your Bethlehem here. It was a rearing, too, from which—as I think my kind Uncle Timothy has informed you—I fled."

"He did! He said you played truant twice, once running away to sea."

"It was no great voyage, then!" The imperturbable youth, hard of eye, soft of voice, smiles cynically. "No, I was cabin boy two days, during all of which the ship lay tied bow and stern to her New York wharf. However, that is of no consequence as part of what we now consider."

"No!" interrupts the doctor miserably, "only so far as it displays the young workings of your sinfully rebellious nature. As a child, too, you mocked your elders, as you do now. Later, as a student, you were the horror of Princeton."

"All that, sir, I confess; and yet I say that it is of the past. I hold it time lost to think on aught save the present or the future."

"Think, then, on your soul's future!—your soul's eternal future!"

"I shall think on what lies this side of the grave. I shall devote my faculties to this world; which, from what I have seen, is more than likely to keep me handsomely engaged. The next world is a bridge, the crossing of which I reserve until I come to it."

"Have you then no religious convictions? no fears?"

"I have said that I fear nothing, apprehend nothing. Timidity, of either soul or body, was pleasantly absent at my birth. As for convictions, I'd no more have one than I'd have the plague. What is a conviction but something wherewith a man vexes himself and worries his neighbor. Conclusions, yes, as many as you like; but, thank my native star! I am incapable of a conviction."

The doctor's earlier horror is fast giving way to anger. He almost sneers as he asks:

"But you pretend to honesty, I trust?"

"Why, sir," returns the youth, with an air which narrowly misses the patronizing, and reminds one of nothing so much as polished brass—"why, sir, honesty, like generosity or gratitude, is a gentlemanly trait, the absence of which would be inexpressibly vulgar. Naturally, I'm honest; but with the understanding that I have my honesty under control. It shall never injure me, I tell you! When its plain effect will be to strengthen an enemy or weaken myself, I shall prove no such fool as to give way to it."

"While you talk, I think," breaks in the doctor; "and now I begin to see the source of your pride and your satanism. It is your own riches that tempt you! Your soul is to be undone because your body has four hundred pounds a year."

"Not so fast, sir! I am glad I have four hundred pounds a year. It relieves me of much that is gross. I turn my back on the Church, however, only because I am unfitted for it, and accept the world simply for that it fits me. I have given you the truth. As a minister of the Gospel I should fail; as a man of the world I shall succeed. The pulpit is beyond me as religion is beyond me; for I am not one who could allay present pain by some imagined bliss to follow after death, or find joy in stripping himself of a benefit to promote another."

"Now this is the very theology of Beelzebub for sure!" cries the incensed doctor.

"It is anything you like, sir, so it be understood as a description of myself."

"Marriage might save him!" muses the desperate doctor. "To love and be loved by a beautiful woman might yet lead his heart to grace!"

The pale flicker of a smile comes about the lips of the black-eyed one.

"Love! beauty!" he begins. "Sir, while I might strive to possess myself of both, I should no more love beauty in a woman than riches in a man. I could love a woman only for her fineness of mind; wed no one who did not meet me mentally and sentimentally half way. And since your Hypatia is quite as rare as your Phoenix, I cannot think my nuptials near at hand."

"Well," observes the doctor, assuming politeness sudden and vast, "since I understand you throw overboard the Church, may I know what other avenue you will render honorable by walking therein?"

"You did not give me your attention, if you failed to note that what elements of strength I've ascribed to myself all point to the camp. So soon as there is a war, I shall turn soldier with my whole heart."

"You will wait some time, I fear!"

"Not so long as I could wish. There will be war between these colonies and England before I reach my majority. It would be better were it put off ten years; for now my youth will get between the heels of my prospects to trip them up."

"Then, if there be war with England, you will go? I do not think such bloody trouble will soon dawn; still—for a first time to-day—I am pleased to hear you thus speak. It shows that at least you are a patriot."

"I lay no claim to the title. England oppresses us; and, since one only oppresses what one hates, she hates

us. And hate for hate I give her. I shall go to war, because I am fitted to shine in war, and as a shortest, surest step to fame and power—those solitary targets worthy the aim of man!”

“Dross! dross!” retorts the scandalized doctor. “Fame! power! Dead sea apples, which will turn to ashes on your lips! And yet, since that war which is to be the ladder whereon you will go climbing into fame and power is not here, what, pending its appearance, will you do?”

“Now there is a query which brings us to the close. Here is my answer ready. I shall just ride over to Sally, and her husband, Tappan Reeve, and take up Blackstone. If I may not serve the spirit and study theology, I’ll even serve the flesh and study law.”

And so the hero of these memoirs rides over to Litchfield, to study the law and wait for a war. The doctor and he separate in friendly son-and-father fashion, while Madam Bellamy urges him to always call her house his home. He is not so hard as he thinks, not so cynical as he feels; still, his self-etched portrait possesses the broader lines of truth. He is one whom men will follow, but not trust; admire, but not love. There is enough of the unconscious serpent in him to rouse one man’s hate, while putting an edge on another’s fear. Also, because—from the fig-leaf day of Eve—the serpent attracts and fascinates a woman, many tender ones will lose their hearts for him. They will dash themselves and break themselves against him, like wild fowl against a lighthouse in the night. Even as he rides out of Bethlehem that June morning, bright young eyes peer at him from behind safe lattices, until their brightness dies away in tears. As for him thus sighed over, his lashes are dry enough. Bethlehem, and all who home therein, from the doctor with Madam Bellamy, to her whose rose-red lips he kissed the latest, are already of the unregarded past. He wears nothing but the future on his agate slope of fancy; he is thinking only on himself and his hunger to become a god of the popular—clothed with power, wreathed of fame!

“Mother,” exclaims the doctor, “the boy is lost! Ambitious as Lucifer, he will fall like Lucifer!”

“Joseph!”

“I cannot harbor hope! As lucidly clear as glass, he was yet as hard as glass. If I were to read his fortune, I should say that Aaron Burr will soar as high to fall as low as any soul alive.”

CHAPTER II—THE GENTLEMAN VOLUNTEER

YOUNG Aaron establishes himself in Litchfield with his pretty sister Sally, who, because he is brilliant and handsome, is proud of him. Also, Tappan Reeve, her husband, takes to him in a slow, bookish way, and is much held by his trenchant powers of mind.

Young Aaron assumes the law, and makes little flights into Bracton’s “Fleeta,” and reads Hawkins and Hobart, delighting in them for their limpid English. More seriously, yet more privately, he buries himself in every volume of military lore upon which he may lay hands; for already he feels that Bunker Hill is on its way, without knowing the name of it, and would have himself prepared for its advent.

In leisure hours, young Aaron gives Litchfield society the glory of his countenance. He flourishes as a village Roquelaure, with plumcolored coats, embroidered waistcoats, silken hose, and satin smalls, sent up from New York. Likewise, his ruffles are miracles, his neckcloths works of starched and spotless art, while at his hip he wears a sword—hilt of gilt, and sharkskin scabbard white as snow.

Now, because he is splendid, with a fortune of four hundred annual pounds, and since no girl’s heart may resist the mystery of those eyes, the village belles come sighing against him in a melting phalanx of loveliness. This is flattering; but young Aaron declines to be impressed. Polished, courteous, in amiable possession of himself, he furnishes the thought of a bright coldness, like sunshine on a field of ice. Not that anyone is to blame. The difference between him and the sighing ones, is a difference of shrines and altars. They sacrifice to Venus; he worships Mars. While he has visions of battle, they dream of wedding bells.

For one moment only arises some tender confusion. There is an Uncle Thaddeus—a dotard ass far gone in years! Uncle Thaddeus undertakes, behind young Aaron’s back, to make him happy. The liberal Uncle Thaddeus goes so blindly far as to explore the heart of a particular fair one, who mayhap sighs more deeply than do the others. It grows embarrassing; for, while the sighing one thus softly met accepts, when Uncle Thaddeus flies to young Aaron with the dulcet news, that favored personage transfixes him with so black a stare, wherefrom such baleful serpent rage glares forth, that our dotard meddler is fear-frozen in the very midst of his ingenuous assiduities. And thereupon the sighing one is left to sigh uncomforted, while Uncle Thaddeus finds himself the scorn of all good village opinion.

While young Aaron goes stepping up and down the Litchfield causeways, as though strutting in Jermyn Street or Leicester Square; while thus he plays the fine gentleman with ruffles and silks and shark-skin sword, skimming now the law, now flattering the sighing belles, now devouring the literature of war, he has ever his finger on the pulse, and his ear to the heart of his throbbing times. It is he of Litchfield who hears earliest of Lexington and Bunker Hill. In a moment he is all action. Off come the fine feathers, and that shark-skin, gilt-hilt sword. Warlock is saddled; pistols thrust into holsters. In roughest of costumes the fop surrenders to the soldier. It takes but a day, and he is ready for Cambridge and the American camp.

As he goes upon these doughty preparations, young Aaron finds himself abetted by the pretty Sally, who proves as martial as himself. Her husband, Tappan Reeve, easy, quiet, loving his unvexed life, from the law book on his table to the pillow whereon he nightly sleeps, cannot understand this headlong war hurry.

“You may lose your life!” cries Tappan Reeve.

“What then?” rejoins young Aaron. “Whether the day be far or near, that life you speak of is already lost. I shall play this game. My life is my stake; and I shall freely hazard it upon the chance of winning glory.”

“And have you no fear?”

The timid Tappan’s thoughts of death are ashen; he likes to live.

Young Aaron bends upon him his black gaze. “What I fear more than any death,” says he, “is stagnation—the currentless village life!”

Young Aaron, arriving at Cambridge, attaches himself to General Putnam. The grizzled old wolf killer likes him, being of broadest tolerations, and no analyst of the psychic.

There are seventeen thousand Americans scattered in a ragged fringe about Boston, in which town the English, taught by Lexington and Bunker Hill, are cautiously prone to lie close. Young Aaron makes the round of the camps. He is amazed by the unrule and want of discipline. Besides, he cannot understand the inaction, feeling that each new day should have its Bunker Hill. That there is not enough powder among the Americans to load and fire those seventeen thousand rifles twice, is a piece of military information of which he lives ignorant, for the grave Virginian in command confides it only to a merest few. Had young Aaron been aware of this paucity of powder, those long days, idle, vacant of event, might not have troubled him. The wearisome wonder of them at least would have been made plain.

Young Aaron learns of an expedition against Quebec, to be led by Colonel Benedict Arnold, and resolves to join it. That all may be by military rule, he seeks General Washington to ask permission. He finds that commander in talk with General Putnam; the old wolf killer does him the favor of a presentation.

“From where do you come?” asks Washington, closely scanning young Aaron whom he instantly dislikes.

“From Connecticut. I am a gentleman volunteer, attached to General Putnam with the rank of captain.”

Something of repulsion shows cloudily on the brow of Washington. Obviously he is offended by this cool stripling, who clothes his hairless boy’s face with a confident maturity that has the effect of impertinence. Also the phrase “gentleman volunteer,” sticks in his throat like a fish bone.

“Ah, a ‘gentleman volunteer!’” he repeats in a tone of sarcasm scarcely veiled. “I have now and then heard of such a trinket of war, albeit, never to the trinket’s advantage. Doubtless, sir, you have made the rounds of our array!”

Young Aaron, from his beardless five feet six inches, looks up at the tall Virginian, and cannot avoid envying him his door-wide shoulders and that extra half foot of height. He perceives, too, with a resentful glow, that he is being mocked. However, he controls himself to answer coldly:

“As you surmise, sir, I have made the rounds of your forces.”

“And having made them”—this ironically—“I trust you found all to your satisfaction.”

“As to that,” remarks young Aaron, “while I did not look to find trained soldiers, I think that a better discipline might be maintained.”

“Indeed! I shall make a note of it. And yet I must express the hope that, while you occupy a subordinate place, you will give way as little as may be to your perilous trick of thinking, leaving it rather to our experienced friend Putnam, here, he being trained in these matters.”

The old wolf killer takes advantage of this reference to himself, to help the interview into less trying channels.

“You were seeking me?” he says to the youthful critic of camps and discipline.

“I was seeking the commander in chief,” returns young Aaron, again facing Washington. “I came to ask permission to go with Colonel Arnold against Quebec.”

“Against Quebec?” repeats Washington. “Go, with all my heart!”

There is a cut concealed in that consent, to the biting smart of which young Aaron is not insensible. However, he finds in the towering manner of its delivery something which checks even his audacity. After saluting, he withdraws without added word.

“General,” observes Washington, when young Aaron has gone, “I fear I cannot congratulate you on your new captain.”

“If you knew him better, general,” protests the good-hearted old wolf killer, “you would like him better. He is a boy; but he has an old head on his young shoulders.”

General Israel Putnam

"The very thing I most fear," rejoins Washington. "A boy has no more business with an old head than with old lungs or old legs. It is unnatural, sir; and the unnatural is the wrong. I want only heads and shoulders about me that were born the same day. For that reason, I am glad your 'gentleman volunteer'"—this with a shade of irony—"goes to Quebec with that turbulent Norwich apothecary, Arnold. The army will be bettered just now by the absence of these lofty spirits. They disturb more than they help. Besides, a tramp of sixty days through the Maine woods will improve such Hotspurs vastly. There is nothing like a six-hundred mile march through an unbroken wilderness, with a fight in the snow at the far end of it, to take the edge off beardless arrogance and young conceit."

What young Aaron carries away from that interview, as an impression of the big commander in chief, crops out in converse with his former college chum, young Ogden. The latter, like himself, is attached to the military family of General Putnam.

"Ogden, we have begun wrong as soldiers—you and I!" says young Aaron. "By flint and steel, man, we should have commenced like Washington, by hoeing tobacco!"

"Now this is not right!" cries young Ogden, in reproof. "General Washington is a soldier who has seen service."

"Why," retorts young Aaron, "I believe he was trounced with Braddock." Then, warmly: "Ogden, the man is Failure walking about in blue and buff and high boots! I read him like a page of print! He is slow, dull, bovine, proud, and of no decision. He lacks initiative; and, while he might defend, he is incapable of attacking. Worst of all he has the soul of a planter—a plantation soul! A big movement like this, which brings the thirteen colonies to the field, is beyond his grasp."

"Your great defect, Aaron," cries young Ogden, not without indignation, "is that you regard your most careless judgment as final. Half the time, too, your decision is the product of prejudice, not reason. General Washington offends you—as, to be frank, he did me—by putting a lower estimate on your powers than that at which you yourself are pleased to hold them. I warrant now had he flattered you a bit, you would have found in him a very Alexander."

"I should have found him what I tell you," retorts young Aaron stoutly, "a glaring instance of misplaced mediocrity. He is even wanting in dignity!"

"For my side, then, I found him dignified enough."

"Friend Ogden, you took dullness for dignity. Or I will change it; I'll even consent that he is dignified. But only in the torpid, cud-chewing fashion in which a bullock is dignified. Still, he does very well by me; for he says I may go with Colonel Arnold. And so, Ogden, I've but time for 'good-by!' and then off to make myself ready to accompany our swashbuckler druggist against Quebec."

CHAPTER III—COLONEL BENEDICT ARNOLD EXPLAINS

IT is September, brilliant and golden. Newburyport is brave with warlike excitement. Drums roll, fifes shriek, armed men fill the single village street. These latter are not seasoned troops, as one may see by their careless array and the want of uniformity in their homespun, homemade garbs. No two are armed alike, for each has brought his own weapon. These are rifles—long, eight-square flintlocks. Also every rifleman wears a powderhorn and bullet pouch of buckskin, while most of them carry knives and hatchets in their rawhide belts.

As our rude soldiery stand at ease in the village street, cheering crowds line the sidewalk. The shouts rise above the screaming fifes and rumbling drums. The soldiers are the force which Colonel Arnold will lead against Quebec. Young, athletic—to the last man they have been drawn from the farms. Resenting discipline, untaught of drill, their disorder has in it more of the mob than the military. However, their eyes like their hopes are bright, and one may read in the healthy, cheerful faces that each holds himself privily to be of the raw materials from which generals are made.

Down in the harbor eleven smallish vessels ride at anchor. They are of brigantine rig, each equal to transporting one hundred men. These will carry Colonel Arnold and his eleven hundred militant young rustics to the mouth of the Kennebec. In the waist of every vessel, packed one inside the other as a housewife arranges teacups on her shelves, are twenty bateaux. They are wide, shallow craft, blunt at bow and stern, and will be used to convey the expedition up the Kennebec. Each is large enough to hold five men, and so light that the five, at portages or rapids, can shoulder it with the dunnage which belongs to them and carry it across to the better water beyond.

The word of command runs along the unpolished ranks; the column begins to move toward the water front, taking its step from the incessant drums and fifes. Once at the water, the embarkation goes briskly forward. As the troops march away, the crowds follow; for the day in Newburyport is a gala occasion and partakes of the character of a celebration. No one considers the possibility of defeat. Everywhere one finds optimism, as though Quebec is already a captured city.

Now when the throngs have departed with the soldiery, the street shows comparatively deserted. This brings to view the Eagle Inn, a hostelry of the village. In the doorway of the Eagle a man and woman are standing. The woman is dashingly handsome, with cheek full of color and a bold eye. The man is about thirty-five in years. He swaggers with a forward, bragging, gamecock air, which—the basis being a coarse, berserk courage—is not altogether affectation. His features are vain, sensual, turbulent; his expression shows him to be proud in a crude way, and is noticeable because of an absence of any slightest glint of principle. There is, too, an extravagance of gold braid on his coat, which goes well with the superfluous feather in the three-cornered hat, and those russet boots of stamped Spanish leather. These swashbuckley excesses of costume bear out the vulgar promise of his face, and guarantee that intimated lack of fineness.

The pair are Colonel Arnold and Madam

Arnold. She has come to see the last of her husband as he sails away. While they stand in the door, the coach in which she will make the homeward journey to Norwich pulls up in front of the Eagle.

As Colonel Arnold leads his wife to the coach, he is saying: “No; I shall be aboard within the hour. After that we start at once. I want a word with a certain Captain Burr before I embark. I’ve offended him, it seems; for he is of your proud, high-stomached full-pursed aristocrats who look for softer treatment than does a commoner clay. I’ve ordered a bottle of wine. As we drink, I shall make shift to smooth down his ruffled plumage.”

“Captain Burr,” repeats Madam Arnold, not without a sniff of scorn. “And you are a colonel! How long is it since colonels have found it necessary to truckle to captains, and, when they pout, placate them into good humor?”

“My dear madam,” returns Colonel Arnold as he helps her into the clumsy vehicle, “permit me to know my own affairs. I tell you this thin-skinned boy is rich, and what is better was born with his hands open. He parts with money like a royal prince. One has but to drop a hint, and presto! his hand is in his purse. The gold I gave you I had from him.”

As the coach with Madam Arnold drives away, young Aaron is observed coming up from the water front. His costume, while as rough as that of the soldiers, has a fit and a finish to it which accents the graceful gentility of his manner beyond what satins and silks might do. Madam Arnold’s bold eyes cover him. He takes off his hat with a gravely accurate flourish, whereat the bold eyes glance their pleasure at the polite attention.

Coach gone, Colonel Arnold seizes young Aaron’s arm, with a familiarity which fails of its purpose by being overdone, and draws him into the inn. He carries him to a room where a table is spread. The stout landlady by way of topping out the feast is adding thereunto an apple pie, moonlike as her face and its sister for size and roundness. This, and the roast fowl which adorns the center, together with a bottle of burgundy to keep all in countenance, invest the situation with an atmosphere of hope.

“Be seated, Captain Burr,” exclaims the hearty Colonel Arnold, as the two draw up to the table. “A roast pullet, a pie, and a bottle of burgundy, let me tell you, should make no mean beginning to what is like to prove a hard campaign. I warrant you, sir, we see worse fare in the pine wilderness of upper Maine. Let me help you to wine, sir,” he continues, after carving for himself and young Aaron. The latter, as cold and

imperturbable as when, in Dr. Bellamy's study, he shattered the designs of that excellent preacher by preferring law to theology and war to either, responds to this hospitable politeness with a bow. "Take your glass, Captain Burr. I desire to drink down all irritations. Yes, sir," replacing the drained glass, "I may say, without lowering myself as a gentleman in your esteem, that, in giving you the order to see the troops aboard, I had no thought of affronting you."

"It was not your orders to which I objected; it was to your manner. If I may say so, sir, it was a manner of intolerable arrogance, one which I shall brook from no man."

"Tush, sir, tush! In war we must thicken our hides. We are not to be sensitive. We should not look in the camps for the manners of a king's court. What you mistook for arrogance was no more than just a tone of command."

Colonel Arnold's delivery of this is meant to be conciliating. Through it, however, runs an exasperating vein of patronage, due, doubtless, to his superior rank, and those extra fifteen years wherein he overlooks young Aaron.

"Let us be plain, colonel," observes young Aaron, studying his wine between eye and windowpane. "I hope for nothing better than concord between us. Also, every order you give me I shall obey. None the less I ask you to observe that I have no purpose of lowering my self-respect in coming to this war. As your subordinate I shall take your commands; as a gentleman, the equal of any, I must be treated as such."

Colonel Arnold's brow is red; but he fills his mouth with chicken which he drenches down with wine, and so restrains every fretful expression. After a moment filled of wine and chicken, he observes carelessly:

"Say no more! Say no more, Captain Burr! We understand one another!"

"There is no more to say," returns young Aaron steadily. "And I beg you to remember that the subject is one which you, yourself, proposed. I am through when I state that, while I object to no man's vanity, no man's arrogance, I shall never permit him to transact them at the expense of my self-respect."

Colonel Arnold turns the talk to what, in a wilderness as well as a fighting way, lies ahead. They linger over pullet and burgundy for the better part of an hour, and get on as well as should gentlemen who have no mighty mutual liking. As they prepare to go aboard, the stout landlady meets them in the hall. Her modest' charges are to be met with a handful of shillings. Colonel Arnold rummages his pockets, wearing the while a baffled angry air; then he falls to cursing in a spirit truly military.

"May the black fiend seize me!" says he, "if my purse has not gone aboard with my baggage!"

Young Aaron pays the score with an indifference which does not betray a conviction that the pocket-rummaging is a pretence, and the native money-meanness of his coarse-faced colonel designed such finale from the first. Score settled, they repair to the water front. As the two depart, the stout landlady of the Eagle follows the retreating Colonel Arnold with shocked, insulted glance. She is a religious woman, and those curses have moved her soul.

"Blaspheming upstart!" she mutters. "And the airs he takes on! As though folk have forgotten that within the year he stood behind his Norwich counter selling pills and plasters!"

The eleven little ships voyage to the mouth of the Kennebec without event. The bateaux are launched, and the eleven hundred highhearted youngsters proceed to pole and paddle their way up the river. Where the currents are overswift they tow with lines from the banks. Finally they abandon the Kennebec, and shoulder the bateaux for a scrambling tramp across the pine-sown watershed. It takes days, but in the end they find themselves again afloat on the Dead River. This stream leads them to the St. Lawrence. It is the march of the century! These buoyant young rustics through the untraced wilderness have come six hundred miles in fifty days.

Woodmen born and bred, this long push through the forests is no surprising feat to these who perform it. They scarcely discuss the matter as they crouch about their camp fires. The big topic among them is their hatred of Colonel Arnold. From that September day in Newbury-port his tyranny has been in hourly expression. Also, it seems to grow with time. He hectors, raves, vituperates, until there isn't a trigger finger in the command which does not itch to shoot him down. Disdaining to aid the march by carrying so much as a pound's weight—as being work beneath his exalted rank—this Caesar of the apothecaries must needs have his special cooking kit along. Also his tent must be pitched with the coming down of every night. Men hungry and unsheltered all around him, he sees no reason why he should not sleep warmly soft, and breakfast and dine and sup like a wilderness Lucullus. Thereat the farmer youth grumble, and console themselves with slighting remarks and looks of contumely.

To these remarks and looks, Colonel Arnold is driven to deafen his ears and offer his back. It would be inconvenient to hear and see these things; since, for all his bullying attitude, he dare not crowd his followers too far. Their unbroken mouths are but new to the military bit; a too cruel pressure on the bridle reins might mean the unhorsing of our vanity-eaten apothecary. As it is, by twos and tens and twenties, the command dwindles away. Every roll call discloses fresh desertions. Wroth with their commander, resolved against the mean tyranny of his rule, when the party reaches the St. Lawrence, half have gone to a right-about and are on their way home. The feather-headed Colonel Arnold finds himself with a muster of five hundred and fifty where he should have had eleven hundred. And the five hundred and fifty with him are on the darkling edge of revolt.

"Think on such cur hearts!" cries Colonel Arnold, as he speaks with young Aaron of those desertions which have cut his force in two. "Half have already turned tail, and the other half are of a coward mind to follow their mongrel example. I would sooner command a brigade of dogs!"

"Believe me," observes young Aaron, icily acquiescent, "I shall not contradict your peculiar fitness for the command you describe."

Being thus happily delivered, young Aaron goes round on his imperturbable heel and strolls away, leaving the angry Colonel Arnold glaring with rage-congested eye.

"Insolent puppy!" the latter grits between his teeth.

He is heedful, however, to avoid the epithet in the presence of young Aaron; for, in spite of that rude

courage which, when all is said, lies at the root of his nature, the ex-apothecary dreads the “gentleman volunteer,” with his black ophidian glance—so balanced, so hard, so vacant of fear!

It is toward the last of November; the valley of the St. Lawrence seems the home of snow. Colonel Arnold grows afraid of the temper of his people. As they push slowly through the drifts, their angry wrath against the Caligula who leads them is only too thinly veiled. At this, the insolent oppressions of our ex-apothecary cease; he seeks to conciliate, but the time is overlate.

Colonel Arnold goes into camp, and considers the situation. Even if his followers do not wheel suddenly southward for home, he fears that on some final battle day they will refuse to fight at his command. With despair gnawing at his heart, he decides to get word to General Montgomery, who has conquered and is holding Montreal. The giant Irishman is the idol of the army. Once he appears, the grumblings and mutinous murmurings will abate. The rebellious ones will go wherever he points, fight like lions at his merest word.

True, the coming of Montgomery will mean his own loss of command, and that is a bitter pill. Still, since he may do no better, he resolves to gulp it. Thus resolving, he calls young Aaron into conference. The uneasy tyrant hates young Aaron—hates him for the gold he has borrowed from him, hates him for his scarcely concealed contempt of himself. None the less he calls him into council. It is wisdom not friendship his case requires, and he early learned to value the long head of our “gentleman volunteer.”

“It is this,” explains Colonel Arnold, desperately. “We have not the force demanded for the capture of Quebec. We must get word to Montgomery. He is one hundred and twenty miles away in Montreal. The puzzle is to find some one, whom we can trust among these French-speaking native Canadians, who will carry my message.”

Young Aaron knots his brows. Colonel Arnold watches him anxiously, for he is at the end of his resources. Finally young Aaron consults his watch.

“It is now ten o’clock,” he says. “Nothing can be done to-night. And yet I think I know the man for your occasion. By daybreak I’ll have him before you.”

CHAPTER IV—THE YOUNG FRENCH PRIEST

THERE are many deserted log huts along the St. Lawrence. Colonel Arnold has taken up his quarters in one of these. It is eight o’clock of the morning following the talk with young Aaron when the sentinel at the door reports that a priest is asking admission.

“What have I to do with priests!” demands Colonel Arnold. “However, bring him in! He must give good reasons for disturbing me, or his black coat will do him little good.”

The priest is clothed from head to heel in the black frock of his order. The frock is caught in about the waist with a heavy cord. Down the front depend a crucifix and beads. The frock is thickly lined with fur; the peaked hood, also fur-lined, is drawn forward over the priest’s face. In figure he is short and slight. As he peers out from his hood at Colonel Arnold, his black eyes give that commander a start of uncertainty.

“I suppose you speak no French?” says the priest.

His accent is wretched. Colonel Arnold might be justified in retorting that his visitor speaks no English. He restricts himself, however, to an admission that, as the priest surmises, he has no French, and follows it with a bluff demand that the latter make plain his errand.

“Why, sir,” returns the priest, glancing about as though in quest of some one, “I expected to find Captain Burr here. He tells me you wish to send a message to Montreal.”

Colonel Arnold is alert in a moment; his manner undergoes a change from harsh to suave.

“Ah!” he cries amiably; “you are the man.” Then, to the sentinel at the door: “Send word, sir, to Captain Burr, and ask him to come at once to my quarters.”

While waiting the coming of young Aaron, Colonel Arnold enters into conversation with his clerkly visitor. The priest explains that he hates the English, as do all Canadians of French stock. He is only too willing to do Colonel Arnold any service that shall tell against them. Also, he adds, in response to a query, that he can make his way to Montreal in ten days.

“There are farmer and fisher people all along the St. Lawrence,” says he. “They are French, and good sons of mother church. I am sure they will give me food and shelter.”

The sentinel comes lumbering in, and reports that young Aaron is not to be found.

“That is sheer nonsense, sir!” fumes Colonel Arnold. “Why should he not be found? He is somewhere about camp. Fetch him instantly!”

When the sentinel again departs, the priest frees his face of the obscuring hood.

“Your sentinel is right,” he says. “Captain Burr is not at his quarters.”

Colonel Arnold stares in amazement; the priest is none other than our “gentleman volunteer.” Perceiving Colonel Arnold gazing in curious wonder at his clerkly frock, young Aaron explains.

“I got it five days back, at that monastery we passed. You recall how I dined there with the Brothers. I thought then that just such a peaceful coat as this might find a use.”

“Marvelous!” exclaims Colonel Arnold. “And you speak French, too?”

“French and Latin. I have, you see, the verbal as well as outward furnishings of a priest of these parts.”

“And you think you can reach Montgomery? I have to warn you, sir, that the work will be extremely delicate and the danger great.”

“I shall be equal to the work. As for the peril, if I feared it I should not be here.”

It is arranged; and young Aaron explains that he is prepared, indeed, prefers, to start at once. Moreover, he counsels secrecy.

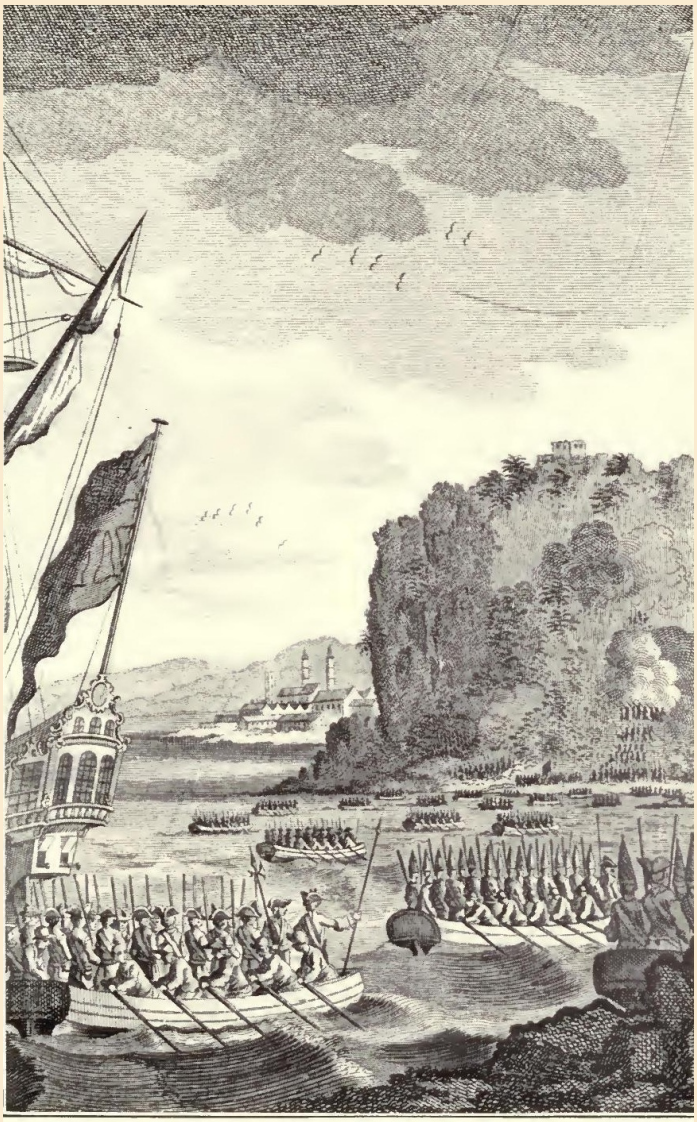
“You have an Indian guide or two, about you,” says he, “whom I do not trust. If my errand were known, one of them might cut me off and sell my scalp to the English.”

When Colonel Arnold is left alone, he gives himself up to a consideration of the chances of his message going safely to Montreal. He sits long, with puckered lips and brooding eye.

“In any event,” he murmurs, “I cannot fail to be the better off. If he reach Montgomery, that is what I want. On the other hand, should he fall a prey to the English I shall think it a settlement of what debts I owe him. Yes; the latter event would mean three hundred pounds to me. Either way I am rid of one whose cool superiorities begin to smart. Himself a gentleman, he seems never to forget that I am an apothecary.”

Young Aaron is twenty miles nearer Montreal when the early winter sun goes down. For ten days he plods onward, now and again lying by to avoid a roving party of English. As he foretold, every cabin is open to the “young priest.” He but explains that he has cause to fear the redcoats, and with that those French Canadians, whom he meets with, keep nightly watch, while couching him warmest and softest, and feeding him on the best. At last he reaches General Montgomery, and tells of Colonel Arnold below Quebec.

General Montgomery, a giant in stature, has none of that sluggishness so common with folk of size. In twenty-four hours after receiving young Aaron’s word, he is off to make a junction with Colonel Arnold. He takes with him three hundred followers, all that may be spared from Montreal, and asks young Aaron to serve on his personal staff.



British Reënforcements Landing at Quebec

They find Colonel Arnold, with his five hundred and fifty, camped under the very heights of Quebec. The garrison, while quite as strong as is his force, have not once molested him. They leave his undoing to the cold and snow, and that starvation which is making gaunt the faces and shortening the belts of his men.

General Montgomery upon his arrival takes command. Colonel Arnold, while foreseeing this—since even his

vanity does not conceive of a war condition so upside down that a colonel gives orders to a general—cannot avoid a fit of the sulks. He is the more inclined to be moody, because the coming of the big Irishman has visibly brightened his people, who for months have been scowls and clouds to him. Now the face of affairs is changed; the mutinous ones have nothing save cheers for the big general whenever he appears.

General Montgomery calls a conference, and Colonel Arnold comes with all his officers. At the request of young Aaron, the big general retains him by his side. This does not please the ex-apothecary, it hurts his self-love that the “gentleman volunteer” is so obviously pleased to be free of his company. At the conference, General Montgomery advises all to hold themselves in readiness for an assault upon the English walls.

“I cannot tell the night,” he observes; “I only say that we shall attack during the first snowstorm that occurs. It may come in an hour, wherefore be ready!”

The storm which is to mask the movements of General Montgomery does not keep folk waiting. There soon falls a midnight which is nothing save a blinding whirling sheet of snow. Thereupon the word goes through the camp.

The assault is to be made in two columns, General Montgomery leading one, Colonel Arnold the other. Young Aaron will be by the elbow of the big Irishman. By way of aiding, a feigned attack is ordered for a far corner of the English works.

As the soldiers fall into their ranks, the storm fairly swallows them up. It would seem as though none might live in such a tempest—white, ferociously cold, Arctic in its fury! It is desperate weather! the more desperate when faced by ones whose courage has been diminished by privation. But the strong heart of General Montgomery listens to no doubts. He will lead out his eight hundred and fifty against an equal force that have been sleeping warm and eating full, while his own were freezing and starving. Also, those warm, full-fed ones are behind stone walls, which the lean, frozen ones must scale and capture.

“I shall give you ten minutes’ start,” observes General Montgomery to Colonel Arnold. “You have farther to go than we to gain your position. I shall wait ten minutes; then I shall press forward.”

Colonel Arnold moves off with his column through the driving storm. When those ten minutes of grace have elapsed, General Montgomery gives his men the word to advance.

They urge their difficult way up a ravine, snow belt-deep. There is an outer work of blockhouse sort at the head of the defile. It is of solid mason work, two stories, crenelled above for muskets, pierced below for two twelve-pounders. This must be reduced before the main assault can begin.

As General Montgomery, with young Aaron on the right, the column in broken disorder at his heels, nears the blockhouse, a dog, more wakeful than the English, is heard to bark. That bark turns out the redcoat garrison as though a trumpet called.

“Forward!” cries General Montgomery.

The men respond; they rush bravely on. The blockhouse, dully looming through the storm, is no more than forty yards away.

Suddenly a red tongue of flame licks out into the snow swirl, to be followed by the roar of one of the twelve-pounders. In quick response comes the roar of its sister gun, while, from the loopholes above, the muskets crackle and splutter.

It is blind cannonading; but it does its work as though the best artillerist is training the guns at brightest noonday. The head of the assaulting column is met flush in the face with a sleet of grapeshot.

General Montgomery staggers; and then, without a word, falls forward on his face in the snow. Young Aaron stoops to raise him to his feet. It is of no avail; the big Irishman is dead.

The bursting roar of the twelve-pounders is heard again. As if to keep their general company, a dozen more give up their lives.

“Montgomery is slain!”

The word zigzags along the ragged column.

It is a daunting word! The men begin to give way.

Young Aaron rushes into their midst, and seeks to rally them. He might as well attempt to stay the whirling snow in its dance! The men will follow none save General Montgomery; and he is dead.

Slowly they fall backward along the ravine up which they climbed. Again the two twelve-pounders roar, and a raking hail of grape sings through the shaking ranks. More men are struck down! That backward movement becomes a rout.

Young Aaron loses the icy self-control which is his distinguishing trait. He buries the retreating ones beneath an avalanche of curses, drowns them with a cataract of scorn.

“What!” he cries. “Will you leave your general’s body in their hands?”

He might have spared himself the shouting effort. Already he is alone with the dead.

“It is better company than that of cowards!” is his bitter cry, as he bends above the stark form of his chief.

The English are pouring from the blockhouse. Still young Aaron will not leave the dead Montgomery behind. Now are the steel-like powers of his slight frame manifest. With one effort, he swings the giant body to his shoulder, and plunges off down the defile, the eager blood-hungry redcoats not a dozen rods behind.

CHAPTER V—THE WRATH OF WASHINGTON

THE gray morning finds the routed ones in their old camp by the St. Lawrence. Colonel Arnold's assault has also failed. The ex-apothecary received a slight wound, and is vastly proud. It is his left arm that was hurt, and of it he makes a mighty parade, slinging it in a rich crimson sash.

Colonel Arnold, now in command, does not attempt another assault, but contents himself with maneuvering his slender forces on the plain in tantalizing view of the redcoat foe. He sends a flag of truce to the foot of the walls, with a sprightly challenge to their defenders, inviting them to come out and fight. The Quebec commander, being a soldier and no mad knight errant, refuses to be thus romantic. The winter is deepening; he will leave the vaporing Colonel Arnold to fight a battle with the thermometer. Also, General Burgoyne, at the head of an army, is pointed that way.

His maneuverings ignored, his challenge declined, Colonel Arnold puts in an entire night framing a demand for the instant surrender of Quebec. This he is at pains to couch in terms of insult, peppering it from top to bottom with biting taunts. He closes with a threat that, should the English commander fail to lower his flag, he will conquer the city at the point of the sword, and put the garrison to disgraceful death by gibbet and halter. When he has completed this precious manifesto, he seeks out young Aaron, and commands him to carry it in person to the city's gates. As Colonel Arnold tenders the letter, young Aaron puts his hands behind him.

"Before I take it, sir," says he, "I should like to hear it read."

Young Aaron's contempt for the ex-apothecary has found increase with every day since the death of Montgomery. Those braggadocio maneuverings, the foolish challenge to come out and fight, have filled him with disgust. They shock by stress of their innate cheap vulgarity. He is of no mind to lend himself to any kindred buffoonery.

"Do you refuse my orders, sirrah?" cries Colonel Arnold, falling into a dramatic fume.

"I refuse nothing! I say that I shall carry no letter until I know its contents. I warn you, sir, I am not to be 'ordered,' as you call it, into a false position by any man alive."

Young Aaron's face is getting white; there is a dangerous sparkle in the black ophidian eyes. Colonel Arnold reads these symptoms, and draws back. Still, he maintains a ruffling front.

"Sir!" says he haughtily; "you should think on your subordinate rank, and on your youth, before you pretend to overlook my conduct."

"My subordinate rank shall not detract from my quality as a gentleman. As for my youth, I shall prove old enough, I trust, to make safe my honor. I say again, I'll not touch your letter till I hear it read."

"Remember, sir, to whom you speak!"

"I shall remember what I mentioned at the Eagle Inn; I shall remember my self-respect."

Colonel Arnold fixes young Aaron with a superior stare. If it be meant for his confusion, it meets failure beyond hope. The black eyes stare back with so much of iron menace in them, as to disconcert the personage of former drugs.

He feels them play upon him like two black rapier points. His assurance breaks down; his lofty determination oozes away. With gaze seeking the floor, his ruddy, wine-marked countenance flushes doubly red.

"Since you make such a swelter of the business," he grumbles, "I, for my own sake, shall now ask you to read it. I would have you know, sir, that I understand the requirements as well as the proprieties of my position."

Colonel Arnold tears open the letter with a flourish, and gives it to young Aaron. The latter reads it; and then, with no attempt to palliate the insult, throws it on the floor.

"Sir," cries Colonel Arnold, exploding into a sudden blaze of wrath, "I was told in Cambridge, what my officers have often told me since, that you are a bumptious young fool! Many times have I been told it, sir; and, until now, I did you the honor to disbelieve it." Young Aaron is cold and sneering. "Sir," he retorts, "see how much more credulous I am than are you. I was told but once that you are a bragging, empty vulgarian, and I instantly believed it."

The pair stand opposite one another, glances crossing like sword blades, the insulted letter on the floor between. It is Colonel Arnold who again gives ground. Snapping his fingers, as though breaking off an incident beneath his exalted notice, he goes about on his heel.

"Ah!" says young Aaron; "now that I see your back, sir, I shall take my leave."

The winter days, heavy and leaden and chill, go by. Colonel Arnold continues those maneuverings and challengings, those struttings and vaporings. At last even his coxcomb vanity grows weary, and he thinks on Montreal. One morning, with all his followers, he marches off to that city, still held by the garrison that Montgomery left behind. Established in Montreal he comports himself as becomes a conqueror, expanding into pomp and license, living on the fat, drinking of the strong. And day by day Burgoyne is drawing nearer.

Broad spring descends; a green mist is visible in the winter-stripped trees. The rumors of Burgoyne's approach increase and prove disquieting. Colonel Arnold leads his people out of Montreal, and plunges southward into the wilderness. He pitches camp on the river Sorel.

Since the incident of the letter, young Aaron has held no traffic, polite or otherwise, with Colonel Arnold. The "gentleman volunteer" sees lonesome days; for he has made no friends about the camp. The men admire him, but offer him no place in their hearts. A boy in years, with a beardless girl's face, he gives himself the airs of gravest manhood. His atmosphere, while it does not repel, is not inviting. Men hold aloof, as though separated from him by a gulf. He tells no stories, cracks no jests. His manner is one of careless nonchalance. In truth, he is so much engaged in upholding his young dignity as to leave him no time to be popular. His bringing off the dead Montgomery, under fire of the English, has been told and retold in every corner of the camp. This gains him credit for a heart of fire, and a fortitude without a flaw. On the march, too, he faces every hardship, shirks no work, but meets and does his duty equal with the best. And yet there is that cool

reserve, which denies the thought of comradeship and holds friendly folk at bay. With them, yet not of them, the men about him cannot solve the conundrum of his nature; and so they leave him to himself. They value him, they respect him, they hold his courage above proof; there it ends.

Young Aaron, aware of his lonely position, does nothing to change it. He is conceitedly pleased with things as they are. It is the old head on the young shoulders that thus gets in his way; Washington was right in his philosophy. Young Aaron, however, is as content with that head, as in those old Bethlehem days, when he patronized Dr. Bellamy, and declared for the gospel according to Lord Chesterfield.

None the less young Aaron is not wholly satisfied. As he idles about the camp by the Sorel, he feels that any present chance of conquering the fame and power he came seeking in this war is closed against him.

"Plainly," counsels the old head on the young shoulders, "it is time to bring about a change."

Colonel Arnold is smitten of surprise one afternoon, when young Aaron walks into his tent. He does his best to hide that surprise, as an emotion at war with his high military station. Young Aaron, ever equal to a rigid etiquette, salutes profoundly.

"Colonel Arnold," says he, "I am here to return into your hands that rank of captain, which I hold only by courtesy. Also, I desire to tell you that I leave for Albany at once."

"Albany!"

"My canoe is waiting, sir. I start immediately."

"I forbid your going, sir!"

Colonel Arnold has recovered his breath, and makes this proclamation grandly. Privately, he is a-quake; for he does not know what stories young Aaron might tell in the south.

"Sir," he repeats, "I forbid your departure! You must not go!"

"Must not?"

As though answering his own query, young Aaron leaves Colonel Arnold without further remark, and walks down to the river, where a canoe is waiting. The latter cranky contrivance is manned by a quartette of Canadians, who sit, paddle in fist, ready for the word to start.

BENEDICT ARNOLD
From an etching by H. B. Hall, New York, 1879.

At this decisive action, Colonel Arnold is roused. He springs to his feet and follows to the waiting canoe. Young Aaron has just taken his place.

"Captain Burr," cries Colonel Arnold, "what does this mean? You heard my orders, sir! You must not go!"

Young Aaron is ashore like a flash. "Colonel Arnold," says he, "it is quite possible that you have force enough at hand to detain me. Be warned, however, that the exercise of such force will have a sequel serious to yourself."

"Oh, as to that," responds Colonel Arnold sullenly, "I shall not attempt to detain you. I simply leave you to

the responsibility of departing in the teeth of my orders, sir."

In a moment young Aaron is back in the canoe; the four paddles churn the water into baby whirlpools, and the slight craft glides out upon the bosom of the Sorel.

Young Aaron encounters a party of Indians, and conquers their friendship with diplomatic rum. He reaches Albany, and tastes the delights of fame; for the story of Quebec has preceded him, and he finds himself a hero. Thereupon, while outwardly unmoved, he swells in the proud but secret recesses of his heart.

In New York he meets his college friend Ogden, who tells him that he has sold Warlock and spent the proceeds. Likewise, Colonel Troup explains how he received a thousand pounds for him from his estate, but was moved to borrow the half of it, having a call for such sum. Colonel Troup gives five hundred pounds to young Aaron, who receives it carelessly, the while assuring his debtor, as well as young Ogden, who spent the price of Warlock, that they are cheerfully welcome to his gold. At that, both young Ogden and Colonel Troup pluck up a generous spirit, and borrow each another fifty pounds; which sums our "gentleman volunteer" puts into their impoverished fingers, as readily as though pounds mean groats and farthings. For he holds that to be niggard of money is impossible to a soldier and a gentleman. Did not the knight-errant of old romaunts go chucking gold-lined purses right and left, into every empty outstretched hand? And shall not young Aaron be the modern knight-errant if he chooses? These are the questions which he puts to himself, as he ministers to the famished finances of his friends.

General Washington learns of the incident of the dead Montgomery. Having a conscience, he is distressed by the thought that he may have been harshly unjust, one Cambridge day, to our "gentleman volunteer." The conscience-smitten general has headquarters in New York, and now, when young Aaron arrives, strives to make amends. He invites that youthful campaigner to a place upon his personal staff, with the rank of major. Young Aaron accepts, and becomes part of Washington's military family. The general is living at Richmond Hill, a mansion which in after years young Aaron will buy and make his residence.

For six weeks young Aaron is with Washington. Sometimes he rides out with him; sometimes he writes reports and orders at his dictation; always he dislikes him. He finds nothing in the Virginian to invoke his confidence or compel his esteem. In the finale he detests him.

This latter mind condition is vastly built up by the lack of notice he receives from the ever-taciturn, often-abstracted, overworried Washington. The big general will sit for hours, with brows of thought and pondering eye, as heedless of young Aaron—albeit in the same room with him—as though our sucking Marlborough owns no existence. This irritates the latter's pride; for he has military views which he longs to unfold, but cannot because of the grim wordlessness of his chief. He resolves to break the ice.

Washington is sitting lost in thought. "Sir," exclaims young Aaron, boldly rushing in upon the general's meditations, "the English grow stronger. Every day their fleet is augmented by new ships, bringing fresh troops. Eventually they will land and drive us from the city. When that time comes, it will be my advice to burn New York to the ground, and leave them naught save the charred ruins."

Washington pays no attention; it is as though a starling spoke. Presently he mounts his horse, and soberly rides off to an inspection of troops. Young Aaron is mightily mortified, and, by way of reestablishing his dignity on the pedestal from which it has been thrust, neglects a line of clerical work that should claim his attention. Washington upon his return discovers this, and having a temper like gunpowder flashes into a rage.

"What does this mean, sir?" he demands, angry to the eyes.

"Why, sir," responds young Aaron coolly, "I should think it might mean that I brought a sword not a pen to this war."

"You are insolent, sir!"

"As you please, sir. But since you say it, I must ask to be relieved from further duty on your staff."

The big general stalks from the room. The next day he transfers young Aaron to the staff of Putnam.

"I'm sorry he offended you, general," says the old wolf killer. "For myself, I'm bound to say that I think well of the boy."

"There is a word," returns Washington, "as to the meaning of which, until I met him, I was ignorant; that is the word 'prig.' It is strange, too; for he is as brave as Cæsar. I have it on the words of twenty. Yes, general, your 'gentleman-volunteer' is altogether a strangeling; for he is one of those anomalies, a courageous prig."

CHAPTER VI—POOR PEGGY MONCRIEFFE

ON that day when the farmers of Concord turn their rifles upon King George, there dwells in Elizabeth a certain English Major Moncrieffe. With him is his daughter, just ceasing to be a girl and beginning to be a woman. Peggy Moncrieffe is a beauty, and, to tell a whole truth, confident thereof to the verge of brazen. When her father is ordered to his regiment he leaves her behind. The war to him is no more than a riot; he looks to be back in Elizabeth before the month expires.

The optimistic Major Moncrieffe is wrong. That riot, which is not a riot but a revolution, spreads and spreads like fire among dry grass. At last a hostile line divides him from his daughter Peggy. This is serious; for, aside from forbidding any word between them, it prevents him sending what money she requires for her care. In her distress she writes General Putnam, her father's comrade in the last war with the French. The old wolf killer invites the desolate Peggy to make one of his own household. When young Aaron leaves the staff of Washington, Peggy Moncrieffe is with the Putnams, whose house stands at the corner of Broadway and the

Battery.

The family of the old wolf killer is made up of Madam Putnam and two daughters. Peggy Moncrieffe is received as a third daughter by the kindly Madam Putnam. Also, like a third daughter, she is set to the spinning wheel; for, while the old wolf killer fights the English, Madam Putnam and her daughters work early and late, with spinning wheel and loom, clothmaking for the continental troops. Peggy Moncrieffe offers no demur; but goes at the spinning and weaving as though she is as much puritan and patriot as are those about her. She is busy at the spinning when young Aaron is presented. And in that presentation lurks a peril; for she is eighteen and he is twenty.

Young Aaron, selfish, gallant, pleased with a pretty face as with a poem, becomes flatteringly attentive to pretty Peggy Moncrieffe. She, for her side, turns restless when he leaves her, to glow like the sun when he returns. She forgets the spinning wheel for his conversation. The two walk under the trees in the Battery, or, from the quiet steps of St. Paul's, watch the evening sun go down beyond the Jersey hills.

Madam Putnam is prudent, and does not like these symptoms. She issues a whispered mandate to the old wolf killer, with whom her word is law. Thereupon he sends the pretty Peggy to safer quarters near Kingsbridge.

That is to say, the Kingsbridge refuge, to which pretty Peggy reluctantly retires, is safe until she arrives. It presently becomes a theater of danger, since young Aaron is not a day in discovering a complete military reason for visiting it. The old wolf killer is not like Washington; there are no foolish orders or tedious dispatches for his aide to write. This gives leisure to young Aaron, which he improves in daily gallops to Kingsbridge. It is to be feared that he and pretty Peggy Moncrieffe find walks as shady, and prospects as pleasant, and moments as sweet, as when they had the Battery for a promenade and took in the Jersey hills from the twilight steps of St. Paul's. Also, the pretty Peggy no longer pleads to join her father; albeit that parent has just been sent with his regiment to Staten Island, not an hour's sail away.

This contentment of the pretty Peggy with things as they are, re-alarms the prudence of Madam Putnam, who regards it as a sign most sinister. Having a genius to be military, quite equal to that of her old wolf-killing husband, she attacks this dangerously tender situation in flank. She gives her commands to the old wolf killer, and at once he blindly obeys. He dispatches young Aaron on a mission to Long Island. The latter is to look up positions of defense, so as to be prepared for the English, should they carry their arms in that direction.

In two days young Aaron returns, and makes an exhaustive report; whereat the old wolf killer breaks into words of praise. This duty discharged, young Aaron is into the saddle and off, clatteringly, for Kingsbridge. The old wolf killer sees him depart and says nothing, while a cunning twinkle dances in the old gray eye. Then the twinkle subsides, and is succeeded by a self-reproachful doubt.

"He might have married her," he observes tentatively to Madam Putnam.

"Never!" returns that clear matron. "Your young Major Burr is too coolly the selfish calculating egotist. He would win her and wear her as he might some bauble ornament, and cast her aside when the glitter was gone. As for marrying her, he'd as soon think of marrying the rings on his fingers, or the buckles on his shoes."

Young Aaron comes clattering back from Kingsbridge. His black eyes sparkle wickedly; his face, usually so imperturbable, is the seat of an obvious anger. Moreover, he seems chokingly full of a question, which even his ingenious self-confidence is at a loss how to ask. He gets the old wolf killer alone.

"Miss Moncrieffe!" he breaks forth. Then he proceeds blunderingly: "I had occasion to go to Kingsbridge, and was surprised to find her gone." The last concludes with a rising inflection.

"Why, yes!" retorts the old wolf killer, summoning the innocence of a sheep. "I forgot to tell you that, seeing an opportunity, I yesterday sent little Peg to Staten Island under a flag of truce. She is with her father. Between us"—here he sinks his voice mysteriously—"I was afraid the enemy might find some way to use little Peg as a spy." Young Aaron clicks his teeth savagely, but says nothing; the old wolf killer watches him with the tail of his eye.

The "gentleman volunteer" strides down to the sea wall, and takes a long and mayhap loving look at Staten Island, with the wind-ruffled expanse of bay between.

And there the romance ends.

Two days later young Aaron is sipping his wine in black Sam Fraunces' long room, the picture of that elegant indifference which he cultivates as a virtue. Already the fancy for poor Peggy Moncrieffe has faded from the agate surface of his nature, as the breath mists fade from the mirror's face, and he thinks only on how and when he shall lay down his title of major for that of lieutenant colonel.

The woman's heart is the heart loyal. While he sips wine at Fraunces', and weighs the chances of promotion, Peggy the forgotten finds in Staten Island another Naxos, and like another Ariadne goes weeping for that Theseus who has already lost her from out his thoughts.

It is unfortunate that, as aide to the old wolf killer, young Aaron is not provided with more work for hand and head. As it is, his unfilled hours afford him opportunity to think and talk unprofitably. He falls to criticising Washington to the old wolf killer; which is about as sapient as though he fell to criticising Madam Putnam to the old wolf killer.

"Of what avail," cries young Aaron one afternoon, as he and his grizzled chief stroll in the Bowling Green —"of what avail for General Washington to hold the city, when he must give it up at last? New English ships show in the bay with the coming up of every sun. He would be wiser if he withdrew into the interior, and so forced the foe to follow him. This would lose them the backing of their fleet, from which they gain not only supplies, but what is of more consequence a kind of moral support."

The old wolf killer looks at his opinionated aide for a moment. Then without replying directly, he observes:

"Just as the Christian virtues are faith, hope, and charity, so the military virtues are courage, endurance, and silence. And the greatest of these is silence. You ought always to remember that a soldier's sword should be immeasurably longer than his tongue."

Young Aaron reddens at what he feels is a rebuke. The following day, when he is directed to join General McDougal on Long Island, he is glad to go.

“He has had too little to do,” explains the old wolf killer to Madam Putnam. “Like all workless folk he is beginning to talk; and his is the sort of conversation that breeds enemies and brews trouble.”

Young Aaron is in the fight on Long Island. Upon the retreating back of that lost battle, he supervises the crossing of the troops to Manhattan. All night, cool and quick and vigilant, he labors on the Brooklyn side to put the men aboard the transports. When the last is across the East River, he himself embarks, bringing with him his horse, hog-tied, in the bottom of the barge. It is early dawn when he leads the released animal ashore on the Manhattan side. Mounting it, with two fellow officers, he rides northward at a leisurely gait, a half mile to the rear of the retreating army.

As young Aaron and his companions push north toward Kingsbridge, they come across the baggage and stores of a battery of artillery. The baggage and stores have been but the moment before abandoned.

“It looks,” observes young Aaron, who is as unruffled as upon the day when he laid down theology for law, to the horrified distress of Dr. Bellamy—“it looks as though the captain of that battery, whoever he is, has permitted these English in our rear to get unnecessarily upon his nerves. There is no such close occasion as to justify the abandonment of these stores. At least he should have destroyed them.”

Twenty rods beyond, he finds one of the battery’s guns. He points to the lost piece scornfully.

“There,” says he, “is the pure proof of some one’s cowardice!”

Spurring on, and led by the rumbling sounds of field guns in full retreat, he overtakes the timid ones who have thrown away baggage and gun. The captain who commands is a youth no older than young Aaron. As the latter comes up, the boy captain is urging his cannoneers to double speed.

“Let me congratulate you, captain,” observes young Aaron, extravagantly polite the better to set off the sneer that marks his manner, “on not having thrown away your colors. May I ask your name?”

“I, sir,” returns the artillery youth, as much moved of resentment at young Aaron’s sneer, as is possible for one in his perturbed frame, “I, sir, am Captain Alexander Hamilton.”

“And I, sir, am Major Burr. Let me compliment you, Captain Hamilton, for the ardor you display in carrying your battery forward. One might suppose from your headlong zeal that the English forces lie in that direction. I must needs say, however, that the zeal which casts away its stores and baggage, and leaves a gun behind, is ill considered.”

Captain Hamilton’s face clouds angrily; but, since he is thinking more on the English than on insults that perilous morning, he does not reply to the taunt. Young Aaron, feeling the better for his expressions of contempt, wheels off to the left toward the Hudson, leaving the other to bring on his battery with what breathless speed he may.

“Now, had that Captain Hamilton been in the light on Long Island,” remarks young Aaron to his companions, “the hurry he shows might have found partial excuse. As it is, I hold his flight too feverish, when one remembers that it is from an enemy which as yet he has personally neither faced nor seen.”

Young Aaron puts in divers idle months at Kingsbridge. His conduct on Long Island, and during the retreat of the army toward the north, has multiplied his fame for an indomitable hardihood. Indeed he is inclined to compliment himself; though he hides the fact defensively in his own breast.

This good opinion of his services teaches him to entertain ambitions of the vaulting, not to say o’er-leaping sort. As he now, by the light of recent achievement, measures his merits nothing short of a colonelcy and the leadership of a regiment will do him justice. Conceive then, how deeply he feels slighted when Washington fails to share these liberal views, and promotes him to nothing higher than that lieutenant colonelcy which his hopes have so much outgrown. He accepts; but he feels the title fit him with an awkward nearness, as might a coat that some blundering tailor has cut too small. The letter of acceptance which he indites to Washington includes such paragraphs as this:

I am constrained to observe that the late date of my appointment as lieutenant colonel, subjects me to the command of officers who, in the late campaign, were my juniors. With due submission, sir, I should like to know whether it was misconduct on my part or extraordinary merit on theirs, which has thus given them the preference. I desire, on my part, to avoid equally the character of turbulent or passive, but as a decent regard to rank is proper and necessary I hope the concern I feel in this matter will be found excusable in one who regards his honor next to the welfare of his country.

The old wolf killer is with Washington when that harassed commander reads young Aaron’s effusion. With an exclamation of wrath the big general tosses it across.

“By all that is ineffable!” he cries, “read that. Now here is a boy gone stark staring mad for vanity! A stripling of twenty-one, with face as hairless as an egg, and yet the second rank in a regiment is no match for his majestic deserts! Putnam,” he continues, as the old wolf killer runs his eye over the letter, “that young friend of yours will be the death of me yet! As I told you, sir, he is a courageous prig—yes, sir, a mere courageous prig!”

“What reply will you make? It should be a sharp one.”

“It shall be none at all. I’ll make no reply to such bombastic fault-finding. One might as well pelt a pig with pearls, as waste common sense on such self-conceit as we have here. Do me the honor, Putnam, to write this boy-conqueror a note, saying it is my orders that he join his regiment at once.”

Young Aaron finds the regiment to which he has been assigned on the Ramapo, a day’s ride back from the Hudson. His superior in command, Colonel Malcolm, is a shop-keeping, amiable gentleman, as short of breath as of courage, who would as soon think of thrusting his hand into the embers as his fat body into battle. Preeminently is he of that peculiar war-feather that, for every reason in favor of going forward, can give a dozen for falling back. Perceiving with delight young Aaron to be possessed of a taste for carnage as well as command, the peace-loving Colonel Malcolm promptly surrenders the regiment into his hands.

“You shall drill it and fight it,” says he, “while I will be its father.”

With this, the fat Colonel Malcolm retires twenty miles farther into the interior; where he joins Madam Malcolm, as fat as himself, who unites with five fat children, their offspring, to fatly welcome him.

Young Aaron, now when he finds himself in sole control, parades the regiment, and does not like its appearance. He makes it a speech, and is exceeding frank. He explains that it is more fitted to shine at barbecues and barn-raisings than in war. Then he grasps it with a daily hand of steel, and begins to crush it into disciplined shape. From break of morning until the sun goes down, he puts it through its paces. As one of the onlookers remarks:

"He drills 'em till their tongues hang out."

The fruits of this iron rule, so much a change from that picnic character of control but lately exercised by the amiable Colonel Malcolm, are twofold. Young Aaron is hated and respected by every soul on the rolls. Caring nothing for the one and everything for the other, he continues to drill the boots off their feet. Finally, the regiment ceases to look like a mob, and dons a military expression. At which young Aaron is privily exalted.

There still remain, however, a round score of thorns in his militant flesh, being as many captains and lieutenants, who are better qualified for the drawing-room than the field. He must rid himself of this element of popinjay.

Since young Aaron is clothed of no power of dismissal over the offensive popinjays, the situation bristles with difficulties. For all that they must go. After one night's thought, he gets up from his cogitations inclined to exclaim, like another Archimedes: "I have found it!"

Young Aaron's device is simplicity itself. Having no power of dismissal, he will usurp it. Also, he will assert it in such fashion that not a popinjay of them all will be able to make his dismissal the basis of military inquiry, and keep his credit clean.

Young Aaron writes, word for word, the same letter to each of the undesirable popinjay ones. He words it, skillfully, in this wise:

Sir: You are unfitted for the duties you have assumed. For the good of the service therefore, I demand the immediate resignation or your commission. To be frank, sir, I think you lack the courage to lead your men in the presence of a foe. Should I be wrong in this assumption, you of course will demonstrate that fact by methods which readily suggest themselves to every gentleman of spirit. Let me therefore urge that you either forward your resignation as herein demanded by me, or dispatch in its stead a request for that satisfaction which I, as a man of honor, shall not for one moment deny. I beg leave to remain, sir,

Your very humble servant,

Aaron Burr, Acting Colonel.

"There!" thinks he, when the last letter is signed, sealed, and sent upon its way to the popinjay hand for which it is designed, "that should do nicely. I've ever held that the way to successfully deal with humanity is to take humanity by the horns. That I've done. Likewise, I flatter myself I've constructed my net so fine that none of them can wriggle through. And as for breaking through by the dueling method I hint at, I shall have guessed vastly to one side, if the best among them own either the force or courage to so much as make the attempt."

Young Aaron is justified of his perspicacity. The resignations of the popinjays come pouring in, each seeming to take the initiative, and basing his "voluntary" abandonment of a military career on grounds wholly invented and highly honorable to himself. No reference, even of the blindest, is made to that brilliant usurpation of authority. Neither is young Aaron's letter alluded to in any conversation.

There is one exception; a popinjay personage named Rawls, retorts in a hectic epistle which, while conveying his resignation, avows a determination to welter in young Aaron's blood as a slight solace for the outrage done his feelings. To this, young Aaron replies that he shall, on the very next day, do himself the honor of a call upon the ill-used and flaming Rawls, whose paternal roof is not an hour's gallop from the Ramapo. Accordingly, young Aaron repairs to the Rawls's mansion at eleven of next day's clock. He has with him two officers, who are dark as to the true purpose of the excursion.

Young Aaron and the accompanying duo are asked to dinner by the Rawls's household. The popinjay fiery Rawls is present, but embarrassed. After dinner, when young Aaron asks popinjay Rawls to ride with his party a mile or two on the return journey, the fiery, ill-used one grows more embarrassed.

He does not, however, ride forth on that suggested mission of honor; his alarmed sisters, of whom there are an angelic three, rush to his rescue in a flood of terrified exclamation.

"O Colonel Burr!" they chorus, "what are you about to do with Neddy?"

"My dear young ladies," protests young Aaron suavely, "believe me, I'm about to do nothing with Neddy. I intend only to ask him what he desires or designs to do with me. I am here to place myself at Neddy's disposal, in a matter which he well understands."

The interfering angelic sisterly ones declare that popinjay Neddy meant nothing by his letter, and will never write another. Whereupon young Aaron observes he will be content with the understanding that popinjay Neddy send him no more letters, unless they have been first submitted to the sisterly censorship of the angelic three. To this everyone concerned most rapturously consents; following which young Aaron goes back to his camp by the Ramapo, while the sisterly angelic ones festoon themselves about the neck of popinjay Neddy, over whom they weepingly rejoice as over one returned from out the blackness of the shadow of death.

CHAPTER VII—THE CONQUERING THEODOSIA

WHILE young Aaron, in his camp by the Ramapo, is wringing the withers of his men with merciless drills, sixteen miles away, in the outskirts of the village of Paranius dwells Madam Theodosia Prévost. Madam Prévost is the widow of an English Colonel Prévost, who was swept up by yellow fever in Jamaica. With her are her mother, her sister, her two little boys. The family name is De Visme, which is a Swiss name from the French cantons.

The hungry English in New York are running short of food. Two thousand of them cross the Hudson, and commence combing the country for beef. Word of that cow-driving reaches young Aaron by the Ramapo. Hackensack is given as the theater of those beef triumphs of the hungry English.

From rustical ones bewailing vanished kine, young Aaron receives the tale first hand. Instantly he springs to the defense of the continental cow. He orders out his regiment, and marches away for that stricken Hackensack region of ravished flocks and herds.

At Paramus, excited by stories of a cow-conquering English, the militia of the neighborhood are fallen to a frenzied building of breastworks. Certain of these home guards look up from their breastwork building long enough to decide that Madam Prévost, as the widow of a former English colonel, is a Tory.

Arriving at this conclusion, the home guards make the next natural step, and argue—because of their nearness to Madam Prévost—that the mother and sister and little boys are Tories. The quietly elegant home of Madam Prévost is declared a nest of Tories, against which judgment a belief that the mansion is worth looting is not allowed to militate.

As young Aaron, on his rescuing way to Hackensack, marches into Paramus, the judgmatical home guards, in the name of a patriotism which believes in spoiling the Egyptian, are about to begin their work of sack and pillage. Young Aaron, who does not think that robbery assists the cause of freedom, calls a halt. He drives off the home guards at the point of his sword, and places sentinels upon the premises. Also he promises to hang the first home guard who, in the name of liberty, or for any more private reason, touches a shilling's worth of Madam Prevost's chattels.

Having established his protectorate in favor of the threatened Prévost household, young Aaron enters, hat in hand, with the pardonable purpose of discovering what manner of folk he has pledged himself to keep safe. It may be that he is beset by visions of distressed fair ones—disheveled, tearful, beautiful! If so, his dreams receive a shock. 'Instead of that flushed, frightened, clinging, tear-stained loveliness, so common of romance, he is met by a severely angular lady who, plain of face, with high, harsh cheek bones, and a scar on her forehead, is two inches taller and twelve years older than himself.

Madam Prévost owns all these; and yet, beyond and above them, she also possesses an ineffable, impalpable something, which is like an atmosphere, a perfume, a melody of manner, and marks her as that greatest of graceful rarities, a well-bred, cultured woman of the world. Polished, fine, Madam Prévost is familiar with the society of two continents. She knows literature, music, art; she is wise, erudite, nobly high. These attributes invest her with a soft brilliancy, into which those uglinesses and bony angularities retreat as into a kind of moonlight, to recur in gentle reassertion as the poetic sublimation of all that charms.

Thus does she break upon young Aaron—young Aaron, who has said that he would no more love a woman for her beauty than a man for his money, and is to be won only by her who, mentally and sentimentally, meets him half way. This last Madam Prévost does; and, from the moment he meets her to the hour of her death, she draws him and holds him like a magnet. It illustrates the inexplicable in love, that this cool, cynical one, whose very youth is an iron element of hardest strength, should be fascinated and fettered by a worn, middle-aged woman with eyes of faded gray.

Young Aaron, on this first encounter with his goddess, remains no longer than is required to receive the arrow in his heart. He presses on with his followers for the Hackensack. A mile from Paramus he halts his soldiery, and, leaving the great body of them, goes forward in person with a scouting party of seventeen. In the middle watches of the night, he discovers a picket post of the cow-collecting English. Only one is awake; he is shot dead by young Aaron. The others, twenty-eight in number, are seized in their sleep.

In the wake of this exploit, young Aaron brings up his whole command. The cow-hunting redcoats, from the confidence of his advance, infer in his favor an overwhelming strength. Panic claims them; they make for the Hudson, leaving those collected cows behind. There is rejoicing among the Hackensack folk at this happy return of their property, and young Aaron goes back to the Ramapo rich in encomium and praise.

The camp by the Ramapo is given up, and young Aaron, love-drawn, brings his force within a mile of Paramus. Daily he seeks the society of Madam Prévost, as sick folk seek the sun. She speaks French, Spanish, German; she reads Voltaire, and is capable of admiring without approving the cynic of Fernay. More; she is familiar with Petrarch, Le Sage, Corneille, Rousseau, Chesterfield, Cervantes. Madam Prévost and young Aaron find much to talk of and agree about, in the way of romance and poetry and philosophy, and are never dull for lack of topics. And, as they converse, he worships her with his eyes, from which every least black trace of that ophidian sparkle has been extinguished.

The first snowflakes are falling when young Aaron receives orders to join Washington's army at Valley Forge. Arriving, his hatred of the big general is rearoused. He suggests an expedition against the English on Staten Island, and offers to undertake it with three hundred men. Washington thinks well of the suggestion, but dispatches Lord Stirling to carry it out. Young Aaron, hot with disappointment, adds this to the list of injuries which he believes he has received from the Virginian.

Food is stinted, fire scarce at Valley Forge; there is a deal of cold and starving. Folk hungry and frozen are in no humor for work, and look on labor as an evil. Young Aaron takes no account of this, but has out his tattered, chilled, thin-flanked followers to those daily drills.

In the end a spirit of mutiny creeps in among the men. It finds concrete shape one frosty morning when private John Cook levels his musket at young Aaron's heart. Private Cook means murder, and is only kept

from it by the promptitude of young Aaron. With that very motion of the mutineer which aims the gun, young Aaron's sword comes rasping from its scabbard, and a backhanded stroke all but severs the would-be homicide's right arm. The wounded man falls bleeding to the ground. With that, young Aaron details a pale-faced, silent quartette to carry the wounded one to the hospital, and, drawing his blade through a handkerchief to wipe away the blood, proceeds with the hated drill.

WASHINGTON AT VALLEY FORGE
From the original painting by A. Chappel.

While young Aaron serves at Valley Forge, a conspiracy, whereof General Conway is the animating heart and General Gates the figurehead, is hatched. The purpose is to remove Washington, and set the conqueror of Burgoyne in his place. Young Aaron joins the conspiracy, and is looked upon by his fellow plotters as ardent, but unimportant because of his youth.

The design falls to the ground; Washington retains his command, while Gates goes south to lose his Burgoyne laurels and get drubbed by Cornwallis. As for young Aaron, he swallows as best he may his disappointment over the poor upcome of that plot, and takes part in the battle of Monmouth. Here he has his horse shot under him, and lays up fresh hatreds against Washington for refusing to let him charge an English battery.

Sore, heart-cankered of chagrin, young Aaron asks for leave of absence. He declares that he is ill, and his hollow cheek and bilious eye sustain him. He says that, until his health mends, he will take no pay.

"You shall have leave of absence," says Washington, to whom young Aaron prefers his request in person, "but you must draw pay."

"And why draw pay, sir!" demands young Aaron warmly, for he somehow smells an insult. "I shall render no service. I think the proprieties much preserved by a stoppage of my pay."

"If you were the only, one, sir," returns Washington, "I might say as you do. But there be others on sick leave, who are not men of fortune like yourself. Those gentlemen must draw their pay, or see their people suffer. Should you be granted leave without pay, they might feel criticised. You note the point, sir."

"Why," replies young Aaron, with a tinge of sarcasm, "the point, I take it, is that you would not have me shine at the expense of folk of lesser fortune or more avarice than myself. Because others are not generous to their country, I must be refused the poor privilege of contributing even my absence to her cause."

At young Aaron's palpable sneer, the big general's face darkens with anger. "You exhibit an insolence, sir," he says at last, "which I succeed in overlooking only by remembering that I am twice your age. I understand, of course, that you intend a covert thrust at myself, because I draw my three guineas per day as commander in chief. Rather to enlighten you than defend my own conduct, I may tell you, sir, that I draw those three guineas upon the precise grounds I state as reasons why you, during your leave, must accept pay. There are men as brave, as true, as patriotic as either of us, who cannot—as we might—fight months on end, without some provision for their families. What, sir"—here the big general begins to kindle—"is it not enough that men risk their blood for these colonies? Must wives and children starve? The cause is not so poor, I tell you, but what it can pay its own cost. You and I, sir, will draw our pay, to keep in self-respecting countenance folk as good as ourselves in everything save fortune."

Young Aaron shrugs his shoulders. "If it were not, sir," he begins, "for that difference in our ages which you so opportunely quote, to say nothing of my inferior military rank, I might ask if your determination to make me accept pay, whether I earn it or no, be not due to a latent dislike for myself personally. I can think of much that justifies the question."

"Colonel Burr," observes the big general, with a dignity which is not without rebuking effect upon young Aaron, "because you are young and will one day be older, I am inclined to justify myself in your eyes. I make it a rule to seldom take advice and never give it. And yet there is room for a partial exception in your instance. There is a word, two, perhaps, which I think you need."

"Believe me, sir, I am honored!"

"My counsel, sir, is to cease thinking of yourself. Give your life a better purpose and a higher aim. You will have more credit now, more fame hereafter, if you will lay aside that egotism which dominates you, and give your career a motive beyond and above a mere desire to advance yourself."

The big general, from the commanding heights of those advantageous extra six inches, looks down upon young Aaron. In that looking down there is nothing of the paternal. Rather it is as though a pedagogue deals with some self-willed pupil.

Of all the big general's irritating attitudes, young Aaron finds this pose of unruffled supremacy the one hardest to bear. He holds himself in hand, however, deeming it a time, now the ice is broken, to go to the bottom of his prospects, and learn what hope there is of honors which can come only through the other's word.

"Sir," observes young Aaron, "will you be so good as to make yourself clear. What you say is interesting; I would not miss its slightest meaning."

"It should be confessed," returns the big general, somewhat to one side, "that I am of a hot and angry temper. My one fear, having authority, is that in the heat of personal resentments I may do injustice. If it were not for such fear, you would have gone south with General Gates, for whom you plotted all you knew to bring about my downfall."

Young Aaron is seized of a chilling surprise. This is his first news that Washington is aware of his part in that plot. However, he schools his features to a statuelike immobility, and evinces neither amazement nor dismay. The big general goes on:

"No, sir; your conduct as a soldier has been good. So I leave you with your regiment, retain you with me, because I can see no public reasons, but only private ones, for sending you away. I go over these things, sir, to convince you that I have not permitted personal bias to control my attitude toward you. Besides, I hope to teach you a present sincerity in what I say."

"Why, sir," interjects young Aaron, careful to maintain a coolness and self-possession equal with the big general's; "you give yourself unnecessary trouble. I cannot think your sincerity important, since I shall not permit the question of it to in any way add to or subtract from your words. I listen gladly and with gratitude. None the less, I shall accept or reject your counsel on its abstract merits, unaffected by its honorable source."

The insufferable impertinence of young Aaron's manner would have got him drummed out of some services, shot in others. The big general only bites his lip.

"What I would tell you," he resumes, "is this. You possess the raw material of greatness—but with one element lacking. You may rise to what heights you choose, if you will but cure yourself of one defect. Observe, sir! Men are judged, not for deeds but motives. A man injures you; you excuse him because no injury was meant. A man seeks to injure you, but fails; and yet you resent it, in spite of that defensive failure, because of the intent. So it is with humanity at large. It looks at the motive rather than the act. Sir, I have watched you. You have no motive but yourself. Patriotism plays no part when you come to this war; it is not the country, but Aaron Burr, you carry on your thoughts. Whatever you may believe, you cannot win fame or good repute on terms, so narrow. A man is so much like a gun that, to carry far, he must have some elevation of aim. You were born fortunate in your parts, save for that defective element of aim. There, sir, you fail, and will continue to fail, unless you work your own redemption. It is as though you had been born on a dead level—aimed point-blank at birth. You should have been born at an angle of forty-five degrees. With half the powder, sir, you would carry twice as far. Wherefore, elevate yourself; give your life a noble purpose! Make yourself the incident, mankind the object. Merge egotism in patriotism; forget self in favor of your country and its flag."

The gray eyes of the big general rest upon young Aaron with concern. Then he abruptly retreats into the soldier, as though ashamed of his own earnestness. Without giving time for reply to that dissertation on the proper aim of man, he again takes up the original business of the leave.

The Battle of Monmouth
From the original painting by A. Chappel.

"Colonel Burr," says he, "you shall have leave of absence. But your waiver of pay is declined."

"Then, sir," retorts young Aaron, "you must permit me to withdraw my application. I shall not take the country's money, without rendering service for it."

"That is as you please, sir."

"One thing stands plain," mutters young Aaron, as he walks away; "the sooner I quit the army the better. For me it is 'no thoroughfare,' and I may as well save my time. He knows of my part in that Conway-Gates

movement, too; and, for all his platitudes about justice and high aims, he's no one to forget it."

CHAPTER VIII—MARRIAGE AND THE LAW

YOUNG Aaron, with his regiment, is ordered to West Point. Next he is dispatched to hold the Westchester lines, being that debatable ground lying between the Americans at White Plains and the English at Kingsbridge. It is still his half-formed purpose to resign his sword, and turn the back of his ambition on every hope of military glory. He says as much to General Putnam, whose real liking for him he feels and trusts. The wise old wolf killer argues in favor of patience.

"Washington is but trying you," he declares. "It will all come right, if you but hold on. And to be a colonel at twenty-two is no small thing, let me tell you! Suck comfort from that!"

Young Aaron knows the old wolf killer so well that he feels he may go as far as he chooses into those twin subjects of Washington and his own military prospects.

"General," he says, "believe me when I tell you that I accept what you say as though from a father. Let me talk to you, then, not as a colonel to his general, but as son to sire. I have my own views concerning Washington; they are not of the highest. I do not greatly esteem him as either a soldier or a man."

"And there you are wrong!" breaks in the old wolf killer; "twice wrong."

"Give me your own views, then; I shall be glad to change the ones I have."

"You speak of Washington as no soldier. Without reminding you that you yourself own but little experience to guide by in coming to such conclusion, I may say perhaps that I, who have fought in both the French War and the war with Pontiac, possess some groundwork upon which to base opinion. Take my word for it, then, that there is no better soldier anywhere than Washington."

"But he is all for retreating, and never for advancing."

"Precisely! And, whether you know it or no, those tactics of falling back and falling back are the ones, the only ones, which promise final success. Where, let me ask, do you think this war is to be won?"

"Where should any war be won but on the battlefield?"

The old wolf killer smiles a wide smile of grizzled toleration. Plainly, he regards young Aaron as lacking in years quite as much as does Washington himself; and yet, somehow, this manner on his part does not fret the boy colonel. In truth, he meets the fatherly grin with the ghost of a smile.

"Where, then, should this war be won?" asks young Aaron.

"Not on the battlefield. I am but a plain farmer when I'm not wearing a sword, and no statesman like Adams or Franklin or Jefferson. For all that, I am wise enough to know that the war must, and, in the end, will be won in the Parliament of England. It must be won for us by Fox and Burke and Pitt and the other Whigs. All we can do is furnish them the occasion and the argument, and that can be accomplished only by retreating."

Young Aaron sniffs his polite distrust of such topsy-turvy logic. "Now I should call," says he, "these retreats, by which you and Washington seem to set so much store, a worst possible method of giving encouragement to our friends. I fear you jest with me, general. How can you say that by retreating, itself a confession of weakness, we give the English Whigs an argument which shall induce King George to recognize our independence?"

"If you were ten years older," remarks the old wolf killer, "you would not put the question. Which proves some of us in error concerning you, and shows you as young as your age should warrant. Let me explain: You think a war, sir, this war, for instance, is a matter of soldiers and guns. It isn't; it is a matter of gold. As affairs stand, the English are shedding their guineas much faster than they shed their blood. Presently the taxpayers of England will begin to feel it; they feel it now. Let the drain go on. Before all is done, their resolution will break down; they will elect a Parliament instructed to concede our independence."

"Your idea, then, is to prolong the war, and per incident the expense of it to the English, until, under a weight of taxation, the courage of the English taxpayer breaks down."

"You've nicked it. We own neither the force, nor the guns, nor the powder, nor—and this last in particular—the bayonets to wage aggressive warfare. To do so would be to play the English game. They would, breast to breast and hand to hand, wipe us out by sheerest force of numbers. That would mean the finish; we should lose and they would win. Our plan—the Washington plan—is, with as little loss as possible in men and dollars to ourselves, to pile up cost for the foe. There is but one way to do that; we must fall back, and keep falling back, to the close of the chapter."

"At least," says young Aaron, with a sour grimace, "you will admit that the plan of campaign you offer presents no peculiar features of attractive gallantry."

"Gallantry is not the point. I am but trying to convince you that Washington, in this backwardness of which you complain, proceeds neither from ignorance nor cowardice; but rather from a set and well-considered strategy. I might add, too, that it takes a better soldier to retreat than to advance. As for your true soldier, after he passes forty, he talks not of winning battles but wars. After forty he thinks little or nothing of that engaging gallantry of which you talk, and never throws away practical advantage in favor of some gilded sentiment. You deem slightly of Washington, because you know slightly of Washington. The most I may say to comfort you is that Washington most thoroughly knows himself. And"—here the old wolf killer's voice begins to tremble a little—"I'll go further: I've seen many men; but none of a courage, a patriotism, a fortitude, a sense of honor to match with his; none of his exalted ideals or noble genius for justice."

Young Aaron is silent; for he sees how moved is the old wolf killer, and would not for the ransom of a world say aught to pain him. After a pause he observes:

“Assuredly, I could not think of going behind your opinions, and Washington shall be all you say. None the less—and here I believe you will bear me out—he has of me no good opinion. He will not advance me; he will not give me opportunity to advance. And, after all, the question I originally put only touched myself. I told you I thought, and now tell you I still think, that I might better take off my sword, forget war, and see what is to be won in the law.”

“And you ask my advice?”

“Your honest advice.”

“Then stick to the head of your regiment. Convince Washington that his opinion of you is unjust, and he’ll be soonest to admit it. To convince him should not be difficult, since you have but to do your duty.”

“Very good,” observes Aaron, resignedly, “I shall, for the present at least, act upon your counsel. Also, much as I value your advice, general, you have given me something else in this conversation which I value more; that is, your expressed and friendly confidence.”

Following his long talk with the old wolf killer, young Aaron throws himself upon his duty, heart and hand. In his rôle as warden of the Westchester marches, he is as vigilant as a lynx. The English under Tryon move north from New York; he sends them scurrying back to town in hot and fear-spurred haste. They attempt to surprise him, and are themselves surprised. They build a doughty blockhouse near Spuyten Duyvel; young Aaron burns it, and brings in its defenders as captives. Likewise, under cloud of night—night, ever the ally of lovers—he oft plays Leander to Madam Prevost’s Hero; only the Hudson is his Hellespont, and he does not swim but crosses in a barge. These love pilgrimages mean forty miles and as many perils. However, the heart-blinded young Aaron is not counting miles or perils, as he pictures his gray goddess of Paramus sighing for his coming.

One day young Aaron hears tidings that mean much in his destinies. The good old wolf killer, his sole friend in the army, is stricken of paralysis, and goes home to die. The news is a shock to him; the more since it offers the final argument for ending with the military. He consults no one. Basing his action on a want of health, he forwards his resignation to Washington, who accepts. He leaves the army, taking with him an unfaltering dislike of the big general which will wax not wane as years wear on.

Young Aaron is much and lovingly about his goddess of the wan gray eyes; so much and so lovingly, indeed, that it excites the gossips. With war and battle and sudden death on every hand and all about them, scandal-mongering ones may still find time and taste for the discussion of the faded Madam Prévost and her boy lover. The discussion, however, is carried on in whispers, and made to depend on a movement of the shoulder or an eyebrow knowingly lifted. Madam Prévost and young Aaron neither hear nor see; their eyes and ears are sweetly busy over nearer, dearer things.

It is deep evening at the Prévost mansion. A carriage stops at the gate; the next moment a bold-eyed woman, the boldness somewhat in eclipse through weariness and fear, bursts in. Young Aaron’s memory is for a moment held at bay; then he recalls her. The bold-eyed one is none other than that Madam Arnold whom he saw on a Newburyport occasion, when he was dreaming of conquest and Quebec. Plainly, the bold-eyed one knows Madam Prévost; for she runs to her with outstretched hands.

“Oh, I’ve lied and played the hypocrite all day!”

Then the bold-eyed one relates the just discovered treason of her husband, and how she imitated tears and hysteria and the ravings of one abandoned, to cover herself from the consequences of a crime to which she was privy, and the commission whereof she urged.

“This gentleman!” cries the bold-eyed one, as she closes her story—she has become aware of young Aaron—“this gentleman! May I trust him?”

Mrs. Benedict Arnold and Child
From a painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

"As you would myself," returns Madam Prévost.

And so, by the lips he loves, young Aaron is bound to permit, if he does not aid, the escape of the bold-eyed traitress. Wherefore, she goes her uninterrupted way; after which he forgets her, and again takes up the subject nearest his heart, his love for Madam Prévost.

Eighteen months slip by; young Aaron is eager for marriage. Madam Prévost is not so hurried, but urges a prudent procrastination. He is about to return to those law studies, which he took up aforetime with Tappan Reeve. She shows him that it would more consist with his dignity, were he able to write himself "lawyer" before he became a married man.

Lovers will listen to sweethearts when husbands turn blandly deaf to wives, and young Aaron accepts the advice of his goddess of faded years and experiences. He hunts up a certain Judge Patterson, a law-light of New Jersey—not too far from Paramus—and enters himself as a student under that philosopher of jurisprudence.

Judge Patterson and young Aaron do not agree. The one is methodical, and looks slowly out upon the world; he holds by the respectable theory that one should know the law before he practices it. The other favors haste at any cost, and argues that by practice one will most surely and sharply come to a profound knowledge of the law.

Perceiving his studies to go forward as though shod with lead, young Aaron remonstrates with his preceptor.

"This will never do," he cries. "Sir, I shall be gray before I go to the bar!" He explains that it is his purpose to enter upon the practice of the law within a year. "Twelve months as a student should be enough," he says.

"Sir," observes the scandalized Judge Patterson in retort, "to talk of taking charge of a client's interests after studying but a year is to talk of fraud. You would but sacrifice them to your own vain ignorance, sir. It would be a most flagrant case of the blind leading the blind."

"Possibly now," urges young Aaron the cynical, "the opposing counsel might be as blind as I, and the bench as blind as either."

"Such talk is profanation!" exclaims Judge Patterson who, making a cult of the law, feels a priestly horror at young Aaron's ribaldry. "Let me be plain, sir! No student shall leave me to engage upon the practice, unless I think him competent. As to that condition of competency, I deem you many months' journey from it."

Finding himself and Judge Patterson so much at variance, young Aaron bids that severe jurist adieu, and betakes himself to Haverstraw. There he makes a more agreeable compact with one Judge Smith, whom the English have driven from New York. While he waits for the day when—English vanished—he may return to his practice, Judge Smith accepts a round sum in gold from young Aaron, on the understanding that he devote himself wholly to that impatient gentleman's education.

Judge Smith of Haverstraw does his honest best to earn that gold. Morning, noon, and night, and late into the latter, he and young Aaron go hammering at the old musty masters of jurisprudence. The student makes astonishing advances, and it is no more than a matter of weeks when Jack proves as good as his master. Still, the sentiment which animates young Aaron's efforts is never high. He studies law as some folk study fencing,

his one absorbing thought being to learn how to defeat an adversary and save himself. His great concern is to make himself past master of every thrust, parry, and sleighty trick of fence, whether in attack or guard, with the one object of victory for himself and the enemy's destruction. Justice, and to assist thereat, is the thing distant from his thoughts.

At the end of six months, Judge Smith declares young Aaron able to hold his own with any adversary.

"Mark my words, sir," he observes, when speaking of young Aaron to a fellow gray member of the guild —"mark my words, sir, he will prove one of the most dangerous men who ever sat down to a trial table. There is, of course, a right side and a wrong side to every cause. In that luck which waits upon the practice of the law, he may, as might you or I, be retained for the wrong side of a litigation. But whether right or wrong, should you some day be pitted against him, you will find him possessed of this sinister peculiarity. If he's right, you won't defeat him; if he's wrong, you must exercise your utmost care or he'll defeat you."

Pronouncing which, Judge Smith refreshes himself with sardonic snuff, after the manner of satirical ones who feel themselves delivered of a smartish quip.

Following that profound novitiate of six months, young Aaron visits Albany and seeks admission to the bar. He should have studied three years; but the benignant judge forgives him those other two years and more, basing his generosity on the applicant's services as a soldier.

"And so," says young Aaron, "I at least get something from my soldier life. It wasn't all thrown away, since now it saves me a deal of grinding study at the books."

Young Aaron settles down to practice law in Albany. He prefers New York City, and will go there when the English leave. Pending that redcoat exodus, he cheers his spirit and improves his time by carrying Madam Prévost to church, where the Reverend Bogard declares them man and wife, after the methods and manners of the Dutch Reformed.

The boy husband and the faded middle-aged wife remain a year in Albany. There a daughter is born. She will grow up as the beautiful Theodosia, and, when the maternal Theodosia is no more, be all in all to her father. Young Aaron kisses baby Theodosia, calls the stars his brothers, and walks the sky. For once, in a way, that old innate egotism is well-nigh dead in his heart.

About this time the beaten English sail away for home, and young Aaron gives up Albany. Albany has three thousand; New York-is a pulsating metropolis of twenty-two thousand souls. There can be no question as to where the choice of a rising young barrister should fall.

He goes therefore to New York; and, with the two Theodosias and the two little Prévost boys, takes a stately mansion in that thoroughfare of fashion and fine society, Maiden Lane. He opens law offices by the Bowling Green, to a gathering cloud of clients.

The Right Reverend Doctor Bellamy of Bethlehem pays him a visit.

"With your few months of study," observes the reverend doctor dryly, "I wonder you know enough of law to so much as keep it, let alone going about its practice."

"Law is not so difficult," responds young Aaron, quite as dry as the good doctor. "Indeed, in some respects it is vastly like theology. That is to say, it is anything which is boldly asserted and plausibly maintained."

The good doctor says he will answer for young Aaron's boldness of assertion.

"And yet," continues the good doctor, with just a glimmer of sarcasm, "the last time I saw you, you gave me the catalogue of your virtues, and declared them the virtues of a soldier. How comes it, then, that in the midst of battles you laid down steel for parchment, gave up arms for law?"

"Washington drove me from the army," responds young Aaron, with convincing gravity. "As I told you, sir, by nature I am a soldier, and turned lawyer only through necessity. And Washington was the necessity."

CHAPTER IX—SON-IN-LAW HAMILTON

NOW when young Aaron, in the throbbing metropolis of New York, finds himself a lawyer and a married man, with an office by the Bowling Green and a house in fashionable Maiden Lane, he gives himself up to a cool survey of his surroundings. What he sees is fairly and honestly set forth by the good Dr. Bellamy, after that dominie returns to Bethlehem and Madam Bellamy. The latter, like all true women, is curious, and gives the doctor no peace until he relates his experiences.

"The city," observes the veracious doctor, looking up from tea and muffins, "is large; some say as large as twenty-seven thousand. I walked to every part of it, seeing all a stranger should. There is much opulence there. The rich, of whom there are many, have not only town houses, but cool country seats north of the town. Their Broad Way is a fine, noble street!—very wide!—fairer than any in Boston!"

"Doctor!" expostulates Madam Bellamy, who is from Massachusetts.

"Mother, it is fact! They have, too, a new church, which cost twenty thousand pounds. At their shipyard I saw an East Indiaman of eight hundred tons—an immense vessel! The houses are grand, being for the better part painted—even the brick houses."

"What! Paint a brick house!"

"It is their ostentation, mother; their senseless parade of wealth. One sees the latter everywhere. I was to breakfast at General Schuyler's; it was an elaborate affair. They assured me their best people were present; Coster, Livingston, Bleecker, Beekman, Jay were some of the names. A more elegant repast I never ate—all

set as it was with a profusion of massive plate. There were a silver teapot and a silver coffeepot——-”

“Solid silver?”

“Ay! The king’s hall-mark was on them; I looked. And finest linen, too—white as snow! Also cups of gilt; and after the toast, plates of peaches and a musk melon! It was more a feast than a breakfast.”

“Why, it is a tale of profligacy!”

“Their manners, however, do not keep pace with their splendid houses and furnishings. There is no good breeding; they have no conversation, no modesty. They talk loud, fast, and all together. It is a mere theater of din and witless babble. They ask a question; and then, before you can answer, break in with a stream of inane chatter. To be short, I met but one real gentleman———”

“Aaron!”

“Ay, mother; Aaron. I can say nothing good of his religious side; since, for all he is the grandson of the sainted Jonathan Edwards, he is no better than the heathen that rageth. But his manners! What a polished contrast with the boorishness about him! Against that vulgar background he shines out like the sun at noon!”

Young Aaron, beginning to remember his twenty-seven years, objects to the descriptive “young.” He has ever scorned it, as though it were some epithet of infamy. Now he takes open stand against it.

“I am not so young,” says he, to one who mentions him as in the morning of his years—“I am not so young but what I have commanded a brigade, sir, on a field of stricken battle. My rank was that of colonel! You will oblige me by remembering the title.”

In view of the gentleman’s tartness, it will be as well perhaps to hereafter drop the “young”; for no one likes to give offense. Besides, our tart gentleman is married, and a father. Still, “colonel” is but a word of pewter when no war is on. “Aaron” should do better; and escape challenge, too, that irritating “young” being dropped.

As Aaron runs his glance along the front of the town’s affairs, he notes that in commerce, fashion, politics, and one might almost say religion, the situation is dominated of a quartette of septs. There are the Livingstons—numerous, rich. There are the Clintons, of whom Governor Clinton is chief. There are the Jays, led by the Honorable John of that ilk. Most and greatest, there are the Schuylers, in the van of which tribe towers the sour, self-seeking, self-sufficient General Schuyler. Aaron, in the gossip of the coffee houses, hears much of General Schuyler. He hears more of that austere person’s son-in-law, the brilliant Alexander Hamilton.

“I shall be glad to make his acquaintance,” thinks Aaron, when he is told of the latter. “I met him after the battle of Long Island, when in his pale eagerness to escape the English he had left baggage and guns behind. Yes; I shall indeed be glad to see him. That such as he can come to eminence in the town possesses its encouraging side.”

There is a sneer on Aaron’s face as these thoughts run in his mind; those praises of son-in-law Hamilton have vaguely angered his selflove.

Aaron’s opportunity to meet and make the young ex-artilleryman’s acquaintance, is not long in coming. The Tories, whom the war stripped of their property and civil rights, are praying for relief. A conference of the town’s notables has been called; the local great ones are to come together in the long-room of the Fraunces Tavern. Being together, they will consider how far a decent Americanism may unbend toward Tory relief.

Aaron arrives early; for the Fraunces long-room is his favorite lounge. The big apartment has witnessed no changes since a day when poor Peggy Moncrieffe, as the modern Ariadne, wept on her near-by Naxos of Staten Island, while a forgetful Theseus, in that same longroom, tasted his wine unmoved. Aaron is at a corner table with Colonel Troup, when son-in-law Hamilton arrives.

“That is he,” says Colonel Troup, for they have been talking of the gentleman.

Already nosing a rival, Aaron regards the newcomer with a curious black narrowness which has little of liking in it. Son-in-law Hamilton is a short, slim, dapper figure of a man, as short and slim as is Aaron himself. His hair is clubbed into an elaborate cue, and profusely powdered. He wears a blue coat with bright buttons, a white vest, a forest of ruffles, black velvet smalls, white silk stockings, and conventional buckled shoes.

It is not his clothes, but his countenance to which Aaron addresses his most searching glances. The forehead is good and full, and rife of suggestion. The eyes are quick, bright, selfish, unreliable, prone to look one way while the plausible tongue talks another. As for the face generally: fresh, full, sensual, brisk, it is the face of a flatterer and a politician, the face of one who will seek his ends by nearest methods, and never mind if they be muddy. Also, there is much that is lurking and secret about the expression, which recalls the slanderer and backbiter, who will be ever ready to serve himself by lies whispered in the dark.

Son-in-law Hamilton does not see Aaron and Colonel Troup, and goes straight to a group the long length of the room away. Taking a seat, he at once leads the conversation of the circle he has joined, speaking in a loud, confident tone, with the manner of one who regards his own position as impregnable, and his word decisive of whatever question is discussed. The pompous, self-consequence of son-in-law Hamilton arouses the dander of Aaron. Nor is the latter’s wrath the less, when he discovers that General Schuyler’s self-satisfied young relative thinks the suppliant Tories should be listened to, as folk overharshly dealt with.

As Aaron considers son-in-law Hamilton, and decides unfavorably concerning that young gentleman’s bumptiousness and pert forwardness, the company is rapped to order by General Schuyler himself. Lean, rusty, arrogant, supercilious, the general explains that he has been asked to preside. Being established in the chair, he announces in a rasping, dictatorial voice the liberal objects of the coming together. He submits that the Tories have been unjustly treated. It was, he says, but natural they should adhere to King George. The war being over, and King George beaten, he does not believe it the part of either a Christian or a patriot to hold hatred against them. These same Tories are still Americans. Their names are among the highest in the city. Before the Revolution they were one and all of a first respectability, many with pews in Trinity. Now when freedom has won its battle, he feels that the victors should let bygones be bygones, and restore the Tories, in property and station, to a place which they occupied before that pregnant Philadelphia Fourth of July in 1776.

All this and more to similar effect the austere, rusty Schuyler rasps forth. When he closes, a profound silence succeeds; for there is no one who does not know the Schuyler power, or believe that the rasping word of the rusty old general is equal to marring or furthering the fortunes of every soul in the room.

The pause is at last broken by Aaron. Self-possessed, steady, his remarks are brief but pointed. He combats at every corner what the rusty general has been pleased to advance. The Tories were traitors. They were worse than the English. It was they who set the Indians on our borders to torch and tomahawk and scalping knife. They have been most liberally, most mercifully dealt with, when they are permitted to go unhanged. As for restoring their forfeited estates, or permitting them any civil share in a government which they did their best to strangle in its cradle, the thought is preposterous. They may have been “respectable,” as General Schuyler states; if so, the respectability was spurious—a mere hypocritical cover for souls reeking of vileness. They may have had pews in Trinity. There are ones who, wanting pews in Trinity, still hope to make their worldly foothold good, and save their souls at last.

As Aaron takes his seat by Colonel Troup, a murmur of guarded agreement runs through the company. Many are the looks of surprised admiration cast in his young direction. Truly, the newcomer has made a stir.

Not that his stir-making is to go unopposed. No sooner is Aaron in his chair, than son-in-law Hamilton is upon him verbally; even while those approving ones are admiringly buzzing, he begins to talk. His tones are high and patronizing, his manner condescending. He speaks to Aaron direct, and not to the audience. He will do his best, he explains, to be tolerant, for he has heard that Aaron is new to the town. None the less, he must ask that daring person to bear his newness more in mind. He himself, he says, cannot escape the feeling that one who is no better than a stranger, an interloper, might with a nice propriety remain silent on occasions such as this. Son-in-law Hamilton ends by declaring that the position taken by Aaron, on this subject of Tories and what shall be their rights, is un-American. He, himself, has fought for the Revolution; but, now it is ended, he holds that gentlemen of honor and liberality will not be guided by the ugly clamor of partisans, who would make the unending punishment of Tories a virtue and call it patriotism. He fears that Aaron misunderstands the sentiment of those among whom he has pitched his tent, congratulates him on a youth that offers an excuse for the rashness of his expressions, and hopes that he may live to gain a better wisdom. Son-in-law Hamilton does himself proud, and the rusty old general erects his pleased crest, to find himself so handsomely defended.

The rusty general exhibits both surprise and anger, when the rebuked Aaron again signifies a desire to be heard. This time Aaron, following that orator’s example,-talks not to the audience but son-in-law Hamilton himself.

“Our friend,” says Aaron, “reminds me that I am young in years; and I think this the more generous on his part, since I have seen quite as many years as has he himself. He calls attention to the battle-battered share he took in securing the liberties of this country; and, while I hold him better qualified to win laurels as a son-in-law than as a soldier, I concede him the credit he claims. I myself have been a soldier, and while serving as such was so fortunate as to meet our friend. He does not remember the meeting. Nor do I blame him; for it was upon a day when he had forgotten his baggage, forgotten one of his guns, forgotten everything, in truth, save the English behind him, and I should be much too vain if I supposed that, under such forgetful circumstances, he would remember me. As to my newness in the town, and that crippled Americanism wherewith he charges me, I have little to say. I got no one’s consent to come here; I shall ask no one’s permission to stay. Doubtless I would have been more within a fashion had I gone with both questions to the gentleman, or to his celebrated father-in-law, who presides here today. These errors, however, I shall abide by. Also, I shall content myself with an Americanism which, though it possess none of those sunburned, West Indian advantages so strikingly illustrated in the gentleman, may at least congratulate itself upon being two hundred years old.”

Having returned upon the self-sufficient head of son-in-law Hamilton those courtesies which the latter lavished upon him, Aaron proceeds to voice again, but with more vigorous emphasis, the anti-Tory sentiments he has earlier expressed. When he ceases speaking there is no applause, nothing save a dead stillness; for all who have heard feel that a feud has been born—a Burr-Schuyler-Hamilton feud, and are prudently inclined to await its development before pronouncing for either side. The feeling, however, would seem to follow the lead of Aaron; for the resolution smelling of leniency toward Tories is laid upon the table.

CHAPTER X—THAT SEAT IN THE SENATE

WHILE Aaron, frostily contemptuous, but with manners as superfine as his ruffles, is saying those knife-thrust things to son-in-law Hamilton, that latter young gentleman’s face is a study in black and red. His expression is a composite of rage colored of fear. The defiance of Aaron is so full, so frank, that it seems studied. Son-in-law Hamilton is not sure of its purpose, or what intrigue it may hide. Deeply impressed as to his own importance, the thought takes hold on him that Aaron’s attack is parcel of some deliberate design, held by folk who either hate him or envy him, or both, to lure him to the dueling ground and kill him out of the way. He draws a long breath at this, and sweats a little; for life is good and death not at all desired. He makes no effort at retort, but stomachs in silence those words which burn his soul like coals of fire. What is strange, too, for all their burning, he vaguely finds in them some chilling touch as of death. He realizes, as much from the grim fineness of Aaron’s manner as from his raw, unguarded words, that he is ready to carry discussion to the cold verge of the grave.

Son-in-law Hamilton’s nature lacks in that bitter drop, so present in Aaron’s, which teaches folk to die but

never yield. Wherefore, in his heart he now shrinks back, afraid to go forward with a situation grown perilous, albeit he himself provoked it. Saving his credit with ones who look, if they do not speak, their wonder at his mute tameness, he says he will talk with General Schuyler concerning what course he shall pursue. Saying which he gets away from the Fraunces long-room somewhat abruptly, feathers measurably subdued. Aaron lingers but a moment after son-in-law Hamilton departs, and then goes his polished, taciturn way.

The incident is a nine-days' food for gossip; wagers are made of a coming bloody encounter between Aaron and son-in-law Hamilton. Those lose who accept the sanguinary side; the two meet, but the meeting is politely peaceful, albeit, no good friendliness, but only a wider separation is the upcome. The occasion is the work of son-in-law Hamilton, who is presented by Colonel Troup.

"We should know each other better, Colonel Burr," he observes.

Son-in-law Hamilton seems the smiling picture of an affability that of itself is a kind of flattery. Aaron bows, while those affable rays glance from his chill exterior as from an iceberg.

"Doubtless we shall," says he.

Son-in-law Hamilton gets presently down to the serious purpose of his coming. "General Schuyler," he says gravely, for he ever speaks of his father-in-law as though the latter were a demi-god—"General Schuyler would like to meet you; he bids me ask you to come to him."

Colonel Troup is in high excitement. No such honor has been tendered one of Aaron's youth within his memory. Wholly the courtier, he looks to see the honored one eagerly forward to go to General Schuyler—that Jove who not alone controls the local thunderbolts but the local laurels. He is shocked to his courtierlike core, when Aaron maintains his cold reserve.

"Pardon me, sir!" says Aaron. "Say to General Schuyler that his request is impossible. I never call on gentlemen at their suggestion and on their affairs. When I have cause of my own to go to General Schuyler, I shall go. Until then, if there be reason for our meeting, he must come to me."

"You forget General Schuyler's age!" returns son-in-law Hamilton. There is a ring of threat in the tones.

"Sir," responds Aaron stiffly, "I forget nothing. There is an age cant which I shall not tolerate. I desire to be understood as saying, and you may repeat my words to whomsoever possesses an interest, that I shall not in my own conduct consent to a social doctrine which would invest folk, because they have lived sixty years, with a franchise to patronize or, if they choose, insult gentlemen whose years, we will suppose, are fewer than thirty."

"I am sorry you take this view," returns son-in-law Hamilton, copying Aaron's stiffness. "You will not, I fear, find many to support you in it."

"I am not looking for support, sir," observes Aaron, pointing the remark with one of those black ophidian stares. "I do you also the courtesy to assume that you intend no criticism of myself by your remark."

There is an inflection as though a question is put. Son-in-law Hamilton so far submits to the inflection as to explain. He intends only to say that General Schuyler's place in the community is of such high and honorable sort as to make his request to call upon him a mark of favor. As to criticism: Why, then, he criticised no gentleman.

There is much profound bowing, and the meeting ends; Colonel Troup, a trifle aghast, retiring with son-in-law Hamilton, whose arm he takes.

"There could be no agreement with that young man," mutters Aaron, looking after the retreating Hamilton, "save on a basis of submission to his leadership. I'll be chief or nothing."

Aaron settles himself industriously to the practice of law. In the courts, as in everything else, he is merciless. Lucid, indefatigable, convincing, he asks no quarter, gives none. His business expands; clients crowd about him; prosperity descends in a shower of gold.

Often he runs counter to son-in-law Hamilton—himself actively in the law—before judge and jury. When they are thus opposed, each is the other's match for a careful but wintry courtesy. For all his courtesy, however, Aaron never fails to defeat son-in-law Hamilton in whatever litigation they are about. His uninterrupted victories over son-in-law Hamilton are an added reason for the latter's jealous hatred. He and his rusty father-in-law become doubly Aaron's foes, and grasp at every chance to do him harm.

And yet, that antagonism has its compensations. It brings Aaron into favor with Governor Clinton; it finds him allies among the Livingstons. The latter powerful family invite him into their politics. He thanks them, but declines. He is for the law; hungry to make money, he sees no profit, but only loss in politics.

In his gold-getting, Aaron is marvelously successful; and, as he rolls up riches, he buys land. Thus one proud day he becomes master of Richmond Hill, with its lawn sweeping down to the Hudson—Richmond Hill, where he played slave of the quill to Washington, and suffered in his vanity from the big general's loftily abstracted pose.

Master of a mansion, Aaron fills his libraries with books and his cellars with wine. Thus he is never without good company, reading the one and sipping the other. The faded Theodosia presides over his house; and, because of her years or his lack of them, her manner toward him trenches upon the maternal.

The household is a hive of happiness. Aaron, who takes the pedagogue instinct from sire and grandsire, puts in his leisure drilling the small Prévost boys in their lessons. He will have them talking Latin and reading Greek like little priests, before he is done with them. As for baby Theodosia, she reigns the chubby queen of all their hearts; it is to her credit not theirs that she isn't hopelessly spoiled.

In his wine and his reading, Aaron's tastes take opposite directions. The books he likes are heavy, while his best-liked wines are light. He reads Jeremy Bentham; also he finds comfort in William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft.

He adorns his study with a portrait of the lady; which feat in decoration furnishes the prudish a pang.

These book radicalisms, and his weaknesses for alarming doctrines, social and political, do not help Aaron's standing with respectable hypocrites, of whom there are vast numbers about, and who in its fashion and

commerce and politics give the town a tone. These whited sepulchers of society purse discreet yet condemnatory lips when Aaron's name is mentioned, and speak of him as favoring "Benthamism" and "Godwinism." Our dullard pharisee folk know no more of "Benthamism" and "Godwinism" in their definitions, than of plant life in the planet Mars; but their manner is the manner of ones who speak of evils tenfold worse than murder. Aaron pays no heed; neither does he fret over the innuendoes of these hypocritical ones. He was born full of contempt for men's opinions, and has fostered and flattered it into a kind of cold passion. Occupied with the loved ones at Richmond Hill, careless to the point of blind and deaf of all outside, he seeks only to win lawsuits and pile up gold. And never once does his glance rove officeward.

This anti-office coolness is all on Aaron's side. He does not pursue office; but now and again office pursues him. Twice he goes to the legislature; next, Governor Clinton asks him to become attorney general. As attorney general he makes one of a commission, Governor Clinton at its head, which sells five and a half million acres of the State's public land for $1,030,000. The highest price received is three shillings an acre; the purchasers number six. The big sale is to Alexander McComb, who is given a deed for three million six hundred thousand acres at eight-pence an acre. The public howls over these surprising transactions in real estate. The popular anger, however, is leveled at Governor Clinton, he being a sort of Cæsar. Aaron, who dwells more in the background, escapes unscathed.

While these several matters go forward, the nation adopts a constitution. Then it elects Washington President, and sets up government shop in New York. Aaron's part in these mighty doings is the quiet part. He does not think much of the Constitution, but accepts it; he thinks less of Washington, but accepts him, too. It is within the rim of the possible that son-in-law Hamilton, invited into Washington's Cabinet as Secretary of the Treasury, helps the administration to a lowest place in Aaron's esteem; for Aaron is a priceless hater, and that feud is in no degree relaxed.

When the national government is born, the rusty General Schuyler and Rufus King are chosen senators for New York. The rusty old general, in the two-handed lottery which ensues, draws the shorter term. This in no wise weighs upon him; what difference should it make? At the close of that short term, he will be reëlected for a full term of six years. To assume otherwise would be preposterous; the rusty old general feels no such short-term uneasiness.

Washington has two weaknesses: he loves flattery, and he is a bad judge of men. Son-inlaw Hamilton, because he flatters best, sits highest in the Washington esteem. He is the right arm of the big Virginian's administration; also he is quite as confident, as the rusty General Schuyler, of that latter personage's reelection. Indeed, if he could be prevailed upon to answer queries so foolish, he would say that, of all sure future things, the Senate reelection of the rusty general is surest. Not a cloud of doubt is seen in the skies.

And yet there lives one who, from his place as attorney general, is watching that Senate seat as a tiger watches its prey. Noiselessly, yet none the less powerfully, Aaron gathers himself for the spring. Both his pride and his hate are involved in what he is about. To be a senator is to wear a proudest title in the land. In this instance, to be a senator means a staggering blow to that Schuyler-Hamilton tribe whose foe he is. More; it opens a pathway to the injury of Washington. Aaron would be even for what long ago war slights the big general put upon him, slights which he neither forgets nor forgives. He smiles a pale, thin-lipped smile as he pictures with the eye of rancorous imagination the look which will spread across the face of Washington, when he hears of the rusty Schuyler's overthrow, and him who brought that overthrow about. The smile is quick to die, however, since he who would strip his toga from the rusty Schuyler must not sit down to dreams and castle building.

Aaron goes silently yet sedulously about his plans. In their execution he foresees that many will be hurt; none the less the stubborn outlook does not daunt him. One cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs.

In his coming war with the rusty Schuyler, Aaron feels the need of two things: he must have an issue, and he must have allies. It is of vital importance to bring Governor Clinton to the shoulder of his ambitions. He looks that potentate over with a calculating eye, making a mental catalogue of his approachable points.

The old governor is of Irish blood and Irish temper. His ancestors were not the quietest folk in Galway. Being of gunpowder stock, he dearly loves a foe, and will no more forget an injury than a favor. Aaron shows the old governor that, in his late election, the Schuyler-Hamilton interest was slyly behind his opponent Judge Yates, and nearly brought home victory for the latter.

"You owe General Schuyler," he says, "no help at this pinch. Still less are you in debt to Hamilton. It was the latter who put Yates in the field."

"And yet," protests the old governor, inclined to anger, but not quite convinced—"and yet I saw no signs of either Schuyler or his son-in-law in the business."

"Sir, that is their duplicity. One so open as yourself would be the last to discover such intrigues. The young fox Hamilton managed the affair; in doing so, he moved only in the dark, walked in all the running water he could find."

What Aaron says is true; in the finish he gives proof of it to the old governor. At this the latter's Irish blood begins to gather heat.

"It is as you tell me!" he cries at last; "I can see it now! That West Indian runagate Hamilton was the bug under the Yates chip!"

"And you must not forget, sir, that for every scheme of politics 'Schuyler' and 'Hamilton' are interchangeable."

"You are right! When one pulls the other pushes. They are my enemies, and I shall not be less than theirs."

The governor asks Aaron what candidate they shall pit against the rusty Schuyler. Aaron has thus far said nothing of himself in any toga connection, fearing that the old governor may regard his thirty-six years as lacking proper gravity. Being urged to suggest a name, he waxes discreet. He believes, he says, that the Livingstons can be prevailed upon to come out against the rusty Schuyler, if properly approached. Such approach might be more gracefully made if no candidate is pitched upon at this time.

"From your place, sir, as governor," observes the skillful Aaron, "you could not of course condescend to go

in person to the Livingstons. My position, however, is not so high nor my years so many as are yours; I need not scruple to take up the matter with them. As to a candidate, I can go to them more easily if we leave the question open. I could tell the Livingstons that you would like a suggestion from them on that point. It would flatter their pride."

The old governor is pleased to regard with favor the reasoning of Aaron. He remarks, too, that with him the candidate is not important. The main thought is to defeat the rusty Schuyler, who, with son-in-law Hamilton, so aforetime played the hypocrite, and pulled treacherous wires against him, in the hope of compassing his defeat. He declares himself quite satisfied to let the Livingstons select what fortunate one is to be the senate successor of the rusty Schuyler. He urges Aaron to wait on the Livingstons without delay, and discover their feeling.

Aaron confers with the Livingstons, and shows them many things. Mostly he shows them that, should he himself be chosen senator, it will necessitate his resignation as attorney general. Also, he makes it appear that, if the old governor be properly approached, he will name Morgan Lewis to fill the vacancy. The Livingston eye glistens; the mother of Morgan Lewis is a Livingston, and the office of attorney general should match the gentleman's fortunes nicely. Besides, there are several ways wherein an attorney general might be of much Livingston use. No, the Livingstons do not say these things. They say instead that none is more nobly equipped for the rôle of senator than Aaron. Finally, it is the Livingstons who go back to the old governor. Nor do they find it difficult to convince him that Aaron is the one surest of defeating the rusty Schuyler.

"Colonel Burr," say the Livingstons, "has no record, which is another way of saying that he has no enemies. We deem this most important; it will lessen the effort required to bring about him a majority of the legislature."

The old governor, as Aaron feared, is inclined to shy at the not too many years of our ambitious one; but after a bit Aaron, as a notion, begins to grow upon him.

"He has brains, sir," observes the old governor thoughtfully—"he has brains; and that is of more consequence than mere years. He has double the intelligence of Schuyler, although he may not count half his age. I call that to his credit, sir." The chief of the clan-Livingston shares the Clinton view.

And now takes place a competition in encomium. Between the chief of the clan-Livingston, and the old governor, so many excellences are ascribed to Aaron that, did he own but the half, he might call himself a model for mankind. As for Morgan Lewis, who is a Livingston, the old governor sees in him almost as many virtues as he perceives in Aaron. He gives the chief of the clan-Livingston hand and word that, when Aaron steps out of the attorney generalship, Morgan Lewis shall step in.

Having drawn to his support the two most powerful influences of the State, Aaron makes search for an issue. He looks into the mouth of the public, and there it is. Politicians do not make issues, albeit poets have sung otherwise. Indeed, issues are so much like the poets themselves that they are born, not made. Every age has its issue; from it, as from clay, the politicians mold the bricks wherewith they build themselves into office. The issue is the question which the people ask; it is to be found only in the popular mouth. That is where Aaron looks for it, and his quest is rewarded.

The issue, so much demanded of Aaron's destinies, is one of those big-little questions which now and then arise to agitate the souls of folk, and demonstrate the greatness of the small. There are twenty-eight members in the National Senate; and, since it is the first Senate and has had no predecessor, there exist no precedents for it to guide by. Also those twenty-eight senators are puffballs of vanity.

On the first day of their first coming together they prove the purblind sort of their conceit, by shutting their doors in the public's face. They say they will hold their sessions in secret. The public takes this action in dudgeon, and begins filing its teeth.

Puffiest among those senate puffballs is the rusty Schuyler. As narrow as he is arrogant, as dull as vain, his contempt for the herd was never a secret. As a senator, he declares himself the guardian, not the servant, of a people too weakly foolish for the safe transaction of their own affairs.

It is against this self-sufficient attitude of the rusty Schuyler touching locked senate doors that Aaron wages war. He urges that, in a republic, but two keys go with government; one is to the treasury, the other to the jail. He argues that not even a senate will lock a door unless it be either ashamed or afraid of what it is about.

"Of what is our Senate afraid?" he asks.

"Of what is it ashamed? I cannot answer these questions; the people cannot answer them. I recommend that those who are interested ask General Schuyler."

The public puts the questions to the rusty Schuyler. Not receiving an answer, the public carries the questions to the legislature, where the Clinton and Livingston influences come sharply to the popular support.

"Shall the Senate lock its door?"

The Clintons say No; the Livingstons say No; the people say No. Under such overbearing circumstances, the legislature feels driven to say No; and, as a best method of saying it, elects to the Senate Aaron, who is a "door-opener," over the rusty Schuyler, who is a "door-closer," by a majority of thirteen. It is no longer "Aaron Burr," no longer "Colonel Burr," it is "Senator Burr." The news heaps the full weight of ten years on the rusty Schuyler. As for son-in-law Hamilton, the blasting word of it withers and makes sick his heart.

CHAPTER XI—THE STATESMAN FROM NEW

YORK

THE shop of government has been moved to Philadelphia. In the brief space between the overthrow of the rusty Schuyler by Aaron, and the latter taking his seat, the great ones talk of nothing but that overthrow. Washington vaguely and Jefferson clearly read in the victory of Aaron the beginning of a new order. It is extravagantly an hour of classes and masses; and the most dull does not fail to make out in the Senate unseating of the rusty but aristocratic Schuyler a triumphant clutch at power by the masses.

Something of the sort crops up in conversation about the President's dinner table. The occasion is informal; save for Vice-President Adams, those present are of the Cabinet. Washington himself brings up the subject.

"It is the strangest news!" says he—"this word of the Senate success of Colonel Burr."

Then, appealing to Hamilton: "Of what could your folk of New York have been thinking? General Schuyler is a gentleman of fortune, the head of one of the oldest families! This Colonel Burr is a young man of small fortune, and no family at all."

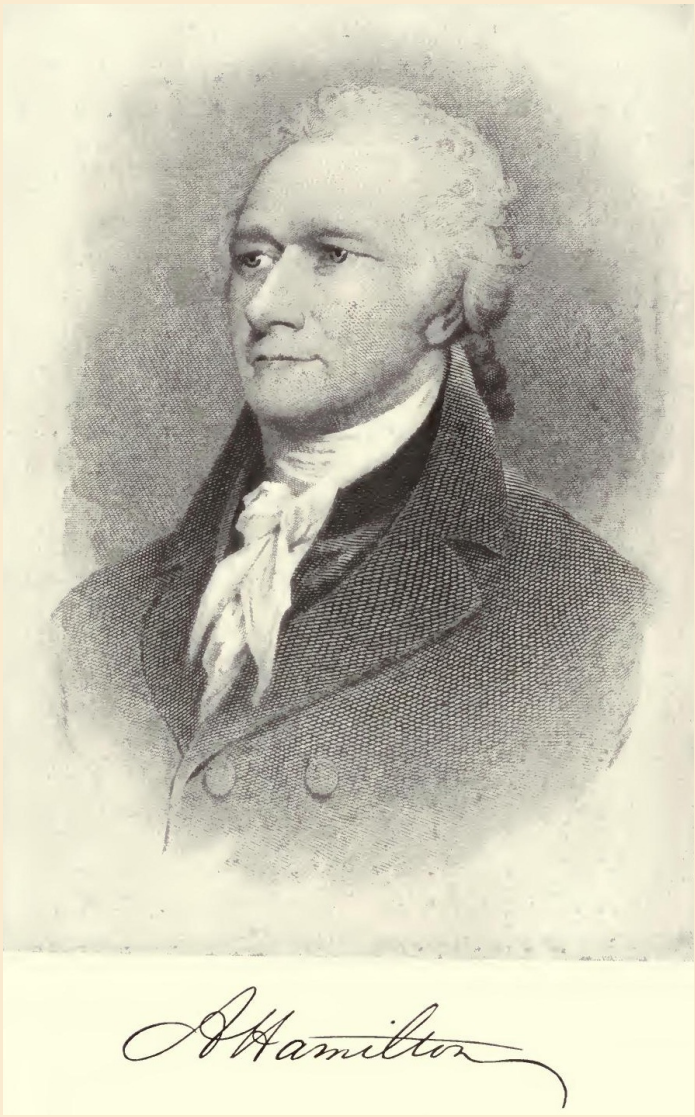
"Sir," breaks in Adams with pompous impetuosity, "you go wide. Colonel Burr is of the best blood of New England. His grandsire was Jonathan Edwards; on his father's side the strain is as high. You would look long, sir, before you discovered one who has a better pedigree."

"Whatever may be the gentleman's pedigree," retorts Hamilton splenetically, "you will at least confess it to be only a New England pedigree."

"Only a New England pedigree!" exclaims Adams, in indignant wonder. "Why, sir, when you say 'The best pedigree in New England,' you have spoken of the best pedigree in the world!"

"Waiving that," returns Hamilton, "I may at least assure you, sir, that in New York your best New England pedigree does not invoke the reverence which you seem to pay it. No, sir; the success of Colonel Burr was the result of no pedigree. No one cared whether he were the grandson of Jonathan Edwards or Tom o' Bedlam. Colonel Burr won by lies and trickery; by the same methods through which a thief might win possession of your horse. Stripping the subject of every polite veneer of phrase, the fellow stole his victory." At this harshness Adams looks horrified, while Jefferson, who has listened with interest, shrugs his wide shoulders.

Washington appears wondrously impressed. Strong, honest, slow, he is in no wise keen at reading men. Hamilton—quick, supple, subservient, a brilliant flatterer—has complete possession of him. He admires Hamilton, rejoices in him in a large, bland manner of patronage.



The pair, in their mutual attitudes, are not unlike a huge mastiff and some small vivacious, spiteful, half-bred terrier that makes himself the mastiff's satellite. Terrier Hamilton—brisk, busy, overbearing, not always honest—rushes hither and yon, insulting one man, trespassing on another. Let the insulted one but threaten or the injured one pursue, at once Terrier Hamilton takes skulking refuge behind Mastiff Washington. And the latter never fails Terrier Hamilton. Blinded by his overweening partiality, a partiality that has no reason beyond his own innate love of flattery, Washington ever saves Hamilton blameless, whatever may have been his evil deeds.

Washington constitutes Hamilton's stock in national trade. In New York, Hamilton is the rusty Schuyler's son-in-law—heir to his riches, lieutenant of his name. In the nation at large, however, Hamilton traffics on that confident nearness to Washington, and his known ability to pull or haul or lead the big Virginian any way he will. To have a full-blown President to be your hand gun is no mean equipment, and Hamilton, be sure, makes the fullest, if not the most honest or honorable, use of it.

"Now I do not think it was either the noble New England blood of Colonel Burr, or his skill as a politician, that defeated General Schuyler."

The voice—while not without a note of jeering—is bell-like and deep, the thoughtful, well-assured voice of Jefferson. Washington glances at his angular, sandy-haired Secretary of State.

"What was it, then," he asks.

"I will tell you my thought," replies Jefferson. "General Schuyler was beaten by that very fortune, added to that very headship of a foremost family, which you hold should have been unanswerable for his election. The people are reaching out, sir, for the republican rule that is their right, and which they conquered from England. You know, as well as I, what followed the peace of Paris in this country. It was not democracy, but aristocracy. The government has been taken under the self-sufficient wing of a handful of families, that, having great property rights, hold themselves forth as heaven-anointed rulers of the land. The people are becoming aroused to both their powers and their rights. In the going of General Schuyler and the coming of Colonel Burr, I find nothing worse than a gratifying notice that American mankind intends to have a voice in its own government."

"You appear pleased, sir," observes Hamilton bitterly.

"Pleased is but a poor word. It no more than faintly expresses the satisfaction I feel."

"You amaze me!" interrupts Adams, as much the aristocrat as either Washington or Hamilton, but of a different tribe. "Do I understand, sir, that you will welcome the rule of the mob?"

"The 'mob,'" retorts Jefferson, "can be trusted to guard its own liberty.. The mob won that liberty, sir! Who, then, should be better prepared to stand sentinel over it? Not a handful of rich snobs, surely, who, in the arrogant idleness which their money permits, play at caste and call themselves an American peerage."

"Government by the mob!" gasps Adams, who, in the narrowness of his New England vanity—honest man!—has passed his life on a self-erected pedestal. "Government by the mob!"

"And why not, sir?" demands Jefferson sharply. "It is the mob's government. Who shall contradict the mob's right to control its own? Have we but shuffled off one royalty to shuffle on another?"

Adams, excellent pig-head, can say no more; besides, he fears the quick-tongued Secretary of State. Hamilton, too, is heedful to avoid Jefferson, and, following that democrat's declarations anent mob right and mob rule, glances with questioning eye at Washington, as though imploring him to come to the rescue. With this the big President begins to unlimber complacently.

"Government, my dear Jefferson," he says, wheeling himself like some great gun into argumentative position, "may be discussed in the abstract, but must be administered in the concrete. I think a best picture of government is a shepherd with his flock of sheep. He finds them a safety and a better pasturage than they could find for themselves. He is necessary to the sheep, as the sheep are necessary to him. He can be trusted; since his interest is the interest of the flock."

Jefferson grins a hard, angular grin, in which there is wisdom, patience, courage, but not one gleam of humor. "I cannot," says he, "accept your simile of sheep and shepherd as a happy one. The people of this country are far from being addle-pated sheep. Nor do I find our self-selected shepherds"—here he lets his glance rove cynically to Adams and Hamilton—"such profound scientists of civil rule. Your shepherd is a dictator. This republic—if it is a republic—might more justly be likened to a company of merchants, equal in interests, who appoint agents, but retain among themselves the control."

"And yet," observes Hamilton, who can think of nothing but Aaron and his own hatred for that new senator, "the present question is one, not of republics or dictatorships, but of Colonel Burr. I know him; know him well. You will find him a crooked gun."

"It is ten years since I saw him," observes Washington. "I did not like him; but that was because of a forward impertinence which ill became his years. Besides, I thought him egotistical, selfish, of no high aims. That, as I say, was ten years ago; he may have changed vastly for the better."

"There has been no bettering change, sir," returns Hamilton. His manner is purring, insinuating, the courtier manner, and conveys the impression of one who seeks only to protect Washington from betrayal by his own goodness of heart. "Sir, he is more egotistical, more selfish, than when you parted from him. I think it my duty, since the gentleman will have his place in government, to speak plainly. I hold Colonel Burr to be a veriest firebrand of disorder. None knows better than I the peril of this man. Bold at once and bad, there is nothing too high for his ambition to fly at, nothing too low for his intrigue to embrace. He is both Jack Cade and Cromwell. Like the one, he possesses a sinister attraction for the vulgar herd; like the other, he would not hesitate to lead the herd against government itself, in furtherance of his vile projects."

Neither Adams nor Jefferson goes wholly unaffected by these malignancies; while Washington, whose credulity is measureless when Hamilton speaks, drinks them in like spring water.

"Well," observes the cautious Jefferson, as closing the discussion, "the gentleman himself will soon be among us, and fairness, if not prudence, suggests that we defer judgment on him until experience has given us a basis for it."

“You will find,” says Hamilton, “that he is, as I tell you, but a crooked gun.”

Aaron takes his oath as senator, and sinks into a seat among his reverend fellows. As he does so he cannot repress a cynical glance about him—cynical, since he sees more to despise than respect. It is the opening day of the session. Washington as President, severe, of an implacable dignity, appears and reads a solemn address. Later, according to custom, both Senate and House send delegations to wait upon Washington, and read solemn addresses to him.

His colleagues pitch upon Aaron to prepare the address for the Senate, since he is supposed to have a genius for phrases. The precious document in his pocket, Vice-President Adams on his arm, Aaron leads the Senate delegation to the President’s house. They find the big Virginian awaiting them in the long dining room, which apartment has been transformed into an audience chamber by the simple expedient of carrying out the table and shoving back the chairs.

Washington stands near the great fireplace. At his elbow and a step to the rear, a look of lackey fawning on his face, whispering, beaming, blandishing, basking, is Hamilton. Utterly the sycophant, wholly the politician, he holds onto Washington by those before-mentioned tendrils of flattery, and finds in him a trellis, whereon to climb and clamber and blossom, wanting which he would fall groveling to the ground. The big Virginian—and that is the worst of it—is as much led by him as any blind man by his dog.

Washington has changed as a figure since he and Aaron, on that far-off day, disagreed touching leaves of absence without pay. Instead of rusty blue and buff, frayed and stained of weather, he is clad in a suit of superb black velvet, with black silk stockings and silver buckles. His hair, white as snow with powder, is gathered behind in a silken bag. In one of his large hands, made larger by yellow gloves, he holds a cocked hat—brave with gold braid, cockade, and plume. A huge sword, with polished steel hilt and white scabbard, dangles by his side. It is in this notable uniform our President receives the Senate delegation, Aaron and Vice-President Adams at the head, as it gathers in a formal half-circle about him.

Being thus happily disposed, Adams in a raucous, pragmatic voice reads Aaron’s address. It is quite as hollow and pointless and vacant of purpose as was Washington’s. Its delivery, however, is loftily heavy, since the mummery is held a most important element of what tinsel-isms make up the etiquette of our American court. Save that the audience chamber is less sumptuous, the ceremony might pass for King George receiving his ministers, instead of President George receiving a delegation from the Senate.

No one is more disagreeably aroused by this paltry imitation of royalty than Aaron. Some glint of his contempt must show in his eyes; for Hamilton, eager to make the conqueror of the rusty Schuyler as offensive to Washington as he may, is swift to draw him out.

“Welcome to the Capitol, Senator Burr!” he exclaims, when Adams has finished. “This, I believe, is your earliest appearance here. I doubt not you find the opening of our Congress exceedingly impressive.”

Since Aaron came into the presence of Washington, he has arrived at divers decisions which will have effect in the country’s story, before the curtain of time descends and the play of government is played out. His first feeling is one of angry repugnance toward Washington himself. He liked him little as a general; he likes him less as a president.

“I shall be no friend to this man,” thinks he, “nor he to me.”

Aaron tries to believe that his resentment is due to Washington’s all but royal state. In his heart, however, he knows that his wrath is personal. He reconsiders that discouraging royalty, and puts his feeling upon more probable grounds.

“I distaste him,” he decides, “because he meets no man on level terms. He places himself on a plane by himself. He looks down to everybody; everybody must look up to him. He is incapable of friendship, and will either be guardian or jailer to mankind. He told Putnam I was vain, conceited. Was there ever such blind vanity as his own? No; he will be no man’s friend—this self-discovered demigod! He does not desire friends. What he hungers for is adulation, incense. He prefers none about him save knee-crooking sycophants—like this smirking parasitish Hamilton.”

Aaron, while the pompous Adams thunders forth that empty address, resolves to hold himself aloof from Washington and all who belt him round. Being in this high mood, he welcomes the opportunity which Hamilton’s remark affords him, to publicly notify those present of his position.

“It will be as well,” he ruminates, “to post, not alone these good people of Cabinet and Senate, but the royal Washington himself. I shall let them, and let him, know that I am not to be a follower of this republican king of ours.”

“Yes,” repeats Hamilton, with a side glance at Washington, who for the moment is talking in a courtly way with Adams, “yes; you doubtless find the opening ceremonies exceedingly impressive. Most newcomers do. However, it will wear down, sir; the feeling will wear down!” Hamilton throws off this last with an ineffable air of experience and elevation.

“Sir,” returns Aaron, preserving a thin shimmer of politeness, “sir, by these ceremonies, through which we have romped so deeply to your gratification, I confess I have been quite as much bored as impressed. There is something cheap, something antic and senseless to it all—as though we were sylvan apes! What are these wondrous ceremonies? Why then, the President ‘addresses> the Senate, the Senate ‘addresses’ the President; neither says anything, neither means anything, and the whole exchange comes to be no more than just an empty barter of bad English.” This last, in view of the fact that Aaron himself is the architect of the address of the Senate, sounds liberal, and not at all conceited. He goes on: “I must say, sir, that my little dip into government, confined as it has been to these marvelous ceremonies, leaves me with a poorer opinion of my country than I brought here. As for the ceremonies themselves, I should call them now about as edifying as the banging and the booming of a brace of Chinese gongs.”

Washington’s brow is red, his eye cold, as he bows a formal leave to Aaron when he departs with the others. Plainly, the views of the young successor to the rusty Schuyler, concerning addresses of ceremony, have not been lost upon him.

“I think,” mutters Aaron, icily complacent—“I think I pricked him.”

CHAPTER XII—IDLENESS AND BLACK RESOLVES

AARON finds a Senate existence inexpressibly dull. He writes his Theodosia: “There is nothing to do here. Everybody is idle; and, so far as I see, the one occupation of a senator is to lie sunning himself in his own effulgence. My colleague, Rufus King, and others I might name, succeed in that way in passing their days very pleasantly. For myself, not having their sublime imagination, and being perhaps better acquainted with my own measure, I find this sitting in the sunshine of self a failure.”

Mindful of his issue, Aaron offers a resolution throwing open the Senate doors. The Senate, whose notion of greatness is a notion of exclusion, votes it down. Aaron warns his puffball brothers of the toga:

“Be assured,” says he, “you fool no one by such trumpery tricks as this key-turning. You succeed only in bringing republican institutions into contempt, and getting yourselves laughed at where you are not condemned.”

Aaron reintroduces his open-door resolution; in the end he passes it. Galleries are thrown up in the chamber, and all who will may watch the Senate as it proceeds upon the transaction of its dignified destinies. At this but few come; whereupon the Senate feels abashed. It is not, it discovers, the thrilling spectacle its puffball fancy painted.

Carked of the weariness of doing nothing, Aaron bursts forth with an idea. He will write a history of the War of the Revolution. He begins digging among the papers of the State department, tossing the archives of his country hither and yon, on the tireless horns of his industry.

Hamilton creeps with the alarming tale to Washington. “He speaks of writing a history, sir,” says sycophant Hamilton. “That is mere subterfuge; he intends a libel against yourself.”

Washington brings his thin lips together in a tight, straight line, while his heavy forehead gathers to a half frown.

“How, sir,” he asks, after a pause, “could he libel me? I am conscious of nothing in my past which would warrant such a thought.”

“There is not, sir, a fact of your career that would not, if mentioned, make for your glory.” Hamilton deprecates with delicately outspread hands as he says this. “That, however, would not deter this Burr, who is Satanic in his mendacities. Believe me, sir, he has the power of making fiction look more like truth than truth itself. And there is another thought: Suppose he were to assail you with some trumped-up story. You could not come down from your high place to contradict him; it would detract from you, stain your dignity. That is the penalty, sir”—this with a sigh of unspeakable adulation—“which men of your utter eminence have to pay. Such as you are at the mercy of every gutter-bred vilifier; whatever his charges, you cannot open your mouth.”

Aaron hears nothing of this. His first guess of it comes when he is told by a State department underling that he will no longer be allowed to inspect and make copies of the papers.

Without wasting words on the underling, Aaron walks in upon Jefferson. That secretary receives him courteously, but not warmly.

“How, sir,” begins Aaron, a wicked light in his eye—“how, sir, am I to understand this? Is it by your order that the files of the department are withheld from me?”

“It is not, sir,” returns Jefferson, coldly frank. “My own theories of a citizen and his rights would open every public paper to the inspection of the meanest. I do not understand government by secrecy.”

“By whose order then am I refused?”

“By order of the President.”

Aaron ruminates the situation. At last he speaks out: “I must yield,” he says, “while realizing the injustice done me. Still I shall not soon forget the incident. You say it is the order of Washington; you are mistaken, sir. It is not the lion but his jackal that has put this affront upon me.”

Idle in the Senate, precluded from collecting the materials for that projected history, Aaron discovers little to employ himself about in Philadelphia. Not that he falls into stagnation; for his business of the law, and his speculations in land take him often to New York. His trusted Theodosia is his manager of business, and when he cannot go to New York she meets him half way in Trenton.

Aside from his concerns of law and land, Aaron devotes a deal of thought to little Theodosia—child of his soul’s heart! In his pride, he hurries her into Horace and Terence at the age of ten; and later sends her voyaging to Troy with Homer, and all over the world with Herodotus. Nor is this the whole tale of baby Theodosia’s evil fortunes. She is taught French, music, drawing, dancing, and whatever else may convey a glory and a gloss. Love-led, pride-blinded, Aaron takes up the rôle of father in its most awful form.

“Believe me, my dear,” he says to Theodosia mere, who pleads for an educational leniency—“believe me, I shall prove in our darling that women have souls, a psychic fact which high ones have been heard to dispute.”

At the age of twelve, the book-burdened little Theodosia translates the Constitution into French at Aaron’s request; at sixteen, she finds celebration as the most learned of her sex since Voltaire’s Emilie. Theodosia mere, however, is spared the spectacle of her baby’s harrowing erudition, for in the middle of Aaron’s term as senator death carries her away.

With that loss, Aaron is more and more drawn to baby Theodosia; she becomes his earth, his heaven, and stands for all his tenderest hopes. While she is yet a child, he makes her the head of Richmond Hill, and gives a dinner of state, over which she presides, to the limping Talleyrand, and Volney with his “Ruins of Empire.” For all her precocities, and that hothouse bookishness which should have spoiled her, baby Theodosia blossoms roundly into womanhood—beautiful as brilliant.

While Aaron finds little or nothing of public sort to engage him, he does not permit this idleness to shake his hold of politics. Angry with the royalties of Washington, he drifts into near if not intimate relations with the arch-democrat Jefferson. Aaron and the loose-framed secretary are often together; and yet never on terms of confidence or even liking. They are in each other’s society because they go politically the same road. Fellow wayfarers of politics, with “Democracy” their common destination, they are fairly compelled into one another’s company. But there grows up no spirit of comradeship, no mutual sentiment of admiration and trust.

Aaron’s feelings toward Jefferson, and the sources of them, find setting forth in a conversation which he holds with his new disciple, Senator Andrew Jackson, who has come on from his wilderness home by the Cumberland.

“It is not that I like Jefferson,” he explains, “but that I dislike Washington and Hamilton. Jefferson will make a splendid tool to destroy the others with; I mean to use him as the instrument of my vengeance.”

Jefferson, when speaking of Aaron to the wooden Adams, is neither so full nor so frank. The Bay State publicist has again made mention of that impressive ancestry which he thinks is Aaron’s best claim to public as well as private consideration.

“You may see evidence of his pure blood,” concludes the wooden one, “in his perfect, nay, matchless politeness.”

| “He is matchlessly polite, as you say,” assents Jefferson; “and yet I cannot fight down the fear that his politeness has lies in it.”

The days drift by, and Minister Gouverneur Morris is recalled from Paris. Washington makes it known to the Senate that he will adopt any name it suggests for the vacancy. The Senate decides upon Aaron; a committee goes with that honorable suggestion to the President.

Washington hears the committee with cloudy surprise. He is silent for a moment; then he says:

“Gentlemen, your proposal of Senator Burr has taken me unawares. I must crave space for consideration; oblige me by returning in an hour.”

The senators who constitute the committee retire, and Washington seeks his jackal Hamilton.

“Appoint Colonel Burr to France!” exclaims Hamilton. “Sir, it would shock the best sentiment of the country! The man is an atheist, as immoral as irreligious. If you will permit me to say so, sir, I should give the Senate a point-blank refusal.”

“But my promise!” says Washington.

“Sir, I should break a dozen such promises, before I consented to sacrifice the public name, by sending Colonel Burr to France. However, that is not required. You told the Senate that you would adopt its suggestion; you have now only to ask it to make a second suggestion.”

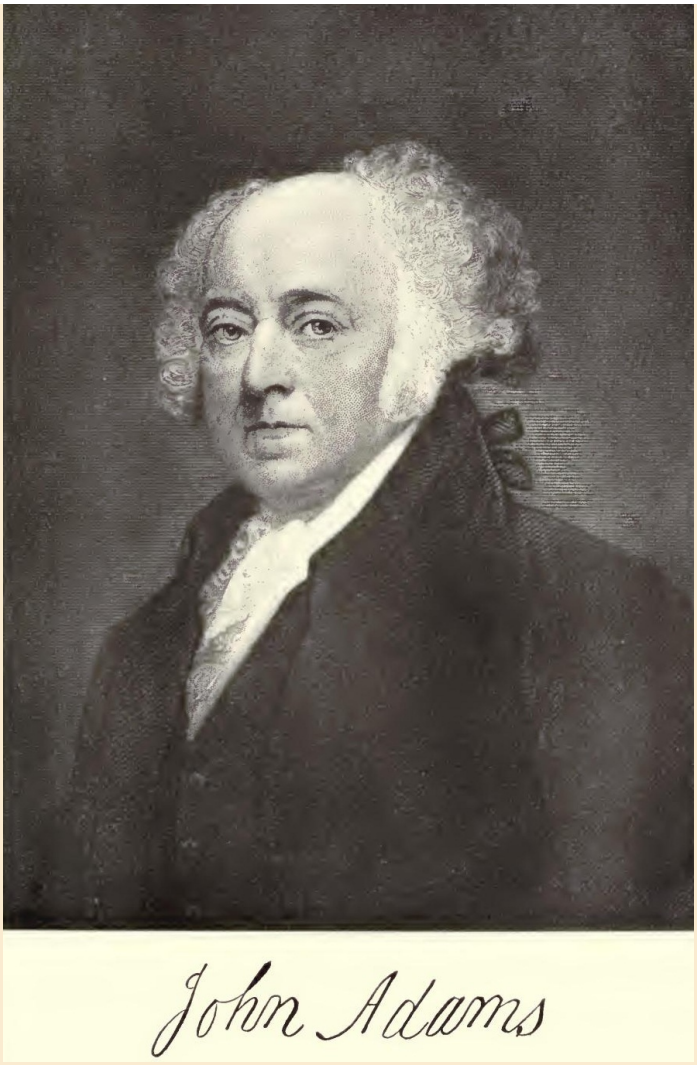
“The thought is of value,” responds Washington, clearing. “I am free to say, I should not relish turning my back on my word.”

The committee returns, and is requested to give the Senate the “President’s compliments,” and say that he will be pleased should that honorable body submit another name. Washington is studious to avoid any least of comment on the nomination of Aaron.

The committee is presently in Washington’s presence for the third time, with the news that the Senate has no name other than Aaron’s for the French mission.

“Then, gentlemen,” exclaims Washington, his hot temper getting the reins, “please report to the Senate that I refuse. I shall send no one to France in whom I have not confidence; and I do not trust Senator Burr.”

“What blockheads!” comments Aaron, when he hears. “They will one day wish they had gotten rid of me, though at the price of forty missions.”



The wooden Adams is elected President to succeed Washington. Aaron's colleague, Rufus King, offers a resolution of compliment and thanks to the retiring one, extolling his presidential honesty and patriotic breadth. A cold hush falls upon the Senate, when Aaron takes the floor on the resolution.

Aaron's remarks are curt, and to the barbed point. He cannot, he says, bring himself to regard Washington's rule as either patriotic or broad. That President throughout has been subservient to England, who was our tyrant, is our foe. Equally he has been inimical to France, who was our ally, is our friend. More; he has subverted the republic and made of it a monarchy with himself as king, wanting only in those unimportant embellishments of scepter, throne, and crown. He, Aaron, seeking to protest against these almost treasons, shall vote against the resolution.

The Senate sits aghast. Aaron's respectable colleague, Rufus King, cannot believe his Tory ears. At last he totters to his shocked feet.

"I am amazed at the action of my colleague!" he exclaims. "I——"

Before he can go further, Aaron is up with an interruption. "It is my duty," says Aaron, "to warn the senior senator from New York that he must not permit his amazement at my action to get beyond his control. I do not like to consider the probable consequences, should that amazement become a tax upon my patience; and even he, I think, will concede the impropriety, to give it no sterner word, of allowing it any manifestation personally offensive to myself."

As Aaron delivers this warning, so dangerous is the impression he throws off, that it first whitens and then locks the condemnatory lips of colleague King. That statesman, rocking uneasily on his feet, waits a moment after Aaron is done, and then takes his seat, swallowing at a gulp whatever remains unsaid of his intended eloquence. The roll is called; Aaron votes against that resolution of confidence and thanks, carrying a baker's dozen of the Senate with him, among them the lean, horse-faced Andrew Jackson from the Cumberland.

Washington bows his adieus to the people, and retires to Mount Vernon. Adams the wooden becomes President, while Jefferson the angular wields the Senate gavel as Vice-President. Hamilton is more potent than ever; for Washington at Mount Vernon continues the strongest force in government, and Hamilton controls that force. Adams is President in nothing save name; Hamilton—fawning upon Washington, bullying Adams and playing upon that wooden one's fear of not succeeding himself—is the actual chief magistrate.

As Aaron's term nears its end, he decides that he will not accept reelection. His hatred of Hamilton has set iron-hand, and he is resolved for that scheming one's destruction. His plans are fashioned; their execution, however, is only possible in New York. Therefore, he will quit the Senate, quit the capital.

"My plans mean the going of Adams, as well as the going of Hamilton," he says to Senator Jackson from the Cumberland, when laying bare his purposes. "I do not leave public life for good. I shall return; and on that day Jefferson will supplant Adams, and I shall take the place of Jefferson."

“And Hamilton?” asks the Cumberland one.

“Hamilton the defeated shall be driven into the wilderness of retirement. Once there, the serpents of his own jealousies and envies may be trusted to sting him to death.”

CHAPTER XIII—THE GRINDING OF AARON’S MILL

AARON tells his friends that he will not go back to the Senate. He puts this resolution to retire on the double grounds of young Theodosia’s loneliness and a consequent paternal necessity of his presence at Richmond Hill, and the tangled condition of his business; which last after the death of Theodosia mère falls into a snarl. Never, by the lifting of an eyelash or the twitching of a lip, does he betray any corner of his political designs, or of his determination to destroy Hamilton. His heart is a furnace of white-hot throbbing hate against that gentleman of diagonal morals and biased veracities; but no sign of the fires within is visible on the arctic exterior.

Polite, on ceaseless guard, Aaron even becomes affable when Hamilton is mentioned. He goes so far with his strategy, indeed, as to imitate concern in connection with the political destinies of the rusty Schuyler, now exceedingly on the shelf. Aaron has the rusty Schuyler down from his shelved retirement, brushes the political dust from his cloak, and declares that, in a spirit of generosity proper in a young community toward an old, tried, even if rusty servant, the State ought to send the rusty one to fill the Senate seat which he, Aaron, is giving up. To such a degree does he work upon the generous sensibilities of mankind, that the rusty Schuyler is at once unanimously chosen to reassume those honors which he, Aaron, stripped from him six years before.

Hamilton falls into a fog; he cannot understand the Aaronian liberality. Aaron’s astonishing proposal, to return the rusty one to the Senate, smells dangerously like a Greek and a gift. In the end, however, Hamilton’s enormous vanity gets the floor, and he decides that Aaron—courage broken—is but cringing to win the Hamilton friendship.

“That is it,” he explains to President Adams. “The fellow has lost heart. This is his way of surrendering, and begging for peace.”

There are others as hopelessly lost in mists of amazement over Aaron’s benevolence as is Hamilton; one is Aaron’s closest friend Van Ness.

“Schuyler for the Senate!” he exclaims. “What does that mean?”

“It means,” whispers Aaron, with Machiavellian slyness, “that I want to get rid of the old dotard here. I am only clearing the ground, sir!”

“And for what?”

“The destruction of Hamilton.”

As Aaron speaks the hated name it is like the opening of a furnace door. One is given a flash of the flaming tumult within. Then the door closes; all is again dark, passionless, inscrutable.

Aaron runs his experienced eye along the local array. The Hamilton forces are in the ascendant. Jay is governor; having beaten North-of-Ireland Clinton, who was unable to explain how he came to sell more than three millions of the public’s acres to McComb for eightpence.

And yet, for all that supremacy of the Hamilton influence—working out its fortunes with the cogent name of Washington—Aaron’s practiced vision detects here and there the seams of weakness. Old Clinton is as angry as any sore-head bear over that gubernatorial beating, which he lays to Hamilton. The clan-Livingston is sulking among its hills because its chief, the mighty chancellor, was kept out of the President’s cabinet by the secret word of Hamilton—whose policies are ever jealous and double-jointed. Aaron, wise in such coils, sees all about him the raw materials wherefrom may be constructed a resistless opposition to the Party-of-things-as-they-are—which is the party of Hamilton.

One thing irks the pride of Aaron—a pride ever impatient and ready for mutiny. In dealing with the Livingstons and the Clintons, these gentry—readily eager indeed to take their revenges with the help of Aaron—never omit a patrician attitude of overbearing importance. They make a merit of accepting Aaron’s aid, and proceed on the assumption that he gains honor by serving them. Aaron makes up his mind to remedy this.

“I must have a following,” says he. “I will call about me every free lance in the political hills. There shall be a new clan born, of which I must be the Rob Roy. Like another McGregor, I with my followers shall take up position between the Campbell and the Montrose—the Clintons and the Livingstons. By threatening one with the other, I can then control both. Given a force of my own, the high-stomached Livingstons and the obstinate Clintons must obey me. They shall yet move forward or fall back, march and countermarch by my word.”

When Aaron sets up as a Rob Roy of politics, he is not compelled to endless labors in constructing a following. The thing he looks for lies ready to his hand. In the long-room of Brom Martling’s tavern, at Spruce and Nassau, meets the “Sons of Tammany or the Columbian Order.” The name is overlong, and hard to pronounce unless sober; wherefore the “Sons of Tammany or the Columbian Order,” as they sit swigging Brom Martling’s cider, call themselves the “Bucktails.”

The aristocracy of the Revolution—being the officers—created unto themselves the Cincinnati. Whereupon, the yeomanry of the Revolution—being the privates—as a counterpoise to the perfumed, not to say gilded

Cincinnati, brought the Sons of Tammany or the Columbian Order, otherwise the Bucktails, into being.

The Bucktails, good cider-loving souls, are solely a charitable-social organization, and have no dreams of politics. Aaron becomes one of them—quaffing and exalting the Martling cider. He takes them up into the mountaintop of the possible, and shows them the kingdoms of the political world and the glories thereof. Also, he points out that Hamilton, the head of the hated Cincinnati, is turning that organization of perfume and purple into a power. The Bucktails hear, see, believe, and resolve under the chiefship of Aaron to fight their loathed rivals, the Cincinnati, in every ensuing battle of the ballots to the end of time.

The word that Aaron has brought the Buck-tails to political heel is not long in making the rounds. It is worth registering that so soon as the Clintons and the Livingstons learn the political determinations of this formidable body of cider drinkers—with Aaron at its head—they conduct themselves toward our young exsenator with profoundest respect. They eliminate the overbearing element in their attitudes, and, when they would confer with him, they go to him not he to them. Where before they declared their intentions, they now ask his consent. It falls out as Aaron forethreatened. Our Rob Roy at the head of his bold Bucktails is sought for and deferred to by both the Clintons and the Livingstons—the Campbell and the Montrose.

Some philosopher has said that there are three requisites to successful war: the first gold, the second gold, the third gold. That deep one might have said the same of politics. Now, when he dominates his Tammany Bucktails—who obey him with shut eyes—and has brought the perverse Clintons and the stiff-necked Livingstons beneath his thumb, Aaron considers the question of the sinews of war. Politics, as a science, has already so far progressed that principle is no longer sufficient to insure success. If he would have a best ballot-box expression, he must pave the way with money. The reasons thereof cry out at him from all quarters. There is such a commodity as a campaign. No one is patriotic enough to blow a campaign fife or beat a campaign drum for fun. Torches are not a gift, but a purchase; neither does Mart-ling’s cider flow without a price. Aaron, considering this ticklish puzzle of money, sees that his plans as well as his party require a bank.

There are two banks in the city, only two; these are held in the hollow of the Hamilton hand. Under the Hamilton pressure these banks act coercively. They make loans or refuse them, as the applicant is or is not amenable to the Hamilton touch. Obedience to Hamilton, added to security even somewhat mildewed, will obtain a loan; while rebellion against Hamilton, plus the best security beneath the commercial sun, cannot coax a dollar from their strong boxes.

Aaron resolves to bring about a break in these iron-bound conditions. The best forces of the town are thereby held in chains to Hamilton. Aaron must free these forces before they can leave Hamilton and follow him. How is this freedom to be worked out? Construct another bank? It presents as many difficulties as making a new north star. Hamilton watches the bank situation with the hundred eyes of Argus; every effort to obtain a charter is knocked on the head.

Those armed experiences, which overtook Aaron as he went from Quebec to Monmouth, and from Monmouth to the Westchester lines, left him full of war knowledge. He is deep in the art of surprise, ambuscade, flank movement, night attack; and now he brings this knowledge to bear. To capture a bank charter is to capture the Hamilton Gibraltar, and, while all but impossible of accomplishment, it will prove conclusive if accomplished. Aaron wrinkles his brows and racks his wits for a way.

Gradually, like the power-imp emerging from Aladdin’s bottle, a scheme begins to take shape before his mental eye. Yellow fever has been reaping a shrouded harvest in the town. The local wiseacres—as usual—lay it to the water. Everybody reveres science; and, while everybody knows full well that science is nothing better than just the accepted ignorance of to-day, still everybody is none the less on his knees to it, and to the wiseacres, who are its high priests. Science and the wiseacres lay yellow fever to the water; the kneeling town, taking the word from them, does the same. The local water is found guilty; the popular cry goes up for a purer element. The town demands water that is innocent of homicidal qualities.

It is at this crisis that Aaron gravely steps forward. He talks of Yellow Jack and unfurls a proposal. He will form a water company; it shall be called “The Manhattan Company.”

With “No more yellow fever!” for a war-cry, Aaron lays siege to Albany. What he wants is incorporation, what he seeks is a charter. With the fear of yellow fever curling about their heart roots, the Albany authorities—being the Hamilton Governor Jay and a Hamilton Legislature—comply with his demands. The Manhattan Company is incorporated, capital two millions.

Aaron goes home with the charter. Carrying out the charter—which authorizes a water company—he originates a modest well near the City Hall. It is not a big well, and might with its limpid output no more than serve the thirst of what folk belong with any city block.

Well complete and in operation, the Manhattan Company abruptly opens a bank, vastly bigger than the well. Also, the bank possesses a feature in this; it is anti-Hamilton.

Instantly, every man or institution that nurses a dislike for Hamilton takes his or its money to the Manhattan Bank. It is no more than a matter of days when the new bank, in the volume of its business and the extent of its deposits, overtops those banks which fly the Hamilton flag. And Aaron, the indefatigable, is in control. At the new Manhattan Bank, he turns on or shuts off the flow of credit, as Brom Mart-ling—spigot-busy in the thirsty destinies of the Bucktails—turns on or shuts off the flow of his own cider.

After the first throe of Hamiltonian horror, Governor Jay sends his attorney general. This dignitary demands of Aaron by what authority his Manhattan Company thus hurls itself upon the flanks of a surprised world, in the wolfish guise of a bank? The company was to furnish the world with water; it is now furnishing it with money, leaving it to fill its empty water buckets at the old-time spouts. Also, it has turned its incorporated back on yellow fever, as upon a question in which interest is dead.

The Jay attorney general puts these queries to Aaron, who replies with the charter. He points with his slim forefinger; and the Jay attorney general—first polishing his amazed spectacles—reads the following clause:

“The surplus capital may be employed in any way not inconsistent with the laws and Constitution of the United States or of the State of New York.”

The Jay attorney general gulps a little; his learned Adam's apple goes up and down. When the aforesaid clause is lodged safe inside his mental stomach, Aaron assists digestion with an explanation. It is short, but lucidly sufficient.

"The Manhattan Company, having completed its well and acting within the authority granted by the clause just read, has opened with its surplus capital the Manhattan Bank."

The Jay attorney general stares blinkingly, like an owl at noon.

"And you had the bank in mind from the first!" he cries.

"Possibly," says Aaron.

"Let me tell you one thing, Colonel Burr," and the Jay attorney general cracks and snaps his teeth in quite an owlish way; "if the authorities at Albany had guessed your purpose, you would never have received your charter. No, sir; your prayer for incorporation would have been refused."

"Possibly!" says Aaron.

All these divers and sundry preparational matters, the subjection of the Clintons and the Livingstons, the political alignment of the Buck-tails swigging their cider at Martlings, and the launching of the Manhattan Bank to the yellow end that a supply of gold be assured, have in their accomplishment taken time. It is long since Aaron looked in at the Federal capitol, where the Hamilton-guided Adams is performing as President, with all those purple royalties which surrounded Washington, and Jefferson is abolishing ruffles, donning pantaloons, introducing shoelaces, cutting off his cue, and playing the democrat Vice-President at the other end of government. Aaron resolves upon a visit to these opposite ones. Jefferson must be his candidate; Adams will be the candidate of the foe. He himself is to manage for the one, while Hamilton will lead for the other. Such the situation, he holds it the part of a cautious sagacity to glance in at these worthies, pulling against one another, and discover to what extent and in what manner their straining and tugging may be used to make or mar the nation's future. Hamilton is to be destroyed. To annihilate him a battle must be fought; and Aaron, preparing for that strife, is eager to discover aught in the present conduct or standing of either Adams or Jefferson which can be molded into bullets to bring down the enemy.

Aaron's friend Van Ness goes with him, sharing his seat in the coach. Some worth-while words ensue. They begin by talking of Hamilton; as talk proceeds, Aaron gives a surprising hint of the dark but unsuspected bitterness of his feeling—a feeling which goes beyond politics, as the acridities of that savage science are understood and recognized.

Van Ness is wonder-smitten.

"Your enmity to Hamilton," he says tentatively, "strikes deeper then than mere politics."

"Sir," returns Aaron slowly, the old-time black, ophidian sparkle flashing up in his eyes, "the deepest sentiment of my nature is my hatred for that man. Day by day it grows upon me. Also, it is he who furnishes the seed and the roots of it. Everywhere he vilifies me. I hear it east, north, west, south. I am his mania—his 'phobia'. In his slanderous mouth I am 'liar,' 'thief,' and 'scoundrel rogue.' In such connection I would have you to remember that I, on my side, give him, and have given him, the description of a gentleman."

"To be frank, sir," returns Van Ness thoughtfully, "I know every word you speak to be true, and have often wondered that you did not parade our epithetical friend at ten paces, and refute his mendacities with convincing lead."

Aaron's look is hard as granite. There is a moment of silence. "Kill him!" he says at last, as though repeating a remark of his companion; "kill him! Yes; that, too, must come! But it must not come too soon for my perfect vengeance! First I shall uproot him politically; every hope he has shall die! I shall thrust him from his high places! When he lies prone, broken, powerless!—when he is spat upon by those in whose one-time downcast, servile presence he strutted lord paramount!—when his past is scoffed at, his future swallowed up!—when his word is laughed at and his fame become a farce!—then, when every fang of defeat pierces and poisons him, then I say should be the hour to talk of killing! That hour is not yet. I am a revengeful man, Van Ness—I am an artist of revenge! Believing as I do that with the going of the breath, all goes!—that for the Man there is no hereafter as there has been no past!—I must garner my vengeance on earth or forever lose it. So I take pains with my vengeance; and having, as I tell you, a genius for it, my vengeful pains shall find their dark and full-blown harvest. Hamilton, for whom my whole heart flows away in hate!—I shall build for him a pyramid of misery while he lives; and I shall cap that pyramid with his death—his grave! I can see, as one who looks down a lane, what lies before. I shall take from him every scrap of that power which is his soul's food—strip him of each least fragment of position! When he has nothing left but life, I'll wrest that from him. Long years after he is gone I'll walk this earth; and I shall find a joy in his absence, and the thought that by my hand and my will he was made to go, beyond what the friendship of man or the favor of woman could bring me. Kill him! There is a grist in the hopper of my purposes, friend, and the mill stones of my plans are grinding!"

Aaron does not look at Van Ness as he thus brings the secrets of his soul to the light of day, but wears the manner of one preoccupied and in the spell of self. Van Ness shudders as he listens; and, while the slow words follow one another in hateful swart procession, a chill creeps over him, as from the evil monstrous nearness of something elemental, abnormal, fearsome. A sweat breaks out on his face. Neither his wits nor his tongue can frame remark for either good or ill. The brooding Aaron seems not to notice, but falls into a black muse.

CHAPTER XIV—THE TRIUMPH OF AARON

IT is the era of bad feeling, and the breasts of men are reservoirs of poison. Jefferson and Adams, while known admitted rivals, deplore these wormwood conditions and strive against them. It is as though they strove against the tides; party lines were never more fiercely drawn. Some portrait of the hour may be found in the following:

Adams gives a dinner; and, because he cannot get over the Jonathan Edwards emanation of Aaron, he invites him. Also, Van Ness being with Aaron, the invitation includes Van Ness. Hamilton and Jefferson will be there; since it is one of the hypocritical affectations of these good people to keep up a polite appearance of friendship, by way of example, if not rebuke, to warring followers, who are hopefully fighting duels and shedding blood and taking life in their interests. On the way to the President's house Van Ness, to whom Adams is new, queries Aaron:

"What sort of a man is Adams?"

"He is an honest, pragmatic, hot-tempered thick-skull," says Aaron—"a New England John Bull!—a masculine Mrs. Malaprop whom Sheridan would love. You can have no better description of him than was given me but yesterday by a member of his Cabinet. 'Adams,' says the cabineteer, 'is a man who whether sportful, witty, kind, cold, drunk, sober, angry, easy, stiff, jealous, careless, cautious, confident, close or open, is so always in the wrong place and with the wrong man!'"

"Is he a good executive?"

"Bad! By nature he is no more in touch with the spirit of a democracy than with the maritime policies of the Ptolemies. His pet picture of government is England, with the one amendment that he would call the king a president. As to his executive labors: why, then, he touches only to disarrange, talks only to disturb. And all without meaning to do so."

The dinner is neither large nor formal. Aaron sits on the right hand of Adams, while Jefferson has Van Ness and Hamilton at either elbow. In the cross fire of conversation comes the following: The topic is government.

"Speaking of the British constitution," says Adams, "purge that constitution of its corruption, and give to its popular branch equality of representation, and it would be the most perfect constitution ever devised by the wit of man."

Hamilton cocks his ear. "Sir," says he, "purge the British constitution of its corruption, and give to its popular branch equality of representation, and it would become an impracticable government. As it stands at present, with all its supposed defects, it is the most powerful government that ever existed."

Presently, the currents of converse shift, and the torrid heats of party are considered. It is now that Jefferson is heard from.

"The situation is deplorable!" he exclaims. "You and I, sir"—looking across at Adams—"have seen warm debates and high political passions. But gentlemen of different politics would then speak to each other, and separate the business of the Senate from that of society. It is not so now. Men who have been intimate all their lives cross the street to avoid meeting, and turn their heads another way lest they be obliged to touch their hats. Men's passions are boiling over; and one who keeps himself cool, and clear of the contagion, is so far below the point of ordinary conversation that he finds himself socially cast away. More; there is a moral breaking down. The interruption of letters is becoming so notorious"—here he looks hard at Hamilton, whose followers are supposed to peep into letters not addressed to them—"that I am forming a resolution of declining correspondence with my friends through the channels of the post office altogether."

Even during Aaron's short stay at the Capitol, fresh fuel is heaped upon the fires of his Hamilton hates. A cloud blows up in the sky; war with France is threatened. Washington at Mount Vernon is commissioned commander in chief; Hamilton—the active—is placed next to him. Aaron's name, sent in for a general's commission, is secretly vetoed by Hamilton whispering in the Adams ear.

Adams does not like the veto; he thinks he should name Aaron, and says so.

"If you do," declares Hamilton warningly, "it will defeat your reelection."

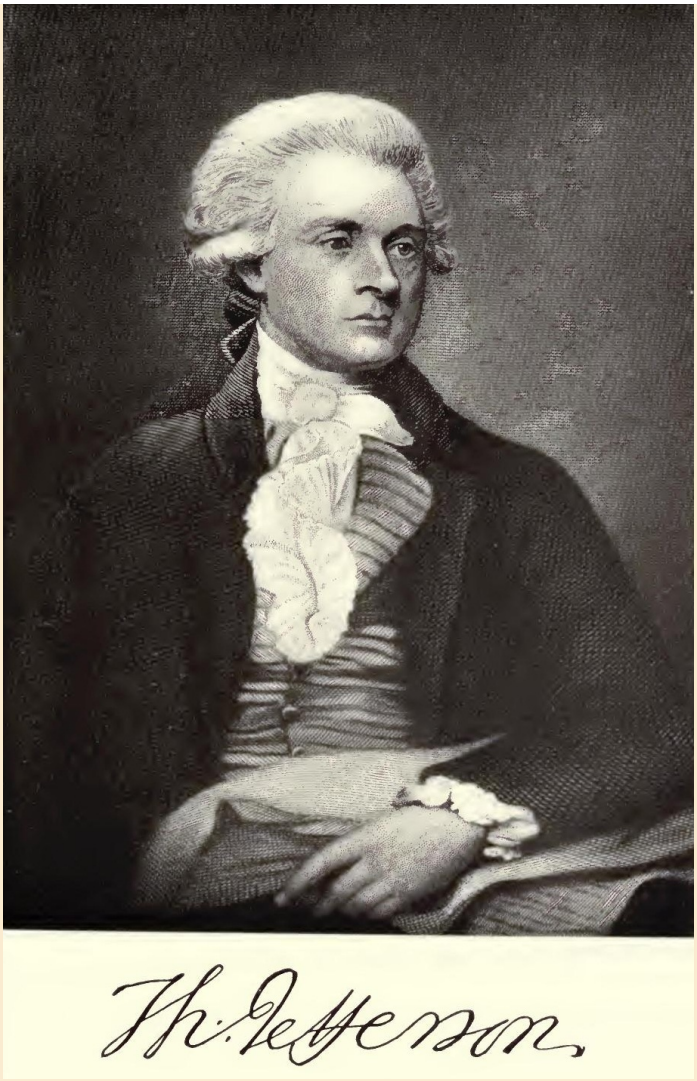
Adams groans and gives way. It is the argument wherewith Hamilton never fails to drive him or curb him as he will. Aaron hears of this new offense; he says nothing, but lays it away with the others.

Candidate Jefferson and Manager Aaron are far apart in their hopes and fears, the former taking the gloomy view. They come together confidentially.

"I have looked over the field," says Jefferson, "and we are already beaten."

"Sir," returns Aaron with grim point, "you should look again. I think you see things wrong end up."

"My hatred of Hamilton," observes Aaron to Van Ness, as their coach rolls north for home, "is the good fortune of Jefferson. I shall be fighting my own fight, and so I shall win. If I were fighting only for Jefferson, I can well see how the strife might have another upcome."



The campaign draws down; it is Adams against Jefferson, Federal against Republican. Hamilton leaves the seat of government, and comes to New York to take personal charge. At that his designs are Janus-faced. He says “Adams,” but he means “Pinckney.” He foresees that, if Adams be given another term, he will defy control. Wherefore he is publicly for Adams, and privately for Pinckney—he looks at Massachusetts but sees only South Carolina. This collision of pretense and purpose, on Hamilton’s false part, gets vastly in the Federal way. That it should do so will instantly occur to curious ones, if they will but seek to go south by heading north.

As Hamilton sets out to take presidential possession of New York, he has no misgivings. He knows little or nothing of Aaron’s designs or what that ingenious gentleman has been about.

“There is the Manhattan Bank of course; but what can it do? There are the Bucktails—who are vulgar clods! There are the Livingstons and the Clintons—he has beaten them before!”

Thus run the reflections of the confident Hamilton. No; he sees only triumph ahead. He gives Aaron and his candidate Jefferson—with their borrel issue of Alien and Sedition—not half the thought that he devotes to ways and means by which he hopes finally to steal the electors from Adams, and produce Pinckney in the White House. That is Hamilton’s dream of power—Pinckney!

Everything pivots on the legislature; since it is the legislature which will select the electors.

Hamilton, bearing in mind his intended steal of the State, prepares his list of candidates for Albany. He does not pick them for either wisdom or moral worth; what he is after are legislators whom he can certainly manhandle to match his designs, and who will give him electors—he himself will furnish the names—of a Pinckney not an Adams complexion. He makes up his slate to that treasonable end; and the swift Aaron gets a copy before the ink is dry.

Aaron smiles when he runs down the ignoble muster of Hamilton’s boneless nonentities.

“They are the least in the town!” he mutters. “I shall pit against them the town’s greatest.”

Aaron with his Bucktails, now makes ready his own legislative ticket. At the head he places old North-of-Ireland Clinton—a local Whittington, ten times governor of the State. General Gates—for whom Aaron, when time was, plotted the downfall of Washington, and who received the sword of the vanquished Burgoyne and sent that popinjay back to England to fail at play-writing—comes next. After General Gates the wily Aaron writes “Samuel Osgood”—who was Washington’s postmaster general—“Henry Rutgers, Elias Neusen, Thomas Storms, George Warner, Philip Arcularius, James Hunt, Ezekiel Robbins, Brockholst Livingston, and John Swartwout”—every name a tower of strength.

Hamilton cannot repress a flutter of fear as he reads the noble roster; but his unflagging vanity, which serves him instead of a more reasonable optimism, rushes to his rescue. None the less it jars on him a bit

strangely, albeit, he laughs at it for a jest, that the best regarded of the town should make up the ticket of the yeomanry and the crude Bucktails, while the aristocratical Federals and the equally aristocratical Cincinnati —that coterie of perfume and patricianism!—search the gutters for theirs.

Seeing himself on the Jefferson ticket, old North-of-Ireland Clinton makes trouble. He sends for Aaron and his committee, and notifies them that he cannot consent to run.

"If you, Colonel Burr, were the candidate," he says, "I should run gladly; but Jefferson I hate."

In his hope's heart, old North-of-Ireland Clinton—-who, for all his North-of-Ireland blood, was born in America—thinks he himself may be struck by the presidential lightning, and does not intend to place any deflecting obstruction in the path of such descending bolt.

Aaron has forestalled the Clinton refusal in his thoughts, and is not surprised by the high Clintonian attitude. He tries persuasion; the old ex-governor and would-be president only plants himself more firmly. Under no circumstances shall he agree to run; his honored name must not be used.

It is now that Aaron shows his teeth: "Governor Clinton," says he, "when it comes to that, our committee's appearance before you, preferring the request that you run, is a ceremony rather of courtesy than need. With the last word, regardless of either your plans or your preferences, the public we represent is perfect in its right to name you, and compel you to run. And, sir, making short what might become long, and so saving time for us all, I must now notify you that, should you continue to withhold your consent, we stand already determined to retain and use your name despite refusal, as a course entirely within the lines of popular right."

In the looks and tones of Aaron, the old North-of-Ireland governor reads decision not to be revoked, and for once in his obstinate life surrenders gracefully.

"Gentlemen," says he, with a bland wave of the hand to Aaron and his Bucktail committee, "since you put it in that way, refusal is out of my power. Also let me add, that no man could take a nomination from a higher, a more honorable, a more patriotic source."

The campaign, on in earnest, goes forward with a roar. Not a screaming item is omitted. Guns boom; flags flaunt; bands of music bray; gay processions go marching; crackers splutter and snap; orators with iron throats sweep down on spellbound crowds in gales of red-faced eloquence; flaming rockets, when the sun goes down, streak the night with fire; the bold Buck-tails, cidered to the brim, cause Brom Martling's long-room to ring again, and make the intersection of Spruce and Nassau a Bedlam crossroads.

This is well; yet Aaron desires more. The issue is Alien and Sedition; he yearns for an overt expression of what villain work may be done by that black statute.

Aaron's strength, as a captain of politics, lies in his intuitive knowledge of men. He is never popular—never loved while ever admired. Men may no more love him than they may love a diamond, or a Damascus sword blade, or a tallest, sun-kissed, snow-capped mountain peak. Still that innate grasp of men, and what motives will move them, is as an edged tool in his hands wherewith to carve out triumph. This gift of man-reading comes in play when now he would exhibit Alien and Sedition in its baleful workings.

There is a Judge Yates; his home is in Otsego. As though he had builded him, Aaron is aware of Yates in his elements. That honest man is of your natural-born martyrs. Is there a headsman's block, there he lays his neck; given a scaffold, he instantly mounts it; into every pillory he thrusts his head and hands, into every stocks his heels; by every stake he takes his stand as soon as it is put up; and he would sooner meet a despot than a friend. And yet—to defend Yates—that bent for martyrdom is nothing less than a bent to be noble; for a martyr is but a hero reversed. The two are brothers; a hero is only a martyr who succeeds, a martyr only a hero who fails.

Aaron sends for the oppression-thirsty Yates. "Here is a pamphlet flaying Adams," says he. "It is raw and ferocious. Take it home and circulate it."

"Why?" asks Yates.

"Because the Federalists will arrest you. They are fools enough to do it."

"Doubtless!"—this dryly. "But what advantage do you discover in having me locked up?"

"Man! can't you see? It will illustrate their tyranny! Your seizure will be on a United States warrant. That means they must bring you from Otsego to New York. Think what a triumph that should be—you, the paraded victim of the monarchical Adams!"

Yates goes home to Otsego with a gay, elate heart, and publishes Aaron's blood-raw pamphlet. He is seized and paraded, as the astute Aaron has foreseen. The flocking farmers fringe the captive's line of march. Yates is a martyr, and makes his journey through double ranks of sympathy for himself and curses for the despotic Adams. The martyrdom of Yates is worth a thousand votes.

"It is the difference between the eye and the ear," says Aaron to his aide, Swartwout. "You might explain the iniquities of Alien and Sedition, and never rouse the people. Show them those iniquities, and they take fire. It is quite natural enough. I tell you of a man crushed by a falling tree; you feel a conventional shock that lasts a minute. Should you some day *see* a man crushed by a falling tree, you will start in your sleep for a twelvemonth with the pure horror of it. Wherefore, never address the ear when you can appeal to the eye. The gateway to the imagination is the eye."

The campaign wags to a close; the day of the ballot has its dawning. To the amazed chagrin of Hamilton, Aaron and his Bucktails go over him at the polls with a rousing majority of four hundred and ninety; he is beaten, Aaron is dominant, New York is Jefferson's. The blow shakes Hamilton to the heart, and for the moment he can neither plan nor act. In the face of such disaster, he sits stricken.

Presently, as though the bad in him is more vivid than the good and quicker at recovery, that old instinct of larceny struggles to its feet. He will steal the State; not from Adams as he planned, but from Jefferson. He scribbles a note to Jay, who is in town at his home, urging him as governor to call a special session of the legislature, a Federal Legislature, and go about the crime. He feels the necessity of justification; for Jay is of a skittish honor. This on his mind, he closes with: "It is the only way by which we can prevent an atheist in

religion and a fanatic in politics from getting possession of the helm of government."

Jay reads, and draws down his brows in a frown. Hamilton's messenger is waiting.

"Governor," says the messenger, "General Hamilton bid me get an answer."

"Tell General Hamilton there is no answer." Jay rereads the note. Then he takes quill, writes a sentence on the back, and files it away in a pigeonhole. Years later, when Jay and Hamilton and Adams and Jefferson and Aaron are dead and under the grass roots, hands yet unformed will draw the letter forth and unborn eyes will read: "Proposing a measure for party purposes which I do not think it would become me to adopt. J. J."

CHAPTER XV—THE INTRIGUE OF THE TIE

HAMILTON writhes and twists like a hurt snake. Helpless in that first effort before the adamantine honesty of Jay, when the breath of his courage returns, he bends himself to consider, whether by other means, fair or foul, the election may not yet be stolen for Pinckney. He sends out a flock of letters to the Federal leaders, whom he addresses loftily as their commander in chief of party.

It is now he receives a fresh stab. By their replies, and rather in the cool tone than in the substance, the Federal chiefs show that his bare word is no longer enough to move them. Washington is dead; that potential name no more remains to conjure with. And now, to the passing of Washington, has been added his own defeat. The two disasters leave his voice of scanty consequence in the parliaments of the Federalists. He finds this out from such as Cabot of Massachusetts, Cooper of New York and Bayard of Delaware, who peremptorily decline a Pinckney intrigue as worse than hopeless. They propose instead—and therein lurks horror—that the Federal electors be asked to abandon Adams for Aaron. They can take the Adams electors, they argue, and, with what may be coaxed from the Jefferson strength, make Aaron President—their President—the President of the Federalists.

The suggestion to take up Aaron shocks Hamilton even more than does his discovered loss of power—which latter, of itself, is as a blade of ice through his heart. It is bitter to lose the election; more bitter to learn that his decree is no longer regarded; most bitter to hear of Aaron as a possible President, and by Federal votes at that. Broken of heart and hope, the deposed king retires to his country seat, the Grange, and sits in mourning with his soul.

Meanwhile, Aaron, as though a presidency in his personal favor possesses but minor interest, devotes himself to the near nuptials of baby Theo, who is to marry Joseph Alston, a rich young rice planter of South Carolina.

Having turned the shoulder of their disregard to Hamilton, the Federal chiefs confer among themselves by letter and word of mouth. Their great purpose is to save themselves from Jefferson, whom they fear and hate. They would sooner have Aaron, as not so much the stark democrat as is the Man of Monticello. There be folk to whom nothing is so full of terror in a democracy as a democrat; and our Federalists are white at the thought of Jefferson. Aaron would suit them better; they think him less of a leveler. Still they must know his feelings. They will bind him with promises; for they, cautious gentlemen, have no notion of buying a pig in a poke. They seek out Aaron, who has left off politics for orange wreaths and is up to the ears in baby Theo's wedding. As a preliminary they send his lieutenant, Swartwout, to take soundings.

"If the presidency be tendered, will you accept?" asks Swartwout.

"Assuredly! There are two things, sir, no gentleman may decline—a lady and a presidency."

Aaron sobers a bit after this small flippancy, and tells Swartwout that, should he be chosen, he will serve.

"There can be no refusal," he says. "The electors are free to make their choice, and he on whom they pitch must serve. Mark this, however," he goes on, warningly; "I shall lift neither hand nor head in the business; the thing must come to me unsought and uninvited. Also, since you, yourself, are of those who will select the electors for our own State, I tell you, as you value my friendship, that New York must go to Jefferson. We carried the State for him, and he shall have it."

Following Swartwout's visit, Federalists Cabot and Bayard wait upon Aaron. They point out that he can be President; but they seek to condition it upon certain promises.

"Gentlemen," returns Aaron, "I know not what in my past has led you to this journey. I've no promises to make. Should I ever be President, I shall be no man's president but my own."

"Think of the honor, sir!" says Federalist Bayard.

"Honor?" repeats Aaron. "Now I should call it disgrace indeed if I went into the White House in fetters to you. Believe me, I can see my own way to honor, sir; you need hold no candle to my feet."

Although rebuffed by Aaron, the Federal chiefs—all save the broken Hamilton, eating out his baffled heart at the Grange—none the less go forward with their designs. They call away from Adams what electors will follow them, and gain a handful from Jefferson besides. The law-demanded vote is finally taken and the count shows Jefferson seventy-three, Aaron seventy-three, Adams sixty-five, Jay one.

No name having received a majority, the ejection must go to the House. The sixteen States, expressing themselves through their House delegations and owning each one vote, are now to pick the world a president. At this the campaign is all to fight over again. But in a different way, on different ground, and the two candidates Jefferson and Aaron.

In the weeks which pass before the House convenes, Federalist Bayard, in the heat of the pulling and hauling among House men, makes a second pilgrimage to Aaron. The latter, baby Theo being by this time

safely married and abroad upon her honeymoon, has leisure to talk.

Federalist Bayard lays open the situation, “As affairs are,” he explains—he has made a count of noses—“Jefferson, when the House convenes, will have New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and his home State of Virginia. You, for your side, will have New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, South Carolina, and my own State of Delaware. The delegations of Maryland and Vermont, being evenly divided between yourself and Jefferson, will have no voice. The tally will show eight for Jefferson, six for you, two not voting. None the less, in the face of these figures the means of electing you exist. By deceiving one man—a great blockhead—and tempting two—not incorruptible—you can still secure a majority of the States. I——”

“You have said enough, sir,” breaks in Aaron. “I shall deceive no one, tempt no one; not even you. Go, sir; carry what I say to what ring of Federalists you represent. Also, you may consider yourself personally fortunate that I do not ask how far your conduct should have construction as an insult.”

Federalist Bayard hurries away with a red face and a flea in his ear. Gulping his chagrin, he tells his fellow chiefs that the obdurate Aaron will do nothing, consent to nothing, to help himself.

Jefferson does not share Aaron’s chill indifference. While the latter comports himself as carelessly as though a White House is an edifice of every day, the Man of Monticello goes as far the other way, and feels all the uneasy anger of him who is on the brink of being robbed. He calls on the wooden Adams, and demands that the wooden one exert his influence with his party in favor of Aaron’s defeat.

“It is I, sir,” says Jefferson, “whom the people elected; and you should see their will respected.”

Adams grows warm. “Sir,” he retorts, “the event is in your power. Say that you will do justice to the Federalists, and the government will instantly be put into your hands.”

“If such be your answer, sir,” returns Jefferson, equaling, if not surpassing the Adams heat, “I have to tell you that I do not intend to come into the presidency by capitulation.”

Jefferson leaves the White House, while Adams—who is practical, even if high-tempered—begins his preparations to create and fill twenty-three life judgeships, before his successor shall take possession.

As much as the Man of Monticello, however, our wooden Adams is afire at the on-end condition of the times. Only his wrath arises, not over the war between Jefferson and Aaron, but because he himself is to be ousted. The action of the people, in its motive, is beyond his understanding. As unrepublican in his hidebound instincts as any royal Charles, he cannot grasp the reason of his overthrow.

Speaking with Federalist Cabot, he furnishes his angry meditations tongue. “What is this mighty difference,” he cries, “which the public discovers between Jefferson and myself? He is for messages to Congress, I am for speeches; he is for a little White House dinner every day, I am for a big dinner once a week; I am for an occasional reception, he is for a daily levee; he is for straight hair and liberty, while I think a man may curl or cue his hair and still be free. Their Jefferson preference, sir, convinces me that, while men are reasoning, they are not reasonable creatures. The one difference between Jefferson and myself is this: I appeal to men’s reason, he flatters their vanity. The result—a mob result—is that he stands victorious, while I lie prostrate.” Saying which the wooden, angry Adams resumes his arrangements for creating and filling those twenty-three life judgeships—being resolved, in his narrow breast, to make the most of his dying moments as a president.

The day of White House fate arrives; the House comes together. Seats are placed for President and Senate. Also lounges are brought in; for there are members too ill to occupy their regular seats—one is even attended by his wife. Before a vote is taken, the House adopts an order which forbids any other business until a President is chosen and the White House tie determined.

The voice of the House is announced by States; the ballot falls as foreseen by Federalist Bayard. It runs eight for Jefferson, six for Aaron, with Maryland and Vermont voiceless, because of their evenly divided delegations, and a refusal on the part of the House to count half votes for any name. There being no choice—since no name possesses a majority of all the States—another vote is called. The upcome is the same: eight Jefferson, six Aaron, two mute. And so through twenty-nine hours of ceaseless balloting.

Seven House days go by; the vote continues unchanged. At the close of the seventh day, Federalist Bayard—who is the entire delegation from his little State of Delaware, and until then has been casting its vote for Aaron—beholds a light. No one may know the sort of light he sees. It is, however, altogether a Bayard and in no wise a Jefferson light; for the Man of Monticello is of too rigid a probity to entertain so much as the ghost of a bargain. On the seventh day, by that new light, Federalist Bayard changes his vote. Jefferson is named President, with Aaron Vice-President, and that heartbreaking tie is at an end.

The result leaves Aaron as coolly the picture of polished, icy indifference as ever during his icily polished days. The Man of Monticello, who has been gloom one moment and angry impatience the next, feels most a burning hatred of the imperturbable Aaron, whom he blames for what he has gone through. The color of this hatred will deepen, not fade, until a day when it gets trippingly in front of Aaron’s plans to send them sprawling. There is, however, no present hateful indications; for Jefferson, reared in an age of secrets, can lock his breast against the curious and prying. President and Vice-President, he and Aaron go about their duties upon terms which mingle a deal of courtesy with little friendly warmth. This excites no wonder; friendships between President and Vice-President have never been the habit.

In wielding the Senate gavel, Aaron is an example of the lucidly just. He refuses to be partisan, and presides for the whole Senate, not a half. He knows no friend, no foe, and adds another coat of black to the Jefferson hate, by voting when a tie occurs with the Federalists, against the repeal of those twenty-three engaging life judgeships, which the practical Adams created and filled in his industrious last days.

Not alone does Aaron shine out as the north star of Senate guidance, but his home rivals the White House—which leans toward the simple-severe under Jefferson—as a polite center of society; for baby Theo comes up from South Carolina to preside over it—Theo, loving and lustrous! Aaron, with the lustrous Theo, entertains Jerome Bonaparte, on his way to a Baltimore bride. Also, Theo, during moments informal, lapses into gossip with Dolly Madison, the pair privily deciding that Miss Patterson has no bargain in the Franco-Corsican.

THEODOSIA BURR
From the original portrait by St. Memin.

On the lustrous Theo's second visit to her Vice-Presidential parent, she brings in her arms a small, red-faced, howling bundle, and, putting it proudly into his arms, tells him it bears the name of Aaron Burr Alston. Aaron receives the small red-faced howling bundle even more proudly than it is offered, and hugs it to his heart. From this moment, until a dark one that will come later, little Aaron Burr Alston is to live the focus and central purpose of all his ambitions. It is for this little one he will make his plots, and lay his plans, to become a western Bonaparte and swoop at empire.

During these days of Aaron's eminence and triumph, the broken, beaten Hamilton mopes about his Grange. Vain, resentful, since politics has turned its fickle back upon him, he does his best to turn his back on politics. For all that, his mortification, while he plays farmer and pretends retirement, finds voice at every chance.

He receives his friend Pinckney, and shows him about his shaven acres. "And when you return home," he says, imitating the lightsome and doing it poorly, "send me some of your Carolina paroquets. Also a paper of Carolina melon seed for my garden. For a garden, my dear Pinckney"—this, with a sickly smile—"is, as you know, a very usual refuge for your disappointed politician." It is now, his acute bitterness coming uppermost, he breaks into not over-manly complaint—the complaint of selflove wounded to the heart. "What an odd destiny is mine! No man has done more for the country, sacrificed more for it, than have I. No man than myself has stood more loyally by the Constitution—that frail, worthless fabric which I am still striving to prop up! And yet I have the murmurs of its friends no less than the curses of its foes to pay for it. What can I do better than withdraw from the arena? Each day proves more and more that America, with its republics, was never meant for me."

CHAPTER XVI—THE SWEETNESS OF REVENGE

WHILE Aaron flourishes with Senate gavel, and Hamilton mourns his downfall at the Grange, new men are springing up and new lines forming. The Federalists disappear in the presidential going down of the wooden Adams; Aaron, by that one crushing victory, annihilated them. The new alignment in New York is personal rather than political, and becomes the merest separation of Aaron's friends from Aaron's enemies.

At the head of the latter, De Witt Clinton, nephew to old North-of-Ireland Clinton, takes his stand. Being

modern, Clinton starts a newspaper, the *American Citizen*, and places a scurrilous dog named Cheetham in charge. As a counterweight, Aaron launches the *Morning Chronicle*, with Peter Irving editor, and his brother, young Washington Irving, as its leading writer. Now descends a war of ink, that is recklessly acrimonious and not at all merry.

Under that spur of feverish ink, the two sides fall to dueling with the utmost assiduity. Hamilton's son Philip insults Mr. Eaker, a lawyer friend of Aaron; and the insulted Mr. Eaker gives up the law for one day to parade young Hamilton at the conventional ten paces. It is all highly honorable, all highly orthodox; and young Hamilton is killed in a way which reflects credit on those concerned.

Aaron's lieutenant, John Swartwout, fastens a quarrel upon De Witt Clinton, for sundry ink utterances of the latter's dog-of-types, Cheetham. The two cross the river to a spot of convenient seclusion.

"I wish it were your chief instead of you!" cries Clinton, who is not fine in his politenesses.

"So do I," responds Swartwout, being of a rudeness to match Clinton's. "For he is a dead shot, and would infallibly kill you; while I am the poorest hand with a pistol among the Buck-tails."

The bickering pair are placed. They fire and miss. A second, and yet a third time their lead flies shamefully wide. At the fourth shot Clinton saves his credit by wounding Swartwout in the leg. The stubborn Swartwout demands a fifth fire, and Clinton plants a second bullet within two inches of the first.

"Are you satisfied?" asks Mr. Riker, who acts for Clinton.

"I am not," returns Swartwout the stubborn. "Your man must retract, or continue the fight. Kill or be killed, I am prepared to shoot out the afternoon with him."

At this, both Clinton's fortitude and manners break down together, and, refusing to either fight on or apologize, he walks off the field. This nervous extravagance creates a scandal among our folk of hectic sensibilities, and shakes the Clinton standing sorely. He is promptly challenged by Senator Dayton—an adherent of Aaron's—but evades that statesman at further loss to his reputation.

Meanwhile Robert Swartwout, brother to the wounded Swartwout, calls out Mr. Riker, who acted for Clinton against the stubborn one, and has the pleasure of dangerously wounding that personage. Also, Editor Coleman of the Evening Post, weary with that felon scribe, goes after type-dog Cheetham of Clinton's American Citizen; whereat dog Cheetham flies yelping.

This last so disturbs Harbor Master Thompson of the Clinton forces, that he offers to take type-dog Cheetham's place. Editor Coleman being agreeable, they fight in a snowstorm in (inappropriately) Love's Lane—it will be University Place later—and the port loses a harbor master at the first fire.

Aaron, gaveling the Senate in the way it should legislatively go, pays no apparent heed to the smoky doings of his warlike subordinates. He never takes his eyes from Hamilton, however; and, if that retired publicist, complaining in his garden, would but cast his glance that way, he might read in their black ophidian depths a saving warning. But Hamilton is blind or mad, and thinks only on what he may do to injure Aaron, and never once on what that perilous Vice-President might be carrying on the shoulder of his purposes.

Hamilton devotes his garden leisure to vilifying Aaron. He goes stark staring raving Aaron-mad; at the mention of the name he pours out a muddy stream of slander. In talk, in print, in what letters he indites, Aaron is accused of every infamy. There is nothing so preposterously vile that he does not charge him with it. Aaron looks on and listens with a grim, evil smile, saying nothing. It is as though he but waits for Hamilton's offenses to ripen in their accumulation, as one waits for apples to ripen on a tree.

At last the hour of harvest comes; Aaron leaves Washington for Richmond Hill, and sends for his friend Van Ness.

"You once marveled at my Hamilton moderation—wondered that I did not stop his slanders with convincing lead?"

"Yes," says Van Ness.

"You shall wonder no longer, my friend. The hour of his death is about to strike."

Van Ness breaks into a gale of protest. Hamilton, beaten, disgraced, deposed, is in political exile! Aaron, powerful, victorious, is on the crest of fortune! There is no fairness, no equality in an exchange of shots under such circumstances! Thus runs the opposition of Van Ness.

"In short," he concludes, "it would be a fight downhill—a fight that you, in justice to yourself, have no right to make. Who is Alexander Hamilton? Nobody—a beaten nobody! Who is Aaron Burr? The second officer of the nation, on his sure way to a White House! Let me say, sir, that you must not risk so much against so little."

"There is no risk; for I shall kill the man. I shall live and he shall die."

"Cannot you see? There is the White House! Adams went from the Vice-Presidency to the Presidency; Jefferson went from the Vice-Presidency to the Presidency; you will do the same. It's as though the White House were already yours. And you would throw it away for a shot at this broken, beaten, disregarded man! For let me tell you, sir; kill Hamilton and you kill your chance of being President. No one may hope to go into the White House on the back of a duel."

About Aaron's mouth twinkles a pale smile. It lights up his face with a cold dimness, as a will-o'-the-wisp lights up the midnight blackness of a wood.

"You have a memory only for what I lose. You forget what I gain."

"What you gain?"

"Ay, friend, what I gain. I shall gain vengeance; and I would sooner be revenged than be President."

"Now this is midsummer madness!" wails Van Ness. "To throw away a career such as yours is simple frenzy!"

"I do not throw away a career; I begin one."

Van Ness stares; Aaron goes slowly on, as though he desires every word to make an impression.

"Listen, my friend; I've been preparing. Last week I closed out all my houses and lands! to John Jacob Astor

for one hundred and forty thousand dollars. The one lone thing I own is Richmond Hill—the roof we sit beneath. I'd have sold this, but I did not care to attract attention. There would have come questions which I'm not ready to answer."

Van Ness fills a glass of Cape, and settles himself to hear; he sees that this is but the beginning.

Aaron proceeds: "As we sit here to-night, Napoleon has been declared hereditary Emperor of the French. It has been on its way for months, and the next packet will bring us the news."

"And what have the Corsican and his empire to do with us?"

"A President," continues Aaron, ignoring the question, "is not comparable to an emperor. The Presidential term is but a stunted thing—in four years, eight at the most, your President comes to his end. And what is an ex-President? Look at Adams, peevish, disgruntled—unhappy in what he is, because he remembers what he was. To be a President is well enough. To be an ex-President is to seek to satisfy present hunger with the memories of banquets eaten years ago. For myself, I would sooner be an emperor; his throne is his for life, and becomes his son's or his grandson's after him."

"What does this lead to?" asks Van Ness, vastly puzzled. "Admitting your imperial preferences, how are they applicable here and now?"

"Let me show you," responds Aaron, still slow and measured and impressive. "What is possible in the East is possible in the West; what has been done in Europe may be done in America. Napoleon comes to Paris—lean, epileptic, poor, unknown, not even French. To-day he is emperor. Also"—this with a laugh which, however, does not prevent Van Ness from seeing that Aaron is deeply serious—"also, he is two inches shorter than myself."

Van Ness leans back and makes a little gesture with his hand, as who should say: "Continue!"

"Very well! Would it be a stranger story if I, Aaron Burr, were to found an empire in the West—if I became Aaron I, as the Corsican has become Napoleon I?"

"You do not talk of overturning our government?" This in tones of wonder, and not without some flash of angry horror.

"Don't hold me so dull. The people of this country are unfitted for king or emperor. They would throw down a thousand thrones while you set up one. I've studied races and peoples. Let me give you a word; it will serve should you go to nation building. Never talk of crowns or thrones to blue-eyed or gray-eyed men. They are inimical, in the very seeds of their natures, to thrones and crowns."

"England?"

"England, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland are monarchies only in name. In fact and spirit they are republics. If you would have king or emperor in very truth, you must go to your black-eyed folk. Setting this country aside, if you cast a glance toward the southwest, you will behold a people who should be the very raw materials of an empire."

"Mexico!" exclaims the astonished Van Ness.

"Ay, Mexico! There is nothing which Napoleon Bonaparte has done in France, which Aaron Burr may not do in Mexico. I would have the flower of this country at my back. Indeed, it should be easier to ascend the throne of the Montezumas than of the Bourbons. I believe, too—for I think he would feel safer with a brother emperor in the West—I might count on Napoleon's help for that climbing. However, we overrun the hunt"—Aaron seems to recall himself like one who comes out of a dream—"I am thinking not on empire, but vengeance. I have thrown out a rude picture of my plans, however, because I hope to have your company in them. Also, I wanted to show how utterly in my heart I have given up America and an American career. It is Mexico and the throne of an emperor, not Washington and the chair of a President, at which I aim. I am laying my foundations, not for four years, not for eight years, but for life. I shall be Aaron I, Emperor of Mexico; with my grandson, Aaron Burr Alston, to follow me as Aaron II. There; that should do for 'Aaron and empire.'" This, with a return to the cynical: "Now let us get to Hamilton and vengeance. The scoundrel has spat his toad-venom on my name and fame for twenty years; the turn shall now be mine."

Van Ness is silent; the glimpses he has been given of Aaron's high designs have tied his tongue.

Aaron gets out a letter. "Here," he says; "you will please carry that to Hamilton. It marks the beginning of my revenge. I base it on excerpts taken from a printed letter written by Dr. Cooper, who says: 'General Hamilton and Judge Kent have declared in substance that they look upon Colonel Burr as a dangerous man, and one who ought not to be trusted with the reins of government. I could detail a still more despicable opinion which General Hamilton has expressed of Colonel Burr.' I demand," concludes Aaron, "that he explain or account to me for having furnished such an 'opinion' to Dr. Cooper."

Van Ness purses up his lips, and knots his forehead cogitatively.

"Why pitch upon this letter of Cooper's as a *casus belli?*" he asks at last. "It is ambiguous, and involves a question of Cooper's construction of English. If we had nothing better it might do; but there is no such pressure. Hamilton, on many recent occasions, in speeches and in print, has applied to you the lowest epithets."

"You may recall, sir, that I once told you I was an artist of revenge. It is this very ambiguity I'm after. I would hook the fellow—hook him and play him as I would a fish! The man's a coward. I saw it written on his face that day when, following 'Long Island,' he threw away his gun and stores. By coming at him with this ambiguity, he will hope in the beginning to secure himself by evasions. He will write; I shall respond; there will be quite a correspondence. Days will drag along in agony and torment to him. And all the time he cannot escape. From the moment I send him that letter he is mine. It is as if I had him in a narrow lane; he cannot get by me. On the other hand, if I come upon him, as you suggest, with some undeniable charge, it will all be over in a moment. He will be obliged at once to toe the peg. You now understand that I design only in this letter to hook him hard and fast. When I have so played him as to satisfy even my hatred, rest secure I'll reel him in. He can no more avoid meeting me than he can avoid trembling when he contemplates the dark promise of that meeting. His wife would despise him, his very children cut him dead were he to creep aside."

Van Ness goes with Aaron's letter to Hamilton. The latter, as he reads it, cannot repress a start. The blood rushes from his face to his heart and back again; for, as though the blind were made to see, he realizes the snare into which he has walked—a snare that he himself has spread to his own undoing.

With an effort he commands his agitation. "You shall have my answer by the hand of Mr. Pendleton," he says.

Hamilton's reply, long and wordy, is two days on its way. As Aaron foretold, it is wholly evasive, and comes in its analysis to be nothing better than a desperate peering about for a hole through which its author may crawl, and drag with him what he calls his honor.

Aaron's reply closes each last loophole of escape. "Your letter," he says, "has furnished me new reasons for requiring a definite reply."

Hamilton reads his doom in this; and yet he cannot consent to the sacrifice, but struggles on. He makes a second response, this time at greater length than before.

Aaron, implacable as Death, reads what Hamilton has written.

"I think we should close the business," he says to Van Ness, as he gives him Hamilton's letter. "It has been ten days since I sent my initial note, and I have had enough of vengeance in anticipation. And so for the last act." Aaron dispatches Van Ness with a peremptory challenge. There being no gateway of relief, Hamilton is driven to accept. Even then comes a cry for time; Hamilton asks that the hour of final meeting be fixed ten further days away. Aaron smiles that pale smile of hatred made content, and grants the prayed-for delay.

The morning following the challenge and its acceptance, Pendleton appears with another note from Hamilton—who obviously prefers pens to pistols for the differences in hand. Aaron, smiling his pale smile of contented hate, refuses to receive it.

"There is," he observes, "no more to be said on either side, a challenge having been given and accepted. The one thing now is to load the pistols and step off the ground."

It is four days later, and the fight six days away. Aaron and Hamilton meet at a dinner given on Independence Day. Hamilton is hysterically gay, and sings his famous song, "The Drum." Also, he never once looks at Aaron, who, dark and lowering and silent, the black serpent sparkle in his eye, seldom shifts his gaze from Hamilton. Aaron's stare, remorseless, hungrily steadfast, is the stare of the tiger as it sights its prey.

Dr. Hosack calls on Aaron, where the latter sits alone at Richmond Hill. Wine is brought; the good doctor takes a nervous glass. He has a rosy, social face, has the good doctor, a face that tells of friendships and the genial board. Just now, however, he is out of spirits. Desperately setting down his wineglass, he flounders into the business that has brought him.

"I can hardly excuse my coming," he says, "and I apologize before I state my errand. I would have you believe, too, that my presence here is entirely by my own suggestion."

Aaron bows.

The good doctor explains that he has been called upon to go, professionally, to the fighting ground with Hamilton.

"That is how I became aware," he concludes, "of what you have in train. I resolved to see you, and make one last effort at a peaceful solution."

Aaron coldly shakes his head: "There can be no adjustment."

"Think of his family, sir! Think of his wife and his seven children!"

"Sir, it is he who should have thought of them. You should have gone to him when he was maligning me. What? You know how this man has slandered me! He has spoken to you as he has to hundreds of others!" The good doctor looks guiltily uneasy. "And now I am asked to sit down with the scorn he has heaped upon me, because he has a family! Does it not occur to you, sir, that I, too, have a family? But with this difference: Should he fall, there will be eight to share the loss among them. If I fall, the blow descends on but one pair of loving shoulders, and those the slender shoulders of a girl."

There is no hope: The good doctor goes his disappointed way.

The fighting grounds are a flat, grassy shelf of rock, under the heights of Weehawken. The morning is bright, with the July sun coming up over the bay. Hamilton, pale, like a man going open-eyed to death, takes his barge at the landing near the Grange. The good Dr. Hosack and his friend Pendleton are with him. The barge is pulled across to the grassy shelf, under the somber Weehawken heights.

The good doctor remains by the barge, while Hamilton, with friend Pendleton, ascends the rocky, shelving, shingly twenty feet to the place of meeting. They find Aaron and Van Ness awaiting them. Aaron touches his hat stiffly, and walks to the far end of the narrow grassy shelf.

Seconds Pendleton and Van Ness toss a dollar piece. Pendleton wins word and choice of position.

Ten paces are stepped off. Second Pendleton places his man at the up-the-river end of the six-foot grassy shelf. Aaron, pistol in hand, is given the other end. The word is to be:

"Present!—one—two—three—stop!" As the two stand in position, Aaron is confident, deadly, implacable; Hamilton looks the man already lost.

Seconds Pendleton and Van Ness retire out of range.

"Gentlemen, are you ready?".

"Ready!" says Aaron.

"Ready!" says Hamilton.

There is a pause, heavy with death. Then comes:

"Present!———-"

There is a flash and a roar!—a double flash, a double roar! The smoke curls, the rocks echo! Hamilton, with a stifled moan, reels, clutches at nothing, and pitches forward on his face—shot through and through. The Hamilton lead, wild and high, cuts a twig above Aaron's head.

Aaron takes a step toward his slain foe, and looks long and deep, like a man drinking. Van Ness comes up; Aaron tosses him the pistol, as folk toss aside a tool when the work is done—well done. Then he walks down to his barge, and shoves away for Richmond Hill, whose green peaceful cedars are smiling just across the river.

"It was worth the price, Van Ness," says Aaron. "The taste of that immortal vengeance will never perish on my lips, nor its fragrance die out in my heart."

CHAPTER XVII—AARON I, EMPEROR OF MEXICO

AARON sits placidly serene at Richmond Hill. Over his wine and his cigar, he reduces those dreams of empire to ink and paper. He maps out his design as architects draw plans and specifications for a house. His friends call—Van Ness, the stubborn Swart-wout, the Irvings, Peter and Washington.

Outside the serene four walls of Richmond Hill there goes up a prodigious hubbub of mourning—demonstrative if not deeply sincere. Hamilton, broken as a pillar of politics, was still a pillar of fashion. Was he not a Schuyler by adoption? Had he not a holding in Trinity? Therefore, come folk of powdered hair and silken hose, who deem it an opportunity to prove themselves of the town's Vere de Veres. There dwells fashionable advantage in tear-shedding at the going out of an illustrious name. Such tear-shedding provides the noble inference that the illustrious one was "of us." Alive to this, those of would-be fashion lapse into sackcloth and profound ashes, the sackcloth silk and the ashes ashes of roses. Also they arrange a public funeral at Trinity, and ask Gouverneur Morris, the local Mark Antony, to deliver an oration.

To the delicate sobbing of super-fashionable ones is added the pretended grief of Aaron's Clintonian foes. They think to use the death of Hamilton for Aaron's political destruction.

At no time does Aaron, serene with his wine and his cigar and his empire-planning, interpose by word or act to stem the current of real or spurious feeling. He heeds it no more, dwells on it no more than on the ebbing or flowing of the tides, muttering about the lawn's shaven borders in front of Richmond Hill.

The duel is eleven days old. Aaron, accompanied by the faithful, stubborn Swartwout, takes barge for Perth Amboy. The stubborn, faithful one says "Good-by!" and returns; Aaron is received by his friend Commodore Truxton. With Truxton he talks "empire" all night. He counts on English ships, he says; being promised in secret by British Minister Merry in Washington. Truxton shall command that fleet.

Having set the sea-going Truxton to hoping, Aaron pushes on for Philadelphia. He meets a beautiful girl whom he calls "Celeste," and to whom he does not speak of conquest or of empire. He remains a week in Philadelphia where, by word of Clinton's scandalized *American Citizen*: "He walks openly about the streets!"

Then to St. Simon's off the Georgia coast, guest of honor among polite Southern circles; and, from St. Simon's across to South Carolina and the noble Alston mansion, to be welcomed by the lustrous Theo. Thus the summer wears into fall, full of honor and ease and love.

With the first light flurry of snow, Aaron, gavel in hand, calls the grave togaed ones to order. It is to be his last session; with the going out of Congress, his Vice-Presidential term will have its end. During those three Washington months which ensue, he dines with the President, goes among friends and enemies as of yore, and never is brow arched or glance averted. Instead, there is marked regard for him; folk compete to do him honor. On the last Senate day he delivers his address of farewell, and men pronounce it a marvel of dignity, wisdom, and polish. So he steps down from American official life; but not from American interest.

Aaron, throughout this last Washington winter, presses his plans of empire. He attaches to them scores of his Bucktail followers—the Swartwouts, Dr. Erick Bollman, the Ogdens, Marinus Willet, General Du Puyster. Among those of Congress who lend their ears and give their words are Mathew Lyon, and Senators Dayton and Smith.. These are weary of civilization and the peace that rusts. Their hearts are eager for conquest, and a clash with the rough, wilderness conditions of the West beyond the Mississippi.

It is evening; Aaron sits in his rooms at the Indian Queen. Outside the rain is falling; Pennsylvania Avenue wallows a world of mire. Slave Peter intrudes his black face to announce:

"Gen'man comin'-up, sah!"

Peter, the privileged, would introduce Guy of Warwick, or the great Dun Cow, with as little ceremony.

As Peter withdraws, a burly figure fills the doorway.

"Come in, General," says Aaron.

General Wilkinson is among Aaron's older acquaintances. They were together at Quebec. They were fellow cabalists against Washington in an hour of Valley Forge. Now they are hand to hilt for Mexico, and that throne-building upon which Aaron has fixed his heart. Also, Wilkinson is in present command of the military forces of the United States in the Southwest, with headquarters at Natchez and New Orleans; and, because of that army control, he is the keystone to the arch of Aaron's plans.

The broad Wilkinson face glows at Aaron's genial "Come in." Its owner takes advantage of the invitation to draw a chair near the log fire, which the wet March night makes comfortable. Then he pours himself a glass of whisky.

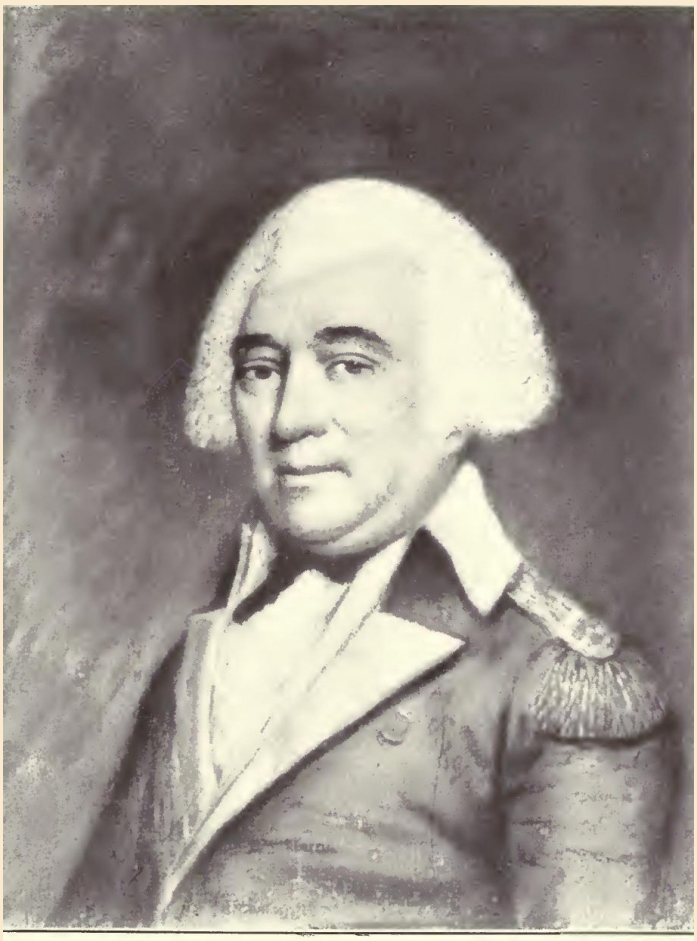
Wilkinson is worth considering. He is paunchy, gross, noisy, vain, bragging, shallow, with a red, sweat-distilling face, and a nose that tells of the bottle. He wears to-night the uniform of his rank. His coat exhibits

an exuberance of epaulette and an extravagance of gold braid that speak of tastes for coarse glitter. His iron-gray hair, shining with bear's grease, matches his fifty years. In conversation he becomes a composite of Rabelais and Munchausen. As for holding wine or stronger liquor, he rivals the Great Tun of Heidelberg.

The stubborn Swartwout doesn't like him. On a late occasion he expresses that dislike.

"To be frank, Chief," observes the blunt Bucktail, who, because of Aaron's headship of the Tammany organization, always addresses him as "Chief"—"to be frank, I believe your friend Wilkinson to be as crooked as a dog's hind leg."

"You are right, sir," says Aaron; "he is both dishonest and treacherous. It was he who uncovered our plans to unhorse Washington, by 'blabbing' them, as Conway called it, to Lord Stirling. Yes; dishonest and treacherous is Wilkinson."



General James Wilkinson

From a crayon portrait by James Sharpless (in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, Pa.).

"Why, then, do you trust him?"

"Why do I trust him?" repeats Aaron. "For several sufficient reasons. He has been in and out of Mexico, and is as familiar with the country as I am with Richmond Hill. He is cheek and jowl with the Bishop of New Orleans; and I hope to attach the church to my enterprise. Most of all, he commands the United States forces in the Southwest. Moreover, I count his dishonesty and genius for double dealing as virtues. They should become of importance in my enterprise.

"As how?" demands the mystified Buck-tail.

"As follows: Mexico is rich in gold; I argue that his dishonest avarice will take him loyally with me, hand and glove, in the hope of loot. His treacherous talents should come finely into play in certain diplomacies that must be entered upon with Mexican officials, who will favor me. Likewise he should find them exercise in dealings with the war department here in Washington; for you can see, sir, that, in his dual rôles of filibusterer and military commander of the Southwest for this government, he is certain to be often in collision with himself."

The stubborn Bucktail says no more, being too well drilled in deference to Aaron's will and word. It is clear, however, that his distrust of the whisky-faced Wilkinson has not been put to sleep.

Wilkinson, as he swigs his whisky by Aaron's fire, sits in happy ignorance of the distrustful Bucktail's views. Confident as to his own high importance, he plunges freely into Aaron's plans.

"Five hundred," says Aaron, "full five hundred are agreed to go; and I have lists of five thousand stout young fellows besides, who should crowd round our standard at the whistle of the fife. The move now is to purchase eight hundred thousand acres on the Washita, as a base from which to operate and a pretext for

bringing our people together. My excuse for recruiting them, you understand, will be that they are to settle on those eight hundred thousand Washita acres."

"Eight hundred thousand acres!" This, between sips of whisky: "That should take a fortune! Where do you think to find the money?"

"It will come from New York, from Connecticut, from New Jersey, from everywhere—but most of it from my son-in-law, Alston, who is to mortgage his plantation and crops. He is worth a round million."

"How do you succeed with the English?" asks Wilkinson, taking a new direction.

"It is as good as done. Merry, the British Minister, was with me yesterday. He has sent Colonel Williamson of his legation to London, to return by way of Jamaica and bring the English fleet to New Orleans. Truxton is to be given temporary command, and sail against Vera Cruz, where you and I must meet him with an army. When we have reduced Vera Cruz, and secured a port, we shall march upon the city of Mexico."

Wilkinson helps himself to another glass.

Then he rubs his encarmined nose with a ruminative forefinger.

"Well," he observes, "it will be a great venture! In New Orleans I'll make you acquainted with Daniel Clark, an Englishman, who has the riches and almost the wisdom of Solomon. He'll embrace the enterprise; once he does he'll back it with his dollars. Clark himself is strong in ships; with his merchant fleet and his warehouses, he should keep us in provisions in Vera Cruz."

"That is well bethought," cries Aaron, eyes a-sparkle.

"Clark's relations with the bishop are likewise close," adds Wilkinson.

Taking a pull at the whisky, he runs off in a fresh direction.

"Give me your scheme in detail. We are not, I trust, to waste time with a claptrap democracy, nor engage in the popular tomfoolery of a republic?"

"The government, imperial in form, shall be styled the 'Empire of Mexico.' I shall be crowned Emperor Aaron I, and the crown made hereditary in the male line; which last will create my grandson, Aaron Burr Alston, heir presumptive."

"And I?" interjects Wilkinson, his features doubly aglow with alcohol and interest. "What are to be my rank and powers?"

"You will be generalissimo of the army."

"Second only to you?"

"Second only to me. Here; I've drawn an outline of the civil fabric we're to set up. The government, as I've said, is to be imperial, myself emperor. There is to be a nobility of grandees, titles hereditary, who will sit as a parliament. The noble programme is this: Aaron I, emperor; Wilkinson, generalissimo of the forces; Alston, chief of the grandees and secretary of state; Theo, chief lady of the court and princess mother of the heir presumptive; Aaron Burr Alston, heir presumptive; Truxton, lord high admiral of the fleet. There will be ambassadors, ministers, consuls, and the usual furniture of government. The grandees should be limited to one hundred, and chosen from those whom we bring with us. There may be minor noble grades, drawn from ones powerful and friendly among the natives."

Aaron and Wilkinson of the carnelian nose sit far into the watches of the night, discussing the great design. As the carnelianed one takes his leave, he says:

"We are fully agreed, I find. To-morrow I start for Natchez; you are to follow in two weeks, you say?"

"Yes," responds Aaron. "There should be months of travel ahead, before my arrangements are perfected. I must meet Adair in Kentucky, Smith in Ohio, Harrison in Indiana, Jackson in Tennessee; besides visit New Orleans, and arrange about those eight hundred thousand Washita acres. In my running about, I shall see you many times, and confer with you as questions come up."

"I shall meet you at Fort Massac on the Ohio. Don't forget two several matters: The enterprise will lick up gold like fire. Also, that in the civil as well as the military control of the empire, I'm to be second to no one save yourself."

"I shall forget nothing. Speaking of money, I sell Richmond Hill to-morrow for twenty-five thousand dollars. The deeds are drawn and signed."

"Oh, we shall find money enough," returns Wilkinson contentedly. "Only it's well never to lose sight of the fact that we're going to need it. Clark, as I say, will plunge in for something handsome—something that should call for six figures in its measure. As to my rank of generalissimo, second only to yourself, it is all I could ask. Popularly," concludes Wilkinson, preparing to take his leave—"popularly, I shall be known as 'Wilkinson the Deliverer.' Coming, as I shall, at the head of those gallant conquering armies which are to relieve the groaning Mexicans from the yoke of Spain, I think it a natural and an appropriate title—'Wilkinson the Deliverer!'"

"Not only an appropriate title," observes the courtly Aaron, who remembers his generalissimo's recent loyalty to the whisky bottle, "but admirably adapted to fill the trump of fame."

The door closes on the broad back of the coming "Deliverer." As Aaron again bends over his "Empire," he hears that personage's footsteps, uncertain by virtue of much drink, and proudly martial at the glorious prospect before him, go shuffling down the corridor of the Indian Queen.

"Bah!" mutters Aaron; "Jack Swartwout was right. It is both dangerous and disgusting to build a great design on the trustless foundation of this conceited, treacherous sot. And yet, such is the irony of my situation, I am unable to do otherwise. At that, I shall manage him. Oh, if Jefferson were only of the right viking sort! But, no; a creature of abstractions, bookshelves and alcoves!—a closet philosopher in whose veins runs no drop of red aggressive fighting blood!—he would as soon think of treason as of conquest, and, indeed, might readily fall into the error of imagining they spell the same thing. Besides, he hates me for that presidential tie of four years ago. The plain offspring of his own unpopularity, he none the less leaves it on my doorstep as the natural child of my intrigues. No! I must watch Jefferson, not trust him. His judgment is ever

valet to his hatreds. He would call the most innocent act a crime, prove white black, for the privilege of making Aaron Burr an outlaw.”

CHAPTER XVIII—THE TREASON OF WILKINSON

NOW begin days crowded on new faces and new scenes. Aaron ascends the Potomac, and crosses the mountains to Pittsburg. He buys a cabined flatboat and floats down to Marietta. They tell him of Blennerhassett, romantic, eccentric, living on an island below. He visits the island; the lord of the isle is absent, but his spouse, broad, thick, genial, not beautiful, welcomes him and bids him come again.

Aaron goes to Cincinnati, and confers with Senator Smith; to Louisville, where he meets General Adair; then cross country to Nashville to find General Jackson—his friend of a Senate day when he, Aaron, served colleague to the kiln-dried Rufus King.

Everywhere Aaron is the honored guest at barbecue and banquet. Processions march; balls are given to his glory. There are roasting of oxen, drinking of corn whisky, rosining of bows and scraping of catgut; and all after the hearty fashion of the West, when once it gets a hero in its clutches.

To Adair and Smith and the lean Jackson, Aaron lays out his purpose of Southwestern conquest. These stark worthies go with him heart and soul. Each hates the Spaniard with a Saxon’s hate; each is a Francis Drake at bottom. Their hot concern in what he is upon, fairly overruns the verbal pace of Aaron in its telling. Only, he is half-secret, and does not make clear those elements of throne and crown and scepter. It will leave them less over which to hesitate, he thinks; for he perceives that he deals with folk who are congenital republicans.

The lean Jackson, even more heartily than do the others, enters into Aaron’s plans. He declares that the best blood of Tennessee shall follow him. In the long talks they have at the Hermitage, Aaron implants in Jackson a Southwestern impulse which, in its deeds, will find victorious culmination thirty years later at San Jacinto. In that day, Jackson himself will occupy the chair now held by Jefferson.

Being no prophet, but only a restless, strong, ambitious man, Aaron does not foresee that day of Jackson in the White House, San Jacinto, and Sam Houston—the latter just now a lad of thirteen, and hidden away in his ancestral woods. Full of hope, Aaron goes diligently forward with his sowing, the harvest whereof those others are to reap. He lays the bedplates of an empire truly; but not *his* empire—not the empire of Aaron I, with Aaron II to follow him. He will be tottering on the grave’s edge in a day of San Jacinto; and yet his age-chilled heart will warm at the news of it, and know it for his work.

Aaron leaves Jackson, drifts down the Cumberland to the Ohio, and meets Wilkinson, who—nose as red, with whisky-fuddled soul—is as much in ardent arms as ever. Wilkinson cannot greet him too warmly. The only change perceivable in our corn-soaked warrior is a doubt as to whether, instead of “Wilkinson the Deliverer,” he might not better fill the wondering measure of futurity as “Washington of the West.” Both titles are full of majesty—a thing important to a taste streaked of rum—but the latter possesses the more alliterative roll. The red-nosed Wilkinson says finally that he will keep the question of title in abeyance, committing himself to neither, with a possibility of adopting both.

Aaron regains his cabined flatboat, and follows the current eight hundred miles to Natchez. Later he drifts away to New Orleans. The latter city is a bubbling community of nine thousand souls—American, Spanish, French. It runs as socially wild over Aaron as did those ruder, up-the-river regions; although, proving its civilization, it scrapes a more delicate fiddle and declines the greasy barbecue enormities of a whole roast ox.

The Englishman Clark strikes hands with Aaron for the coming empire. It is agreed that, with rank next to son-in-law Alston’s, Clark shall be of the grandees. Also, Aaron makes the acquaintance of the Bishop of New Orleans, and the pair dispatch three Jesuit brothers to Mexico to spy out the land. For the Spanish rule, as rapacious as tyrannous, has not fostered the Church, but robbed it. Under Aaron I, the Church shall not only be protected, but become the national Church.

Leaving New Orleans, Aaron returns by an old Indian trace to Nashville, keeping during the journey a sharp lookout for banditti who rob and kill along the trail. Coming safe, he is welcomed by the lean Jackson, whom he sets building bateaux for conveying the Tennessee contingent to the coming work.

HARMAN BLENNERHASSET
After a miniature made in Europe about 1795.

Leaving Jackson busy with saw and adz and auger over flatboats, Aaron heads north for the island dwelling of Blennerhassett. In the fortnight he spends with that muddled exile, he wins him—life and fortune. Blennerhassett is weak, forceless, a creature of dreams. Under spell of the dominating Aaron, he sees with the eyes, speaks with the mouth, feels with the heart of that strong ambitious one. Blennerhassett will be a grandee. As such he must go to England, ambassador for the Empire of Mexico, bearing the letters of Aaron I. He takes joy in picturing himself at the court of St. James, and hears with the ear of anticipation the exclamatory admiration of his Irish friends.

"Ay! they'll change their tune!" cries Blennerhassett, as he considers his greatness to come. "It should open their Irish eyes, for sure, when they meet me as 'Don Blennerhassett, grandee of the Mexican Empire, Ambassador to St. James by favor of his Imperial Majesty, Aaron I.' It'll cause my surly kinfolk to sing out of the other corners of their mouths; for I cannot remember that they've been over-respectful to me in the past."

Aaron recrosses the mountains, and descends the Potomac to Washington. He dines with Jefferson, and relates his adventures, but hides his plans. No whisper of empire and emperors at the great democrat's table! Aaron is not so horn-mad as all that.

While Aaron is in Washington, the stubborn Swartwout comes over. As the fruits of the conference between him and his chief, the stubborn one returns, and sends his brother Samuel, young Ogden, and Dr. Bollman to Blennerhassett. Also, the lustrous Theo and little Aaron Burr Alston join Aaron; for the princess mother of the heir presumptive, as well as the sucking emperor himself, is to go with Aaron when he again heads for the West. There will be no return—the lustrous Theo and the heir presumptive are to accompany the expedition of conquest. Son-in-law Alston, who will be chief of the grandees and secretary of state, promises to follow later. Just now he is trying to negotiate a loan on his plantations; and making slow work of it, because of Jefferson's interference with the exportation of rice.

Madam Blennerhassett welcomes the princess mother with wide arms, and kisses the heir presumptive. Aaron decides to make the island a present headquarters. Leaving the lustrous Theo and the heir presumptive to Madam Blennerhassett, he indulges in swift, darting journeys, west and north and south. He arranges for fifteen bateaux, each to carry one hundred men, at Marietta. He crosses to Nashville to talk with Jackson, and note the progress of that lean filibusterer with the Cumberland flotilla. What he sees so pleases him that he leaves four thousand dollars—a royal sum!—with the lean Jackson, to meet initial charges in outfitting the Tennessee wing of the great enterprise.

Aaron goes to Chillicothe and talks to the Governor of Ohio. Returning, he drops over to the little huddle of huts called Cannonsburg. There he forms the acquaintance of an honest, uncouth personage named Morgan, who is eaten up of patriotism and suspicion. Morgan listens to Aaron, and decides that he is a firebrand of treason about to set the Ohio valley in a blaze. He writes these flaming fears to Jefferson—as suspicious as any Morgan!

Having aroused Morgan the wrong way,

Aaron descends to New Orleans and makes payment on those eight hundred thousand acres along the Washita. Following this real estate transaction, he hunts up the whisky-reddened Wilkinson, and offers a suggestion. As commander in chief, Wilkinson might march a brigade into the Spanish country on the Sabine, and tease and tempt the Castilians into a clash. Aaron argues that, once a brush occurs between the Spaniards and the United States, a war fury will seize the country, and furnish an admirable background of sentiment for his own descent upon Mexico. Wilkinson, full of bottle valor, receives Aaron's suggestion with rapture, and starts for the Sabine. Wilkinson safely off for the Sabine, to bring down the desired trouble, Aaron again pushes up for Blennerhassett and that exile's island.

While these important matters are being thus set moving war-wise, the soft-witted Blennerhassett is not idle. He writes articles for the papers, descriptive of Mexico, which he pictures as a land flowing with milk and honey. During gaps in his milk-and-honey literature, the coming ambassador buys pork and flour and corn and beans, and stores them on the island. They are to feed the expedition, when it shoves forth upon the broad Ohio in those fifteen Marietta bateaux.

Aaron gets back to the island. Accompanied by the lustrous Theo and Blennerhassett, he goes to Lexington. While there, word reaches him that Attorney Daviess, acting for the government by request of Jefferson, has moved the court at Frankfort for an order "commanding the appearance of Aaron Burr." The letter of the suspicious Morgan to the suspicious Jefferson has fallen like seed upon good ground.

Aaron does not wait; taking with him Henry Clay as counsel, he repairs to Frankfort as rapidly as blue grass horseflesh can travel. Going into court, Aaron, with Henry Clay, routs Attorney Daviess, who intimates but does not charge treason. The judge, the grand jury, and the public give their sympathies to Aaron; following his exoneration, they promote a ball in his honor.

Recruits begin to gather; the fifteen Marietta bateaux approach completion. Aaron dispatches Samuel Swartwout and young Ogden with letters to the red-nosed, necessary Wilkinson, making mad the Spaniards on the Sabine. Also Adair and Bollman take boat for New Orleans. When Swartwout and young Ogden have departed, Aaron resumes his Marietta preparations, urging speed with those bateaux.

Swartwout reaches the red-nosed Wilkinson, and delivers Aaron's letters. These missives find the red-nosed one in a mixed mood. His cowardice and native genius for treachery, acting lately in concert, have built up doubts within him. There are bodily perils, sure to attend upon the conquest of Mexico, which the rednosed one now hesitates to face. Why should he face them? Would he not get as much from Jefferson for betraying Aaron? He might, by a little dexterous mendacity, make the Credulous Jefferson believe that Aaron meditates a blow not at Mexico but the United States. It would permit him, the red-nosed one, to pose as the saviour of his country. And as the acknowledged saviour of his country, what might not he demand?—what might not he receive? Surely, a saved country, even a saved republic, would not be ungrateful!

The red-nosed one's genius for treachery being thus addressed, he sends posthaste to Jefferson. He warns him that a movement is abroad to break up the Union. Every State west of the Alleghenies is to be in the revolt. Thus declares the treacherous red-nosed one, who thinks it the shorter cut to that coveted title, "Wilkinson the Deliverer, Washington of the West." Besides, there will be the glory and sure emolument! Wilkinson the red-nosed, thinks on these things as he goes plunging Aaron and his scheme of empire into ruin.

While these wonders are working in the West, Aaron, wrapped in ignorance concerning them, is driving matters with a master's hand at Marietta and the island. The fifteen bateaux are still unfinished, when he resolves, with sixty of his people, to go down to Natchez. There are matters which call to him in connection with those Washita eight hundred thousand acres. Besides, he desires a final word with the red-nosed Wilkinson.

At Bayou Pierre, a handful of miles above Natchez, Aaron hears of a Jefferson proclamation. The news touches his heart as with a finger of frost. Folk say the proclamation recites incipient treason in the States west of the Alleghenies, and warns all men not to engage therein on peril of their necks. About the same time comes word that the red-nosed, treacherous Wilkinson has caused the arrest of Adair, Dr. Boll-man, Samuel Swartwout, and young Ogden, and shipped them, per schooner, to Baltimore, to answer as open traitors to the State. Aaron requires all his fortitude to command himself.

The Governor of Mississippi grows excited; he feels the heroic need of doing something. He hoarsely orders out certain companies of militia; after which he calls into counsel his attorney general.

The latter potentate advises eloquence before powder and ball. He believes that treason, black and lowering, is abroad, the country's integrity threatened by the demonaic Aaron. Still, he has faith in his own sublime powers as an orator. He tells the governor that he can talk the treason-mongering Aaron into tameness. At this the governor—nobly willing to risk and, if need press, sacrifice his attorney general on the altars of a common good—bids him try what he can eloquently do.

The confident attorney general goes to Aaron, where that would-be conqueror is lying, at Bayou Pierre. He sets forth what a fatal mistake it would be, were Aaron to lock military horns with the puissant territory of Mississippi. Common prudence, he says, dictates that Aaron surrender without a struggle, and come into court and be tried.

Aaron makes not the least objection. He goes with the attorney general, and, pending investigation by the grand jurors, is enthusiastically hailed by rich planters of the region, who sign for ten thousand dollars.

The grand jurors, following the example of those others of the blue grass, find Aaron an innocent, ill-used individual. They order his honorable release, and then devote themselves, with heartfelt diligence, to indicting the governor for illicitly employing the militia. Cool counsel intervenes, however, and the grand jurors, not without difficulty, are convinced that the governor intended no wrong. Thereupon they content themselves with grimly warning that official to hereafter let "honest settlers" coming into the country alone. Having discharged their duty in the premises, the grand jurors lapse into private life and the governor draws a long breath of relief.

Aaron procures a copy of Jefferson's anti-treason proclamation. The West will snap derisive fingers at it; but New England and the East are sure to be set on edge. The proclamation itself is enough to cripple his

enterprise of empire. Added to the treachery of the rednosed Wilkinson, it makes such empire for the nonce impossible. The proclamation does not name him; but Aaron knows that the dullest mind between the oceans will supply the omission.

There is nothing else for it. The mere thought is gall and wormwood; and yet Aaron's dream must vanish before what stubborn conditions confront him.

As a best move toward extricating himself from the tangle into which the perfidy of the red-nosed one has forced him, Aaron decides to go to Washington. He informs the leading spirits about him of his purpose, mounts the finest horse to be had for money, and sets out.

It is a week later. One Perkins meets Aaron at the Alabama village of Wakeman. The thoroughbred air of the man on the thoroughbred horse sets Perkins to thinking. After ten minutes' study, Perkins is flooded of a great light.

"Aaron Burr!" he cries, and rushes off to Fort Stoddart.

Perkins, out of breath, tells his news to Captain Gaines. Two hours later, as Aaron comes riding down a hill, he is met by Captain Gaines and a sober file of soldiers.

The captain salutes:

"You are Colonel Burr," he says. "I arrest you by order of President Jefferson. You must go with me to Fort Stoddart, where you will be treated with the respect due one who has honorably filled the second highest post of Government."

"Sir," responds Aaron, unruffled and superior, "I am Colonel Burr. I yield myself your prisoner; since, with the force at your command, it is not possible to do otherwise." Aaron rides with Captain Gaines to the fort. As the two dismount at the captain's quarters, a beautiful woman greets them.

"This is my wife, Colonel Burr," says Captain Gaines. Then, to Madam Gaines: "Colonel Burr will be our guest at dinner."

Aaron, the captain, and the beautiful Madam Gaines go in to dinner. Two sentries with fixed bayonets march and countermarch before the door. Aaron beholds in them the sign visible that his program of empire, which has cost him so much and whereon his hopes were builded so high, is forever thrust aside. Smooth, polished, deferential, brilliant—the beautiful Madam Gaines says she has yet to meet a more fascinating man! Aaron is never more steadily composed, never more at polite ease than now when power and empire vanish for all time.

"You appreciate my position, sir," says Captain Gaines, as they rise from the table. "I trust you do not blame me for performing my duty."

"Sir," returns Aaron, with an acquiescent bow, "I blame only the hateful, thick stupidity of Jefferson, and my own criminal dullness in trusting a scoundrel."

CHAPTER XIX—HOW AARON IS INDICTED

IT is evening at the White House. The few dinner guests have departed, and Jefferson is alone in his study. As he stands at the open window, and gazes out across the sweep of lawn to the Potomac, shining like silver in the rays of the full May moon, his face is cloudy and angry. The face of the sage of Monticello has put aside its usual expression of philosophy. In place of the calm that should reign there, the look which prevails is one of narrowness, prejudice and wrathful passion.

Apparently, he waits the coming of a visitor, for he wheels without surprise, as a fashionably dressed gentleman is ushered in by a servant.

"Ah, Wirt!" he cries; "be seated, please. You got my note?"

William Wirt is thirty-five—a clean, well-bred example of the conventional Virginia gentleman. He accepts the proffered chair; but with the manner of one only half at ease, as not altogether liking the reason of his White House presence.

"Your note, Mr. President?" he repeats. "Oh, yes; I received it. What you propose is highly flattering. And yet—and yet——"

"And yet what, sir?" breaks in Jefferson impatiently. "Surely, I propose nothing unusual? You are practicing at the Richmond bar. I ask you to conduct the case against Colonel Burr."

"Nothing unusual, of course," returns Wirt, who, gifted of a keen political eye, hungrily foresees a final attorney generalship in what he is about. "And yet, as I was about to say, there are matters which should be considered. There is George Hay, for instance; he is the Government's attorney for the Richmond district. It is his province as well as duty to prosecute Colonel Burr; he might resent my being saddled upon him. Have you thought of Mr. Hay?"

"Thought of him? Hay is a dullard, a blockhead, a respectable nonentity! no more fit to contend with Colonel Burr and those whom he will have about him, than would be a sucking babe. He is of no courage, no force, sir; he seems to think that, now he is the son-in-law of James Monroe, he has done quite enough to merit success in both law and politics. No; there is much depending on this trial, and I desire you to try it. Burr must be convicted. The black Federal plot to destroy this republic and set a monarchy in its stead, a plot of which he himself is but a single item, must be nipped in the bud. Moreover, you will find that I am to be on trial even more than is Colonel Burr. The case will not be 'The People against Aaron Burr.' but 'The

Federalists against Thomas Jefferson.' Do you understand? I am the object of a Federal plot, as much as is the Government itself! John Marshall, that arch Federalist, will be on the bench, doing all he can for the plotters and their instrument, Colonel Burr. It is no time to risk myself on so slender a support as George Hay. It is you who must conduct this cause."

Wirt is a bit scandalized by this outburst; especially at the reckless dragging in of Chief Justice Marshall. He expostulates; but is too much the courtier to let any harshness creep into either his manner or his speech.

"You surely do not mean to say," he begins, "that the chief justice——"

"I mean to say," interrupts Jefferson, "that you must be ready to meet every trick that Marshall can play against the Government. For all his black robe, is he of different clay than any other? Believe me, he's a Federalist long before he's a judge! Let me ask a question: Why did Marshall, the chief justice, mind you, hold the preliminary examination of Burr? Why, having held it, did he not commit him for treason? Why did he hold him only for a misdemeanor, and admit him to bail? Does not that look as though Marshall had taken possession of the case in Burr's interest? You spoke a moment ago of the propriety of Hay prosecuting the charge against Burr, being, as he is, the Government's attorney for that district. Does not it occur to you that his honor, Judge Griffin, is the judge for that district? And yet Marshall shoves him aside to make room on the bench for himself. Sir, there is chicanery in this. We must watch Marshall. A chief justice, indeed! A chief Federalist, rather! Why, he even so much lacked selfrespect as to become a guest at a dinner given in Colonel Burr's honor, after he had committed that traitor in ten thousand dollars bail! An excellent, a dignified chief justice, truly!—doing dinner table honor to one whom he must presently try for a capital offense!"

"Justice Marshall's appearance at the Burr dinner"—Wirt makes the admission doubtfully—"was not, I admit, in the very flower of good taste. None the less, I should infer honesty rather than baseness from such appearance. If he contemplated any wrong in Colonel Burr's favor, he would have remained away. Coming to the case itself," says Wirt, anxious to avoid further discussion of Judge Marshall, as a topic whereon he and Jefferson are not likely to agree, "what is the specific act of treason with which the Government charges Colonel Burr?"

"The conspiracy, wherein he was prime mover, aimed first to take Mexico from, the Spanish. Having taken Mexico, the plotters—Colonel Burr at the head—purposed seizing New Orleans. That would give them a hold in the vast region drained by the Mississippi. Everything west of the Alleghenies was expected to flock round their standards. With an empire reaching from Darien to the Great Lakes, from the Pacific to the Alleghenies, their final move was to be made upon Washington itself. Sir, the Federalists hate this republic—have always hated it! What they desire is a monarchy. They want a king, not a president, in the White House."

"I learn," observes Wirt—"I learn, since my arrival, that Colonel Burr has been in Washington."

"That was three days ago. He demanded copies of my orders to General Wilkinson. When I prevented his obtaining them, he said he would move for a *subpoena duces tecum*, addressed to me personally. Think of that, sir! Can you conceive of greater impudence? He will sue out a subpoena against the President of this country, and compel him to come into court bringing the archives of Government!"

Wirt shrugs his shoulders. "And why not, sir?" he asks at last. "In the eye of the law a president is no more sacred than a pathmaster. A murder might be committed in the White House grounds. You, looking from that window, might chance to witness it—might, indeed, be the only witness. You yourself are a lawyer, Mr. President. You will not tell me that an innocent man, accused of murder, is to be denied your testimony?—that he is to hang rather than ruffle a presidential dignity? What is the difference between the case I've supposed and that against Colonel Burr? He is to be charged with treason, you say! Very well; treason is a hanging matter as much as murder."

Jefferson and Wirt, step by step, go over the arrest of Aaron, and what led to it. It is settled that Wirt shall control for the prosecution. Also, when the Grand Jury is struck, he must see to it that Aaron is indicted for treason.

"Marshall has confined the inquiry," says Jefferson, "to what Burr contemplated against Mexico—a mere misdemeanor! You, Wirt, must have the Grand Jury take up that part of the conspiracy which was leveled against this country. There is abundant testimony. Burr talked it to Eaton in Washington, to Morgan in Ohio, to Wilkinson at Fort Massac."

"You speak of his *talking* treason," returns Wirt with a thoughtful, non-committal air. "Did he anywhere or on any occasion *act* it? Was there any overt act of war?"

"What should you call the doings at Blennerhassett Island?—the gathering of men and stores?—the boat-building at Marietta and Nashville? Are not those, taken with the intention, hostile acts?—overt acts of war?"

Wirt falls into deep study. "We must," he says after a moment's silence, "leave those questions, I fear, for Justice Marshall to decide."

Jefferson relates how he has written Governor Pinckney of South Carolina, advising the arrest of Alston.

"To be sure, Alston is not so bad as Colonel Burr," he observes, "for the reason that he is not so big as Colonel Burr; just as a young rattlesnake is not so venomous as an old one." Then, impressively: "Wirt, Colonel Burr is a dangerous man! He will find his place in history as the Catiline of America."

Wirt cannot hide a smile. "It is but fair you should say so, Mr. President, since at the Richmond hearing he spoke of you as a presidential Jack Straw." Seeing that Jefferson does not enjoy the reference, Wirt hastens to another subject. "Colonel Burr will have formidable counsel. Aside from Wickham, and Botts, and Edmund Randolph, across from Maryland will come Luther Martin."

"Luther Martin!" cries Jefferson. "So they are to unloose that Federal bulldog against me! But then the whisky-swilling beast is never sober."

"No more safe as an adversary for that," retorts Wirt. "If I am ever called upon to write Luther Martin's epitaph, I shall make it 'Ever drunk and ever dangerous!'"

On the bench sits Chief Justice Marshall—tall, slender—eyes as black as Aaron's own—face high, dignified—brow noble, full—the whole man breathing distinction. By his side, like some small thing lost in shadow, no one noticing him, no one addressing him, a picture of silent humility, sits District Judge Griffin.

For the Government comes Wirt, sneering, harsh—as cold and hard and fine and keen as thrice-tempered steel. With him is Hay—slow, pompous, of much respectability and dull weakness. Assisting Wirt and Hay and filling a minor place, is one McRae.

Leading for the defense, is Aaron himself—confident, unshaken. Already he has begun to relay his plans of Mexican conquest. He assures Blennerhassett, who is with him, that the present interruption should mean no more than a time-waste of six months. With Aaron sit Edmund Randolph, the local Nestor; Wickham, clear, sure of law and fact; and Botts, the Bayard of the Richmond bar. Most formidable is Aaron's rear guard, the thunderous Luther Martin—coarse, furious, fearless—gay clothes stained and soiled—ruffles foul and grimy—eye fierce, bleary, bloodshot—nose bulbous, red as a carbuncle—a hoarse, roaring, threatening voice—the Thersites of the hour. Never sober, he rolls into court as drunk as a Plantagenet. Ever dangerous, he reads, hears, sees everything, and forgets nothing. Quick, rancorous, headlong as a fighting bull, he lowers his horns against Wirt, whenever that polished one puts himself within forensic reach. Also, for all his cool, sneering skill, Toreador Wirt never meets the charge squarely, but steps aside from it.

Apropos of nothing, as Martin takes his place by the trial table, he roars out:

"Why is this trial ordered for Richmond? Why is it not heard in Washington? It is by command of Jefferson, sir. He thinks that in his own State of Virginia, where he is invincible and Colonel Burr a stranger, the name of 'Jefferson' will compel a verdict of guilt. There is fairness for you!"

Wirt glances across, but makes no response to the tirade; for Martin, purple of face, snorting ferociously, seems only waiting a word from him to utter worse things.

The Grand Jury is chosen: foreman, John Randolph of Roanoke—sour, inimical, hateful, voice high and spiteful like the voice of a scolding woman! The Grand Jury is sent to its room to deliberate as to indictments, while the court adjourns for the day.

It is well into the evening when the parties in interest leave the courtroom. As Wirt and Hay, arm in arm, are crossing the courthouse green, they become aware of an orator who, loud of tone and careless of his English, is addressing a crowd from the steps of a corner grocery. Just as the two arrive within earshot, the orator, lean, hawklike of face, tosses aloft a rake-handle arm, and shouts:

"When Jefferson says that Colonel Burr is a traitor, Jefferson lies in his throat!" The crowd applaud enthusiastically.

Hay looks at Wirt. "Who is the fellow?" he asks.

"Oh! he's a swashbuckler militia general," returns Wirt, carelessly. "He's a low fellow, I'm told; his name is Andrew Jackson. He was one of Colonel Burr's confederates. They say he's the greatest blackguard in Tennessee."

Just now, did some Elijah touch the Wirtian elbow and tell of a day to come when he, Wirt, will be driven to resign that coveted attorney generalship into the presidential hands of the "blackguard," who will receive it promptly, and dismiss him into private life no more than half thanked for what public service he has rendered, the ambitious Virginian would hold the soothsayer to be a madman, not a prophet.

Scores upon scores of witnesses are sent one by one to the Grand Jury. The days run into weeks. Every hour the question is asked: "Where is Wilkinson?" The red-nosed one is strangely, exasperatingly absent.

Wirt seeks to explain that absence. The journey is long, he says. He will pledge his honor for the red-nosed one's appearance.

Meanwhile the friends of Aaron pour in from North and West and South. The stubborn, faithful Swartwout is there, with his brother Samuel; for, Samuel Swartwout and young Ogden and Adair and Bollman, shipped aforetime per schooner to Baltimore by the red-nosed one as traitors, have been declared innocent, and are all in Richmond attending upon their chief.

One morning the whisper goes about that "Wilkinson is here." The whisper is confirmed by the red-nosed one's appearance in court. Young Washington Irving, who has come down from New York in the interest of Aaron, writes concerning that red-nosed advent:

Wilkinson strutted into court, and took his stand in a parallel line with Colonel Burr. Here he stood for a moment swelling like a turkey cock, and bracing himself to meet Colonel Burr's eye. The latter took no notice of him, until Judge Marshall directed the clerk to "swear General Wilkinson." At the mention of the name, Colonel Burr turned and looked him full in the face, with one of his piercing regards, swept him from head to foot, and then went on conversing with his counsel as before. The whole look was over in a moment; and yet it was admirable. There was no appearance of study or constraint, no affectation of disdain or defiance; only a slight expression of contempt played across the countenance, such as one might show on seeing a person whom one considers mean and vile.

That evening Samuel Swartwout meets the red-nosed one, as the latter warrior is strutting on the walk for the admiration of men, and thrusts him into a mud hole. The lean Jackson is so delighted at this disposition of the rednosed one, that he clasps the warlike Swartwout in his rake-handle arms. Later, by twenty-two years, he will make him collector of the port of New York for it. Just now, however, he advises a duel, holding that the mudhole episode will be otherwise incomplete.

Since Swartwout has had the duel in his mind from the beginning, he and the lean Jackson combine in the production of a challenge, which is duly sent to the red-nosed one in the name of Swartwout. The red-nosed one has no heart for duels, and crawls from under the challenge by saying, "I refuse to hold communication with a traitor." Thereupon Swartwout, with the lean Jackson to aid him, again lapses into the clerical, and prints the following gorgeous outburst in the *Richmond Gazette:*

Brigadier General Wilkinson: Sir: When once the chain of infamy grapples to a knave, every new link creates a fresh sensation of detestation and horror. As it gradually or precipitately unfolds itself, we behold in each succeeding connection, and arising from the same corrupt and contaminated source, the same base and degenerated conduct. I could not have supposed that you would have completed the catalogue of your crimes by adding to the guilt of treachery forgery and perjury the accomplishment of cowardice. Having failed in two different attempts to procure an interview with you, such as no gentleman of honor could refuse, I have only

to pronounce and publish you to the world as a coward.

Samuel Swartwout.

The Grand Jury comes into court, and by the shrill mouth of Foreman Randolph reports two indictments against Aaron: one for treason, "as having levied war against the United States," and one for "having levied war upon a country, to wit, Mexico, with which the United States are at peace"—the latter a misdemeanor.

CHAPTER XX—HOW AARON IS FOUND INNOCENT

THE indictments are read, and Aaron pleads "Not guilty!" Thereupon Luther Martin moves for a *subpoena duces tecum* against Jefferson, commanding him to bring into court those written orders from the files of the War Department, which he, as President and *ex officio* commander in chief of the army, issued to the red-nosed Wilkinson. Arguing the motion, the violent Martin proceeds in these words:

"We intend to show that these orders were contrary to the Constitution and the laws. We intend to show that by these orders Colonel Burr's property and person were to be destroyed; yes, by these tyrannical orders the life and property of an innocent man were to be exposed to destruction. This is a peculiar case, sirs. President Jefferson has undertaken to prejudge my client by declaring that 'of his guilt there can be no doubt!' He has assumed to himself the knowledge of the Supreme Being, and pretended to search the heart of my client. He has proclaimed him a traitor in the face of the country. He has let slip the dogs of war, the hell-hounds of persecution, to hunt down my client. And now, would the President of the United States, who has himself raised all this clamor, pretend to keep back the papers wanted for a trial where life itself is at stake? It is a sacred principle that the accused has a right to the evidence needed for his defense, and whosoever—whether he be a president or some lesser man—withholds such evidence is substantially a murderer, and will, be so recorded in the register of heaven."

Argument ended, Marshall, chief justice, sustains the motion. He holds that the *subpoena duces tecum* may issue, and goes so far as to say that, if it be necessary to the ends of justice, the personal attendance of Jefferson himself shall be compelled.

The charge is treason, and no bail can be taken; Aaron must be locked up. The Governor of Virginia offers as a place of detention a superb suite of rooms, meant for official occupation, on the third floor of the penitentiary building. Marshall, chief justice, accepting such proffer, orders Aaron's confinement in the superb official suite. Aaron takes possession, stocks the larder, loads the sideboards, and, with a cloud of servitors, gives a dinner party to twenty friends.

The lustrous Theo arrives, and makes her residence with Aaron in the official suite, as lady of the establishment. Each day a hundred visitors call, among them the aristocracy of the town. Also dinner follows dinner; the official suite assumes a gala, not to say a gallant look, and no one would think it a prison, or dream for one urbane moment that Aaron—that follower of the gospel according to Lord Chesterfield—is fighting for his life.

Following the order for the *subpoena duces tecum*, and Aaron's dinner-giving incarceration in the official suite, Marshall, chief justice, directs that court be adjourned until August—a month away.

Wirt, during the vacation, goes over to Washington. He finds Jefferson in a mood of double anger.

"What did I tell you," cries Jefferson—"what did I tell you of Marshall?" Then he rushes on to the utterances of the violent Luther Martin. "Shall you not move," he demands, "to commit Martin as *particeps criminis* with Colonel Burr? There should be evidence to fix upon him misprision of treason, at least. At any rate, such a step would put down our impudent Federal bulldog, and show that the most clamorous defenders of Colonel Burr are one and all his accomplices."

Meanwhile, the "impudent Federal bulldog" attends a Fourth-of-July dinner in Baltimore. Every man at table, save himself, is an adherent of Jefferson. Eager to demonstrate that loyal fact to the administration, sundry of the guests make speeches full of uncompliment for Martin, and propose a toast:

"Aaron Burr! May his treachery to his country exalt him to the scaffold!"

More speeches, replete of venom, are aimed at Martin; whereupon that undaunted drunkard gets upon his feet.

"Who is this Aaron Burr," he roars, "whose guilt you have pronounced, and for whose blood your parched throats so thirst? Was not he, a few years back, adored by you next to your God? Were not you then his warmest admirers? Did not he then possess every virtue? He was then in power. He had influence. You were proud of his notice. His merest smile brightened all your faces. His merest frown lengthened all your visages. Go, ye holiday, ye sunshine friends!—ye time-servers, ye criers of hosannah to-day and crucifiers to-morrow!—go; hide your heads from the contempt and detestation of every honorable, every right-minded man!"

August: The day of trial arrives. Wirt, with the dull, deferent Hay, has gone over the testimony against Aaron, and arranged the procession of its introduction. Wirt will begin far back. By the mouth of the red-nosed Wilkinson—somewhat in hiding from Swartwout—and by others, he will relate from the beginning Aaron's dream of Mexican conquest. He will show how the vision grew and expanded until it reacted upon the United States, and the downfall of Washington became as much parcel of Aaron's design as was the capture of Mexico. He will trace Aaron through his many conferences in Washington, in Marietta, in Nashville, in Cincinnati; and then on to New Orleans, where he is closeted with Merchant Clark and the Bishop of

Louisiana.

And so the parties go into court.

The jury being sworn, Marshall, chief justice, at once overthrows those well-laid plans of Wirt.

“You must go to the act, sir,” says Marshall.

“Treason, like murder, is an act. You can’t think treason, you can’t plot treason, you can’t talk treason; you can only act it. In murder you must first prove the killing—the murderous act, before you may offer evidence of an intent. And so in treason. You must begin by proving the overt act of war against the country, before I can permit evidence of an intent which led up to it.”

This ruling throws Wirt abroad in his calculations. The “Federal bulldog” Martin grows vulgarly gleeful, Wirt correspondingly glum.

Being prodded by Marshall, chief justice, Wirt declares that the “act of war” was the assembling of forty armed men, under one Taylor, at Blennerhassett Island. They stopped at the island but a moment, and Aaron himself was in Lexington. None the less there were forty of them; they were armed; they were there by design and plan of Aaron, with an ultimate purpose of levying war against this Government. Wirt urges that constructive war was at that very island moment being waged, with Aaron personally absent but constructively present, and constructively waging such war.

At this setting forth, Marshall, chief justice, puckers his lips, as might one who thinks the argument far-fetched and overfinely spun. Martin, the “Federal bulldog,” does not scruple to laugh outright.

“Was ever heard such hash!” cries Martin. “Men may bear arms without waging war! Forty men no more mean war than four! Men may float down the Ohio, and still no war be waged. Because the hypochondriac Jefferson imagined war, we are to receive the thing as *res adjudicata*, and now give way while a pleasantly concocted tale, of that carnage of a presidential nightmare, is recited from the witness box. Sirs, you are not to fiddle folk onto a scaffold to any such tune as that, though a president furnish the music.”

Marshall, chief justice, still with pursed lips and knotted forehead, directs Wirt to proceed with his evidence of what, at Blennerhassett Island, he relies upon to constitute, constructively or otherwise, a state of war. Having heard the evidence, he will pass upon the points of law presented.

Wirt, desperate because he may do no better, puts forward one Eaton as a witness. The latter tells a long, involved story, which sounds vastly like fiction and not at all like fact, of conversations with Aaron. Aaron brings out in cross examination, that within ten days after he, Eaton, went with this tale to Jefferson, a claim for ten thousand dollars, which he had been pressing without success against the Government, was paid. Aaron suggests that Eaton, to induce payment of such claim, invented his narrative; and the suggestion is plainly acceptable to the jury.

Following Eaton, Wirt calls Truxton; and next the suspicious Morgan, who first wrote to Jefferson touching Aaron and his plans. Then follow Blennerhassett’s gardener and groom, and one Woodbridge, Blennerhassett’s man of business. Wirt, by these, proves Aaron’s frequent presence on the island; the boats building at Marietta; the advent of Taylor with his forty armed men, and there the relation ends. In all—the testimony, not a knife is ground, not a flint is picked, not a rifle fired; the forty armed men do not so much as indulge in drill. For all they said or did or acted, the forty might have been explorers, or sightseers, or settlers, or any other form of peaceful whatnot.

“I suppose,” observes Marshall, chief justice, bending his black eyes warningly upon Wirt—“I suppose it unnecessary to instruct counsel that guilt will not be presumed?”

Wirt replies stiffly that counsel for the Government, at least, require no instructions; whereat Martin the “Federal bulldog” barks hoarsely up, that what counsel for the Government most require, and are most deficient in, is a case and the evidence of it. Wirt pays no heed to the jeer, but announces that under the ruling of the court, made before evidence was introduced, he has nothing more to offer touching acts of overt war. He rests his case, he says, on that point; and thereupon, the defense take issue with him. The Government, Aaron declares, has failed to make out even the shadow of a treason. There is nothing which demands reply; he will call no witnesses.

Marshall, chief justice, directs that the arguments to the jury be proceeded with. Wirt is heard. Being imaginative, and having no facts, he unchains his fancy and paints a paradise, whereof Aaron is the serpent and Blennerhassett and his moon-visaged spouse are Adam and Eve. It is a beautiful picture, and might be effective did it carry any grain of truth. However, it is well received by the jury as a romance full of entertaining glow and glitter; and then it is put aside from serious consideration.

While Wirt the fanciful is thus coloring his invented paradise, with Aaron as the serpent and the Blennerhassetts the betrayed Adam and Eve, the “betrayed” Blennerhassett, sitting by Aaron’s side, is reading the “serpent” a letter, that day received from Madam Blennerhassett. The missive closes:

“Apprise Colonel Burr of my warmest acknowledgments for his own and Theo’s kind remembrances. Tell him to assure her that she has inspired me with a warmth of attachment that never can diminish.”

On the oratorical back of Wirt come Wickham, Hay, Randolph, Botts, and McRae. Lastly Martin is heard, the “Federal bulldog” seizing the occasion to bay Jefferson even more violently than before. When they are done, Marshall, chief justice, lays down the law as to what should constitute an “overt act of war”; and, since it is plain, even to the court crier, that no such act has been proven, the jury hurry forward a finding:

“Not guilty!”

Jefferson, full of prejudice, hears the news. He writes wrathfully to Wirt:

“Let no witness depart without taking a copy of his evidence, which is now more important than ever. The criminal Burr is preserved, it seems, to become the rallying point of all the disaffected and worthless of the United States, and to be the pivot on which all the conspiracies and intrigues, that foreign governments may wish to disturb us with, are to turn. There is still, however, the misdemeanor; and, if he be convicted of that, Judge Marshall must, for very decency, give us some respite by a confinement of him; but we must expect it to be very short.” There is a day’s recess; then the charge of “levying war against Mexico” is called. The red-

nosed Wilkinson now tells his story; and is made to admit—the painful sweat standing in great drops upon his purple visage—that he has altered in important respects several of Aaron's letters. Being, by his own mouth, a forger, the jury marks its estimate of the red-nosed one by again acquitting Aaron, and pronouncing a second finding: "Not guilty!"

Thus ends the great trial which has rocked a continent. Aaron is free; his friends crowd about him jubilantly, while the loving, lustrous Theo weeps upon his shoulder.

CHAPTER XXI—THE SAILING AWAY OF AARON.

SIX months creep by; May is painting Manhattan with its flowers. The house of the stubborn, loyal Swartwout is in Stone Street. Long ago, in the old Dutch beaver-peltry days, the home of the poet Steen-dam was there. Now it is the dwelling place of John Swartwout, and Aaron is his guest.

The lustrous Theo is with Aaron this sunny afternoon, luster something dimmed; for the hour is one sad and tearful with parting. It is a last parting; though the pair—the loving father! the adoring, clinging daughter!—hopefully, happily blind, believe otherwise.

"Yes," Aaron is saying, "I must sail tonight. The ship is at anchor in the lower bay." Theo, the lustrous, is too bravely the child of Aaron to break into lamentation, though the wrung heart fills her eyes with tears. "And should your plans fail," she says, "you will come to us at the 'Oaks.' Joseph, you know, is no longer 'Mr. Alston,' but 'Governor Alston.' As father to the Governor of the State, and with your own high name, you may take what place you will in South Carolina. You promise, do you not? If by any trip of fortune your prospects are overthrown, you will come to us in the South?"

"But, dearling, my plans will not fail. I have had letters from Lords Mulgrave and Castlereagh, I bear with me the indorsement of the British Minister in Washington. Openly or secretly, England will support my project with men and money and ships. If, in some caprice of politics or a changing cabinet, she should refuse, I shall seek Napoleon. Mexico and an empire!—that should match finely the native color of his Corsican feeling."

Night draws on; Aaron and the lustrous Theo say the sorrowful words of separation, and within the hour he is aboard the *Clarissa*, outward bound for England.

In London, full of new fire, Aaron throws away no time. Each day he is closeted with Mulgrave, Castlereagh and Canning. He goes to Holland House, and its noble master is seized with the fever for Montezuman conquest. The inventive Earl of Bridgewater—who is radical and goes readily to novel enterprises—catches the Mexican fury. The spirit of Cortez is abroad; the nobility of England fall quickly in with Aaron's Western design. It will mean an augmentation of the world's peerage. Also, Mexico should furnish an admirable grazing ground for second sons. Aaron's affairs go swimmingly; he is full of hopeful anticipation. He writes the lustrous Theo at the "Oaks" that, "save for the unforeseen," little Aaron Burr Alston shall yet wear an imperial crown as Aaron II.

Save for the unforeseen! The reservation is well put in. As Aaron sits in conference, one foggy London evening, with Mulgrave and Castlereagh, who have become principal figures in those Mexican designs, Canning comes hurriedly in.

"I am from the Foreign Office," says he, "and I come with bad news. There is a lion in our path—two lions. Secret news was just received that Napoleon has driven the king and queen from Madrid, and established his brother Joseph on the Spanish throne. Mexico by that: stroke belongs to the Bonapartes; they will hardly consent to its loss."

"That is one lion," observes Mulgrave; "now for the other."

"The other is England," proceeds Canning. "Already we are mustering our forces, and enlisting ships, to drive the Corsican out of Spain. We are to become the allies of the royal outcasts, and restore them to Spanish power. I need not draw the inference. As Spain's ally, fighting her battles against the French in the Peninsula, England will no more permit the loss of Mexico than will Napoleon."

Aaron listens; a chill of disappointment touches his strong heart. He understands how wholly lost are his hopes, even before Canning is through talking. He had two strings to his bow; both have snapped. No chance now of either France or England aiding him. His prospects, so bright but the moment before, are on the instant darkened.

"Delay! always delay!" he murmurs. Then his courage mounts again; the chill is driven from his heart. He is too thoroughbred to despond, and quickly pulls himself together. "Yes," says he, "the word you bring shuts double doors against us. The best we may do is wait—wait for Napoleon to win or lose in Spain. Should England hurl him back across the Pyrenees, we may resume our plans again."

"Indubitably," returns Canning. "Should England save Spain from the Corsican, she might well lay claim to the right of disposing of Mexico as a recompense for her exertions."

Thus, for the time, by force of events in far-off Spain, is Aaron compelled to fold away his ambitions.

While waiting the turn of fortune's wheel in Spain, Aaron fills in his leisure with society. Everywhere he is the lion. "The celebrated Colonel Burr!" is the phrase by which he is presented. Entertained as well as instructed by what he sees and hears, he begins to keep a journal. It shall one day be read with interest by the lustrous Theo, he thinks.

Jeremy Bentham—honest, fussy, sprightly, full of dreams for bettering governments—finds out Aaron. The honest, fussy Bentham loves admiration and the folk who furnish it. He has heard from letter-writing friends in America that "the celebrated Colonel Burr" reads his works with satisfaction. That is enough for honest, fussy, praise-loving Bentham, and he drags Aaron off to live with him at Barrow Green.

"You," cries the delighted Bentham, when he has the "celebrated Colonel Burr" as a member of his family —"you and Albert Gallatin are the only two in the United States who appreciate my ideas. For the common mind—which is as dull and crawling as a tortoise—my theories travel too fast."

Aaron lives with Bentham—fussy, kindly, pragmatical Bentham—now at Barrow Green, now at the philosopher's London house in Queen Square Place. From this latter high vantage he sallies forth and meets William Godwin; and Godwin, and Mary Wollstonecraft, carry him off to tea with Charles and Mary Lamb. He writes in his journal:

"Go with the Godwins to Mr. Lamb's. He is a writer, and lives with a maiden sister, also literary, up four pairs of stairs."

At the Lambs he encounters Faseli the painter; and thereupon Aaron, the Godwins, Faseli, and the Lambs brew a bowl of punch, and thresh out questions social, artistic, literary, and political until the hours grow small.

Cobbett talks with Aaron; and straight off runs to Bentham with the suggestion that they send him to Parliament. Aaron laughs.

"I'm afraid," says he, "that whatever may be my genius for law-giving, it would fit but badly with English prejudice and English inclination. You would find me in the British Commons but a sorry case of a square peg in a round hole."

That Aaron is the fashion at Holland House, which is the gathering point of opposition to Government, does not help him at the Home Office. Also, the Spanish allies of England, through their minister, complain.

"He is fomenting his Mexican design," cries the Spaniard. "It shows but poorly for England's friendship that she harbors him, and that he is feted and feasted by her nobility."

Lord Hawkesbury leans to the Spanish view. He will assert his powers under the "Alien Act." It will please the Spaniards. Likewise, it will offend Holland House. Two birds; one stone. Hawkesbury sends a request that Aaron call upon him at his office; and Aaron calls.

"This, you will understand," observes Hawkesbury, "is not a personal but an official interview, Colonel Burr. I might hope to make it more pleasant were it personal. Speaking as one of the crown's secretaries, I must notify you to quit England."

"What is your authority for this?" asks Aaron.

"You will find it in the 'Alien Act.' Under that statute, Government is invested with power to order the departure of any alien without assigning cause."

"Precisely! Your Government is now engaged in searching American ships for English sailors. It was, I recall, the basis of bitter complaint in America when I left. In seizing those whom you call English sailors and subjects, you refuse to recognize their naturalization as citizens of America. Do I state the fact?"

"Assuredly! No Englishman has a right to shift his allegiance from his king. That is British doctrine. Once a subject, always a subject."

"The very point!" returns Aaron. "Once a subject, always a subject. I suppose you will not deny that I was in 1756 born in New Jersey, then a province of England. I was born a British subject, was I not?"

"There is no doubt of that."

"Then, sir, being born a British subject, under your doctrine of 'Once a subject, always a subject,' I am still a British subject. Therefore, I am no alien. Therefore, I do not fall within the description of your 'Alien Act.' You can hardly order me to quit England as an alien at the very moment when you say I am a British subject. My lord"—this with a smile like a warning—"the story, if told in the papers, would get your lordship laughed at."

Hawkesbury falls back baffled. He keeps his face, however, and tells Aaron the matter may rest until he further considers it.

Aaron visits Oxford, and is wined and dined by the grave college heads. He talks Bentham and religion to his hosts, and they fall to amiable disagreement with him.

"We then," he writes in his journal, "got upon American politics and geography, upon which subjects a most profound and learned ignorance was displayed."

Birmingham entertains Aaron; Stratford makes him welcome. He travels to Edinburgh, and is the victim of parties, dinners, balls, sermons, assemblies, plays, lectures, and other Scottish dissipations. The bench and bar cannot get too much of him. Mackenzie, who wrote the "Man of Feeling," and Walter Scott, who is in the "Marmion" stage of his development, seek his acquaintance. Aaron sees a deal of these lettered ones, and sets down in his diary that:

"Mackenzie has twelve children; six of them daughters, all interesting, and two handsome. He is sprightly, amiable, witty. Scott, with less softness, has more animation—talks much and is very agreeable."

Aaron stays a month with his Scotch friends, and returns to London. He resumes the old round of club and drawing-room, with Holland, Melville, Mulgrave, Castlereagh, Canning, Bentham, Cobbett, Godwin, Lamb, Faseli, and others political, philosophical, social, literary, and artistic.

One day as he returns from breakfast at Holland House, he finds a note on his table. It is from Lord Liverpool. The note is polite, bland, insinuating, flattering. It says, none the less, that "The presence of Colonel Burr in Great Britain is embarrassing to His Majesty's Government, and it is the wish and expectation of Government that he remove."

The note continues to the courteous effect that "passports will be furnished Colonel Burr," and a free passage in an English ship to any port—not English.

Aaron replies to Lord Liverpool's note, and says that having become, as his Lordship declares, "embarrassing to His Majesty's Government," he must, of course, as a gentleman "gratify the wishes of Government by withdrawing." He adds that Sweden, now he may no longer stay in England, is his preference.

Aaron goes to Stockholm, and has trouble with the language but none with the inhabitants, who receive him with open hearts and arms. At once he is called upon to play the distinguished guest in highest circles, and does it with usual easy grace. He spends three months in Stockholm, and two in traveling about the kingdom. The excellence of the roads and the lack of toll-gates amaze him. Likewise, he is in rapture over Swedish honesty. He makes an admiring dash at the laws of the realm, and spreads on his journal:

"There is no country in which personal liberty is so well secured; none in which the violation of it is punished with so much certainty and promptitude; none in which justice is administered with so much dispatch and so little expense."

Aaron attends the opera, and cannot say too much in praise of the Swedish appreciation of music. He exalts the sensibility of the Norsemen. Returning from the opera, he lights his candle and writes:

"What most interested me was the perfect attention and the uncommon degree of feeling exhibited by the audience. Every countenance was affected by those emotions which the music expressed. In England you see no expression painted on the faces at a concert or an opera. All is somber and grim. They cry 'Bravo! bravissimo!' with the same countenance wherewith they curse."

From Sweden Aaron repairs to Denmark, and takes up pleasant quarters in Copenhagen. Here he goes in for science, ransacks libraries, and attends the courts. Studying the Danish jurisprudence, he is struck by that amiable feature called the "Committees on Conciliation," and resolves to recommend its adoption in America.

Hamburg next. Here Aaron asks for passports into France. They are not immediately forthcoming, since under the Corsican passports are more easily asked for than obtained. While his passports are making, Aaron is visited by the learned Ebeling, and Niebuhr, privy counselor to the king.

Aaron takes six weeks and explores Germany.

He sees Hanover, Brunswick, Gottingen, Gotha, Weimar. At Weimar, Goethe brings him to his house, where he meets "the amiable, good Wieland," and is dragged off by Goethe to the theater, and sits through a "serious comedy" with the Baroness de Stein. He is presented at court, and is welcomed by the grand duke—Goethe's duke—and the grand duchess. Here, too, he falls temporarily in love with the noble d'Or, a beautiful lady of the ducal court. His love begins to alarm him; he fears he may wed the d'Or, remain in Weimar, and "lapse into a Dutchman." To avoid this fate, he beats a hasty retreat to Erfurth. Being safe, he cheers his spirits by writing:

"Another interview, and I would have been lost! The danger was so imminent, and the d'Or so beautiful, that I ordered post horses, gave a crown extra to the postilions to whip like the devil, and lo! here I am in a warm room, with a neat, good bed, safe locked within four Erfurth walls, rejoicing and repining."

As Aaron writes this, he lays aside his "repining" for the lovely d'Or, and so far emerges from his gloom as to "draw a dirk," and put to thick-soled clattering flight one of the local police, who invades his room with the purpose of putting out the candle. Erfurth being a garrison town, lights are ordered "out" at nine o'clock. As a mark of respect to his dirk, however, Aaron's candles are permitted to gutter and sputter unrebuked until long after midnight.

CHAPTER XXII—HOW AARON RETURNS HOME

THE belated passports arrive, and Aaron journeys to Paris. It is now with him as it was with the unfortunate gentleman, celebrated in Scripture, who went down into a certain city only to fall among thieves. Fouché orders his police to dog him. The post office is given instructions; his letters are stolen —those he writes as well as those he should receive.

What is at the bottom of all this French scoundrelism? Madison the weak is president in Washington. That is to say, he is called "president," the actual power abiding in Mon-ticello with Jefferson, at whose political knee he was reared. Armstrong is Madison's minister to France. Armstrong is a New York politician married to a Livingston, and, per incident, a promoted puppet of Jefferson's. McRae is American consul at Paris—McRae, who sat at the back of Wirt and Hay during the Richmond trial. It is these influences, directed from Mon-ticello, which, in each of its bureaus, oppose the government of Napoleon to Aaron. By orders from Monticello, "every captain, French or American, is instructed to convey no letter or message or parcel for Colonel Burr. Also such captain is required to make anyone handing him a letter or parcel for delivery in the United States, to pledge his honor that it contains nothing from Colonel Burr." In this way is Aaron shut off from his friends and his supplies. He writes in his diary:

"These vexations arise from the machinations of Minister Armstrong, who is indefatigable in his exertions to my prejudice, being goaded on by personal hatred, political rancor, and the native malevolence of his temper."

Aaron waits on Savary, and finds that minister polite but helpless. He sees Fouché; the policeman is as polite and as helpless as Savary.

He calls upon Talleyrand. That ingrate and congenital traitor skulks out of an interview. Aaron smiles as he recalls the skulking, limping one fawning upon him aforetime at Richmond Hill.

Talleyrand puts Aaron in mind of Jerome Bonaparte, now King of Westphalia, made so by that kingmonger, his brother. His Royal Highness of Westphalia was, like Talleyrand, a guest at Richmond Hill. He, too, has nibbled American crusts, and was thankful for American crumbs in an hour when his official rating, had he been given one, could not have soared above that of a vagrant out of Corsica by way of France. Aaron applies for an interview.

"His Royal Highness is engaged; he cannot see Colonel Burr," is the response.

"I am not surprised," says Aaron. "He who will desert a wife will desert a friend, and I am not to suppose that one can remember friendship who forgets love."

Official France shuts and bolts its doors in the face of Aaron to please the Man of Monticello. Thereupon Aaron demands his passports of the American minister.

Armstrong, minister, is out of Paris for the moment, and Aaron goes to Consul McRae. That official, feeling the pressure of the Monticello thumb, replies:

"My knowledge of the circumstances under which Colonel Burr left the United States, render it my duty to decline giving him a passport."

Five weeks eaten up in disappointment!

Aaron, who intended remaining but a month in Paris, finds his money running out. He confides to his diary:

"Behold me, a prisoner of state, and almost without a sou."

Aaron resolves to economize. He removes from his hotel, dismisses his servants, and takes up garret lodgings in a back street. He jokes with his poverty:

"How sedate and sage one is," he writes, "on only three sous. Eating my bread and cheese, and seeing half a bottle of the twenty-five sous wine left, I thought it too extravagant to open a bottle of the good. I tried to get down the bad, constantly thinking on the other, which was in sight. I stuck to the bad and got it all down. Then to pay myself for this heroism, I treated myself to a large tumbler of the true Roussillon. I am of Santara's opinion that though a man may be a little the poorer for drinking good wine, yet he is, under its influence, much more able to bear poverty." Farther on he sets down: "It is now so cold that I should be glad of a fire, but to that there are financial objections. I was near going to bed without writing, for it is very cold, and I have but two stumps of wood left. By the way, I wear no surtout these days, for a great many philosophic reasons, the principal being that I have not got one. The old greatcoat, which I brought from America, will serve for traveling if I ever travel again."

Although official France shuts its doors on Aaron, unofficial France does not. The excellent Volney, of a better memory than the King of Westphalia or the slily skulking Talleyrand, remembers Richmond Hill. Volney hunts out Aaron in his poor lodgings, laughs at his penury, and offers gold. Aaron also laughs, and puts back the kindly gold-filled hand.

"Very well," says Volney. "Some other day, when you are a little more starved. Meanwhile, come with me; there are beautiful women and brave men who are dying to meet the renowned Colonel Burr."

Again in salon and drawing-room is Aaron the lion—leaving the most splendid scenes to return to his poor, barren den in the back street. And yet he likes the contrast. He goes home from the Duchess d'Alberg's and writes this:

"The night bad, and the wind blowing down my chimney into the room. After several experiments as to how to weather the gale, I discovered that I could exist by lying flat on the floor. Here, on the floor, reposing on my elbows, a candle by my side, I have been reading 'L'Espion Anglos,' and writing this. When I got up just now for pen and ink, I found myself buried in ashes and cinders. One might have thought I had lain a month at the foot of Vesuvius."

Aaron, having leisure and a Yankee fancy for invention, decides to remedy the chimney. He calls in a chimney doctor, of whom there are many in chimney-smoking Paris, and assumes to direct the bricklaying energies of that scientist. The *fumiste* rebels; he objects that to follow Aaron's directions will spoil the chimney.

"Monsieur," returns Aaron grandly, "that is my affair."

The rebellious *fumiste* is quelled, and lays bricks according to directions. The work is completed; the inmates of the house gather about, as a fire is lighted, to enjoy the discomfiture of the "insane American"; for the *fumiste* has told. The fire is lighted; the chimney draws to perfection; the convinced *fumiste* sheds tears, and tries to kiss Aaron, but is repelled.

"Monsieur," cries the repentant *fumiste*, "if you will but announce yourself as a chimney doctor, your fortune is made."

Aaron's friend, Madam Fenwick, is told of his triumph, and straightway begs him to restore the health of her many chimneys—a forest of them, all sick! Aaron writes:

"Madam Fenwick challenged me to cure her chimneys. Accepted, and was assigned for a first trial the worst in the house. Enter the mason, the bricks, and the mortar. To work; Madam Fenwick making, meanwhile, my breakfast—coffee, blanc and honey—in the adjoining room, and laughing at my folly. Visitors came in to see what was going forward. Much wit and some satire was displayed. The work was finished. Made a large fire. The chimney drew in a manner not to be impeached. I was instantly a hero, especially to the professional *fumiste*, who bent to the floor before me, such was the burden of his respect."

Griswold, a New York man and a speculator, unites with Aaron; the two take a moderate flier in the Holland Company stocks. Aaron is made richer by several thousand francs. These riches come at a good time, for the evening before he entered in his journal:

"Having exactly sixteen sous, I bought with them two plays for my present amusement. Came home with my two plays, and not a single sou. Have been ransacking everywhere to see if some little vagrant ten-sou piece might not have gone astray. Not one! To make matters worse, I am out of cigars. However, I have some black vile tobacco which will serve as a substitute."

With Volney, Aaron meets Baron Denon, who is charmed to know "the celebrated Colonel Burr." Baron

Denon was with Napoleon in Egypt, and is a privileged character. Denon is a bosom friend of Maret. Nothing will do but Maret must know Aaron. He does know him and is enchanted. Denon and Maret ask Aaron how they may serve him.

"Get me my passports," says Aaron.

Maret and Denon are figures of power. Armstrong, minister, and McRae, consul, begin to feel a pressure. It is intimated that the Emperor's post office is tired of stealing Aaron's letters, Fouché's police weary of dogging him. In brief, it is the emperor's wish that Aaron depart. Maret and Denon intrigue so sagaciously, press so surely, that, acting as one man, the French and the American officials agree in issuing passports to Aaron. He is free; he may quit France when he will. He is quite willing, and makes his way to Amsterdam.

Lowering in the world's sky is the cloud of possible war between England and America. "Once a subject, always a subject," does not match the wants of a young and growing republic, and America is racked of a war fever. The feeble Madison, in leash to Monticello, does not like war and hangs back. In spite of the weakly peaceful Madison, however, the war cloud grows large enough to scare American ships. Being scared, they avoid the ports of Northern Europe, as lying too much within the perilous shadow of England.

This war scare, and its effect on American ships, now gets much in Aaron's way. He turns the port of Amsterdam upside down; not a ship for New York can he find. Killing time, he again gambles in the Holland Company's shares. He travels about the country. He does not like the swamps and canals and windmills; nor yet the Dutchmen themselves, with their long pipes and twenty pairs of breeches. He returns to Amsterdam, and, best of good fortunes! discovers the American ship *Vigilant*, Captain Combes.

"Can he arrange passage for America?"

Captain Combes replies that he can. There is a difficulty, however. Captain Combes and his good ship *Vigilant* are in debt to the Dutch in the sum of five hundred guilders. If Aaron will advance the sum, it shall be repaid the moment the *Vigilant's* anchors are down in New York mud. Aaron advances the five hundred guilders. The *Vigilant* sails out of the Helder with Aaron a passenger. Once in blue water, the *Vigilant* is swooped upon by an English frigate, which carries her gayly into Yarmouth, a prize.

Aaron writes to the English Alien Office, relates how his homeward voyage has been brought to an end, and asks permission to go ashore. Since England has somewhat lost interest in Spain, and is on the threshold of war with the United States, her objections to Aaron expressed aforetime by Lord Liverpool have cooled. Aaron will not now "embarrass his Majesty's Government." He is granted permission to land; indeed, as though to make amends for a past rudeness, the English Government offers Aaron every courtesy. Thus he goes to London, and is instantly in the midst of Bentham, Godwin, Mulgrave, Canning, Cobbett, and the rest of his old friends.

Aaron's funds are at their old Parisian ebb; that loan to Captain Combes, which ransomed the *Vigilant* from the Dutch, well-nigh bankrupted him. He got to like poverty in France, however, and does not repine. He refuses to go home with Bentham, and takes to cheap London lodgings instead. He explains to the fussy, kindly philosopher that his sole purpose now is to watch for a home-bound ship, and he can keep no sharp lookout from Barrow Green.

Once in his poor lodgings, Aaron resumes that iron economy he learned to practice in Paris. He sets down this in his diary:

"On my way home discovered that I must dine. I find my appetite in the inverse ratio to my purse, and I can now conceive why the poor eat so much when they can get it. Considering the state of my finances, I bought half a pound of boiled beef, eightpence; a quarter of a pound of ham, sixpence; one pound of brown sugar, eightpence; two pounds of bread, eight-pence; ten pounds of potatoes, fivepence; and then, treating myself to a pot of ale, eightpence, proceeded to read the second volume of 'Ida.' As I read, I boiled my potatoes, and made a great dinner, eating half my beef. Of the two necessaries, coffee and tobacco, I have at least a week's allowance, so that without spending another penny, I can keep the machinery going for eight days."

At last Aaron's money is nearly gone. He makes a memorandum of the stringency in this wise:

"Dined at the Hole in the Wall off a chop. Had two halfpence left, which are better than a penny would be, because they jingle, and thus one may refresh one's self with the music."

Aaron, at this pinch in his fortunes, seeks out a friendly bibliophile, and sells him an armful of rare books. In this manner he lifts himself to affluence, since he receives sixty pounds.

Practicing his economies, and filling his treasury by the sale of his books, Aaron is still the center of a brilliant circle. He goes everywhere, is received everywhere; for in England poverty comes not amiss with the honor of an exile, and is held to be no drawing-room bar. Exiled opulence, on the other hand, is at once the subject of gravest British suspicions.

That Aaron's experiences have not warmed him toward France, finds exhibition one evening at Holland House. He is in talk with the inquisitive Lord Balgray, who asks about Napoleon and France.

"Sir," says Aaron, "France, under Napoleon, is fast rebarberizing—retrograding to the darkest ages of intellectual and moral degradation. All that has been seen or heard or felt or read of despotism is freedom and ease compared with that which now dissolves France. The science of tyranny was in its infancy; Napoleon has matured it. In France all the efforts of genius, all the nobler sentiments and finer feelings are depressed and paralyzed. Private faith, personal confidence, the whole train of social virtues are condemned and eradicated. They are crimes. You, sir, with your generous propensities, your chivalrous notions of honor, were you condemned to live within the grasp of that tyrant, would be driven to discard them or be sacrificed as a dangerous subject."

"What a contrast to England!" cries Bal-gray—"England, free and great!"

"England!" retorts Aaron, with a grimace. "There are friends here whom I love. But for England as mere England, why, then, I hope never to visit it again, once I am free of it, unless at the head of fifty thousand fighting men!"

Balgray sits aghast.—Meanwhile the chance of war between America and England broadens, the cloud in the sky grows blacker. Aaron is all impatience to find a ship for home; war might fence him in for years. At

last his hopes are rewarded. The *Aurora*, outward bound for Boston, is reported lying off Gravesend. The captain says he will land Aaron in Boston for thirty pounds.

And now he is really going; the ship will sail on the morrow. At midnight he takes up his diary:

"It is twelve o'clock—midnight. Having packed up my residue of duds, and stowed my papers in the writing desk, I sit smoking my pipe and contemplating the certainty of escaping from this country. As to my reception in my own country, so far as depends on J. Madison & Co., I expect all the efforts of their implacable malice. This, however, does not give me uneasiness. I shall meet those efforts and repel them. My confidence in my own resources does not permit me to despond or even doubt. The incapacity of J. Madison & Co. for every purpose of public administration, their want of energy and firmness, make it impossible they should stand. They are too feeble and corrupt to hold together long. Mem.: To write to Alston to hold his influence in his State, and not again degrade himself by compromising with rascals and cowards."

It is in this high vein that Aaron sails away for home, and, thirty-five days later, sits down to beef and potatoes with the pilot and the *Auroras* captain, in the harbor of Boston. He goes ashore without a shilling, and sells his "Bayle" and "Moreri" to President Kirtland of Harvard for forty dollars. This makes up his passage money for New York. He negotiates with the skipper of a coasting sloop, and nine days later, in the evening's dusk, he lands at the Battery.

It is the next day. The sun is shining into narrow Stone Street. It lights up the Swartwout parlor where Aaron, home at last, is hearing the news from the stubborn, changeless one—Swartwout of the true, unflagging breed!

"It is precisely four years," says Aaron, following a conversational lull, "since I left this very room to go aboard the *Clarissa* for England."

"Aye! Four years!" repeats the stubborn one, meditatively. "Much water runs under the bridges in four years! It has carried away some of your friends, colonel; but also it has carried away as many of your enemies."

For one day and night, Aaron and the stubborn, loyal Swartwout smoke and exchange news. On the second day, Aaron opens offices in Nassau Street. Three lines appear in the *Evening Post*. The notice reads:

"Colonel Burr has returned to the city, and will resume his practice of the law. He has opened offices in Nassau Street."

The town sits up and rubs its eyes. Aaron's enemies—the old fashionable Hamilton-Schuyler coterie—are scandalized; his friends are exalted. What is most important, a cataract of clients swamps his offices, and when the sun goes down, he has received over two thousand dollars in retainers. Instantly, he is overwhelmed with business; never again will he cumber his journals with ha'penny registrations of groat and farthing economies. As redoubts are carried by storm, so, with a rush, to the astonishment of friend and foe alike, Aaron retakes his old place as foremost among the foremost at the New York bar.

CHAPTER XXIII—GRIEF COMES KNOCKING

BUSINESS rushes in upon Aaron; its volume overwhelms him.

"This is too much," says he, "for a gentleman whose years have reached the middle fifties," and he takes unto himself a partner.

Later he takes another partner; the work of the firm overflows into a quartette of rooms and keeps busy a dozen clerks.

"Why labor so hard?" asks the stubborn Swartwout. "Your income is the largest at the bar. You have no such need of money."

"Ay! but my creditors have!"

"Your creditors? Who are they?"

"Every soul who lost a dollar by my Southwestern ambitions—you, with others. Man, I owe millions!"

Aaron works like a horse and lives like a Spartan. He rises with the blue of dawn. His servant appears with his breakfast—an egg, a plate of toast, a pot of coffee. He is at his desk in the midst of his papers when the clerks begin to arrive. All day he is insatiable to work. He sends messages, receives them, examines authorities, confers with fellow lawyers, counsels clients, dictates letters. Business incarnate—he pushes every affair with incredible dispatch. And the last thing he will agree to is defeat.

"Accept only the inevitable!" is his war-word, in law as in life.

Aaron's day ends with seven o'clock. He shoves everything of litigation sort aside, helps himself to a glass of wine, and refuses further thought or hint of business. It is then he calls about him his friends. The evening is merry with laughter, jest and reminiscence. At midnight he retires, and sleeps like a tree.

DeWitt Clinton
From an etching by H. B. Hall, New York, 1869.

"Colonel Burr," observes Dr. Hosack—he who attended Hamilton at Weehawken—"you do not sleep enough; six hours is not enough. Also, you eat too little."

Aaron gazes, with comic eye at the rotund, well-fed doctor, the purple of good burgundy in his full cheeks.

"If I were a doctor, now," he retorts, "I should grant your word to be true. But I am a lawyer, and must keep myself on edge."

Aaron's earliest care is to write his arrival to the lustrous Theo. The reply he receives makes the world black.

"Less than a fortnight ago," she says, "your letters would have gladdened my soul. Now there is no more joy, and life a blank. My boy is gone—forever dead and gone."

While Aaron sits with the fatal letter in his fingers, his friend Van Ness comes in. He turns his black eyes on the visitor—eyes misty, dim, the brightness lost from them.

"What dreams were mine," he sighs—"what dreams for my brave little boy! He is dead, and half my world has died."

Toward the end of summer, Alston sends word that the lustrous Theo is in danger. The loss of her boy has struck at the roots of her life. Aaron, in new alarm, writes urging that she come North. He sends a physician from New York to bring her to him. Alston consents; he himself cannot come. His duties as governor tie him. The lustrous Theo, eager to meet her father with whom she parted on that tearful evening in Stone Street so many years ago, will start at once. He, Alston, shall later follow her.

Alston sees the lustrous Theo aboard the schooner *Patriot*, then lying in Charleston harbor. It is rough December weather when the *Patriot* clears for New York. The message of her sailing reaches Aaron overland, and he is on strain for the schooner's arrival. Days come, days go; the schooner is due—overdue. Still no sign of those watched-for topsails down *the* lower bay! And so time passes. The days become weeks, the weeks months. Hope sickens, then dies. Aaron, face white and drawn, a ghost's face, reads the awful truth in that long waiting. The lustrous Theo is dead—like the baby! It is then the iron of a measureless adversity enters his soul!

Aaron goes about the daily concerns of life, making no moan. He does not speak of his loss, but saves his grief for solitude. One day a friend relates a rumor that the schooner was captured by buccaneers, and the lustrous Theo lives. The broken Aaron shakes his head.

"She is dead!" says he. "Thus is severed the last tie that binds me to my kind."

Aaron hides his heart from friend and foe alike. As though flying from his own thoughts, he plunges more furiously than ever into the law.

While Aaron's first concern is work, and to earn money for those whom he calls his creditors, he finds time for politics.

“Not that I want office,” he observes; “for he who was Vice-President and tied Jefferson for a presidency, cannot think on place. But I owe debts—debts of gratitude, debts of vengeance. These must be paid.”

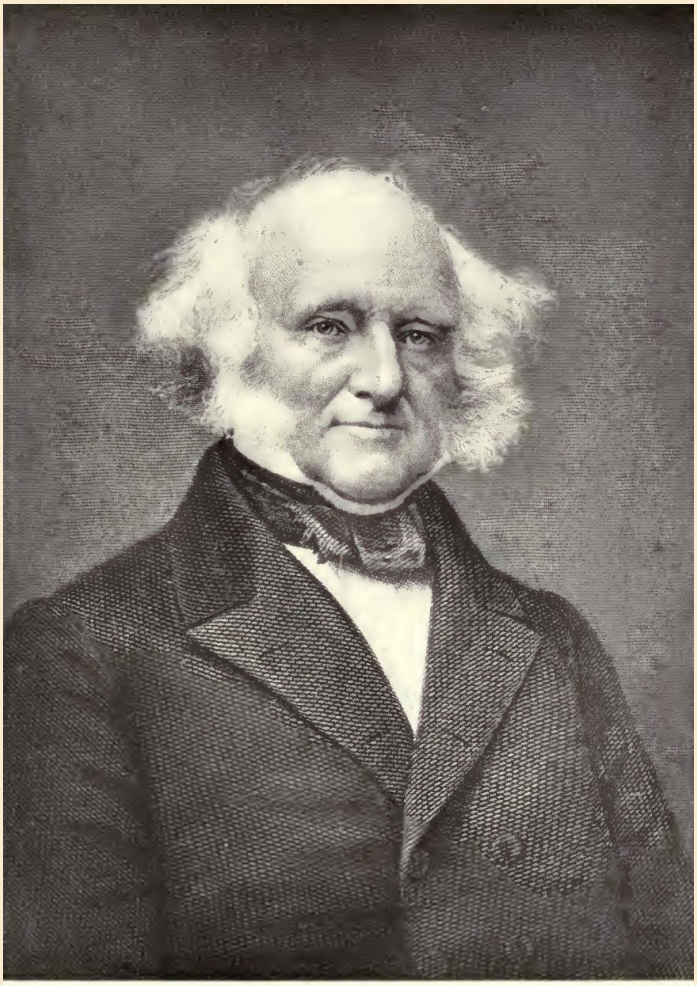
Aaron’s foes are in the ascendant. De Witt Clinton is mayor—the aristocrats with the Livingstons, the Schuylers and the Clintons, are everywhere dominant. They control the town; they control the State. At Washington, Madison a marionette President, is in apparent command, while Jefferson pulls the White House wires from Monticello. All these Aaron sees at a glance; he can, however, take up but one at a time.

“We will begin with the town,” says he, to the stubborn, loyal Swartwout. “We must go at the town like a good wife at her house-cleaning. Once that is politically spick and span, we shall clean up the State and the nation.”

Aaron calls about him his old circle of indomitables.

They have been overrun in his absence by the aristocrats—by the Clintons, the Schuylers and the Livingstons. They gather at his rooms in the Jay House—a noble mansion, once the home of Governor Jay.

“I shall make no appearance in your politics,” says he. “It would not fit my years and my past. None the less, I’ll show you the road to victory.” Then, with a smile: “You must do the work; I’ll be the Old Man of the Mountain. From behind a screen I’ll give directions.”



Aaron’s lieutenants include the Swartwouts, Buckmaster, Strong, Prince, Radcliff, Rutgers, Ogden, Davis, Noah, and Van Buren, the last a rising young lawyer from Kinderhook.

“Become a member of Tammany,” is Aaron’s word to young Van Buren. “Our work must be done by Tammany Hall. You must enroll yourself beneath its banner. We must bring about a revival of the old Bucktail spirit.”

Van Buren enters Tammany; the others are already members.

Aaron, through his lieutenants, brings his old Tammany Bucktails together within eight weeks after his return. The Clintons, and their fellow aristocrats are horrified at what they call “his effrontery.” Also, they are somewhat panic-smitten. They fall to vilification. Aaron is “traitor!” “murderer!” “demon!” “fiend!” They pay a phalanx of scribblers to assail him in the press. His band of Bucktail lieutenants are dubbed “Burrites,” “Burr’s Mob,” and “the Tenth Legion.” The epithets go by Aaron like the mindless wind.

The Bucktail spirit revived, the stubborn Swartwout and the others ask:

“What shall we do?”

The popular cry is for war with England. At Washington—Jefferson at Monticello pulling on the peace string—Madison is against war. Mayor De Witt Clinton stands with Jefferson and Marionette Madison. He is for peace, as are his caste of aristocrats—the Schuylers and those other left-over fragments of Federalism, all lovers of England from their cradles.

“What shall we do?” cry the Bucktails.

“Demand war!” says Aaron. Then, calling attention to Clinton and his purple tribe, he adds: “They could not occupy a better position for our purposes. They invite destruction.” Tammany demands war vociferously. It is, indeed, the cry all over the land. The administration is carried off its feet. Jefferson at last orders war; for he sees that otherwise Marionette Madison will be defeated of a second term.

Mayor Clinton and his aristocrats are frantic.

The more frantic, since with “War!” for their watchword, Aaron’s Bucktails conquer the city, and two years later the State. As though by a tidal wave, every Clinton is swept out of official Albany.

Aaron sends for Van Ness, the stubborn Swartwout, and their fellow Bucktails.

“Go to Albany,” says he. “Demand of Governor Tompkins the removal of Mayor Clinton. Say that he is inefficient and was the friend of England.”

Governor Tompkins—being a politician—hesitates at the bold step. The Bucktails, Aaron-guided, grow menacing. Seeing himself in danger, Governor Tompkins hesitates no longer. Mayor Clinton is ignominiously thrust from office into private life. With him go those hopes of a presidency which for half a decade he has been sedulously cultivating. Under the blight of that removal, those hopes of a future White House wither like uprooted flowers.

Broken of purse and prospects, Clinton is in despair.

“He will never rise again!” exclaims Van Ness.

“My friend,” says Aaron, “he will be your governor. He will never be president, but the governorship is yet to be his; and all by your negligence—yours and your brother Buck-tails.”

“As how?” demands Van Ness.

“You let him declare for the Erie Canal,” returns Aaron. “You were so purblind as to oppose the project. You should have taken the business out of his hands. If I had been here it would have been done. Mark my words! The canal will be dug, and it will make Clinton governor. However, we shall hold the town against him; and, since we have been given a candidate for the presidency, we shall later have Washington also.”

“Who is that presidential candidate to whom you refer?”

“Sir, he is your friend and my friend. Who, but Andrew Jackson? Since New Orleans, it is bound to be he.”

“Andrew Jackson!” exclaims Van Ness. “But, sir, the Congressional caucus at Washington will never consider him. You know the power of Jefferson—he will hold that caucus in the hollow of his hand. It is he who will name Madison’s successor; and, after those street-corner speeches and his friendship for you in Richmond, it can never be Andrew Jackson.”

“I know the Jefferson power,” returns Aaron; “none knows it better. At the head of his Virginia junta he has controlled the country for years. He will control it four years more, perchance eight. Our war upon him and his caucus methods must begin at once. And our candidate should be, and shall be, Andrew Jackson.”

“Whom will Jefferson select to follow Madison?”

“Monroe, sir; he will put forward Monroe.”

“Monroe!” repeats Van Ness. “Has he force?—brains? Some one spoke of him as a soldier.”

“Soldier!” observes Aaron, his lip curling. “Sir, Monroe never commanded so much as a platoon—never was fit to command one. He acted as aide to Lord Stirling, who was a sot, not a soldier. Monroe’s whole duty was to fill his lordship’s tankard, and hear with admiration his drunken lordship’s long tales about himself. As a lawyer, Monroe is below mediocrity. He never rose to the honor of trying a cause wherein so much as one hundred pounds was at stake. He is dull, stupid, illiterate, pusillanimous, hypocritical, and therefore a character suited to the wants of Jefferson and his Virginia coterie. As a man, he is everything that Jackson isn’t and nothing that he is.”

Van Ness and his brother Bucktails do the bidding of Aaron blindly. On every chance they shout for Jackson. Aaron writes “Jackson” letters to all whom, far or near, he calls his friends. Also the better to have New York in political hand, he demands—through Tammany—of Governor Tompkins and Mayor Rad-cliff that every Clinton, every Schuyler, every Livingston, as well as any who has the taint of Federalism about him be relegated to private life. In town as well as country, he sweeps the New York official situation free of opposition.

The Bucktails are in full sway. Aaron privily coaches young Van Buren, who is suave and dexterous, and for politeness almost the urbane peer of Aaron himself, in what local party diplomacies are required, and sends him forward as the apparent controlling spirit of Tammany Hall. What Jefferson is doing with Monroe in Virginia, Aaron duplicates with the compliant Van Buren in New York.

CHAPTER XXIV—THE DOWNFALL OF KING CAUCUS

Marionette madison is withdrawn from the White House boards at the close of his second term. Jefferson, working the machinery from Monticello, replaces him with Marionette Monroe. It is now Aaron begins his war on the system of Congressional nomination—a system which has obtained since the days of Washington. He writes to Alston:

"*Our Virginia junta, beginning with Washington, owning Adams, and controlled by Jefferson, having had possession of the Government for twenty-four years, consider the nation their property, and by bawling, 'Support the administration!' have so far succeeded in duping the public. The moment is auspicious for a movement which in the end must break down this degrading system. The best citizens all over the country are impatient of the Virginia rule, and the wrongs wrought under it. Its administrations have been weak; offices have been bestowed merely to preserve power, and without a smallest regard for fitness. If, then, there be in the country a man of firmness and decision and standing, it is your duty to hold him up to public view. There is such a man—Andrew Jackson. He is the hero of the late war, and in the first flush of a boundless popularity. Give him a respectable nomination, by a respectable convention drawn from the party at large, and in the teeth of the caucus system—so beloved of scheming Virginians—his final victory is assured. If it does not come to-day, it will come to-morrow; for 'caucus,' which is wrong, must go down; and 'convention,' which is right, must prevail. Have your legislature pass resolutions condemning the caucus system; in that way you can educate the sentiment of South Carolina, and the country, too. Later, we will take up the business of the convention, and Jackson's open nomination.*"

Aaron writes in similar strain to Major Lewis, Jackson's neighbor and man of politics in Tennessee. He winds up his letter with this:

"*Jackson ought to be admonished to be passive; for the moment he is announced as a candidate, he will be assailed by the Virginia junta with menaces, and those failing, with insidious promises of boons and favors.*"

On the back of this anti-caucus, pro-convention letter-writing, that his candidate Jackson may have a proper début, Aaron pulls a Swartwout string, pushes a Van Ness button. At once the obedient Bucktails proffer a dinner in Jackson's honor. The hero accepts, and comes to town. The town is rent with joy; Bucktail enthusiasm, even in the cider days and nights of Martling, never mounted more wildly high.

Aaron, from his back parlor in the old Jay house, directs the excitement. It is there Jackson finds him.

"I shall not be at the dinner, general," says Aaron; "but with Van Buren and Davis and Van Ness and Ogden and Rutgers and Swart-wout and the rest, you will find friends and good company about you."

"But you?"

"There will be less said by the Clintons and the Livingstons of traitors and murderers if I remain away. I owe it to my past to subdue lies and slanders to a smallest limit. No; I must work my works behind bars and bolts, and in darkened rooms. It is as well—better! After a man sees sixty, the fewer dinners he eats, the better for him. I intend to live to see you President; not on your account, but mine, and for the grief it will bring my enemies. And yet it may take years. Wherefore, I must save myself from wine and late hours—I must keep myself with care."

Aaron and the general talk for an hour.

"And if I should become President some day," says Jackson, as they separate, "you may see that Southwestern enterprise of ours revived."

"It will be too late for me," responds Aaron. "I am old, and shall be older. All my hopes, and the reasons of them are dead—are in the grave. Still"—and here the black eyes sparkle in the old way—"I shall be glad to have younger men take up the work. It should serve somewhat to wipe 'treason' from my fame."

"Treason!" snorts the fiery Jackson. "Sir, no one, not fool or liar, ever spoke of treason and Colonel Burr in one breath!"

There is a mighty dinner outpouring of Buck-tails, and Jackson—the "hero," the "conqueror," the "nation's hope and pride," according to orators then and there present and eloquent—is toasted to the skies. At the close of the festival a Clintonite, one Colden, thinks to test the Jackson feeling for Aaron. He will offer the name of Aaron's arch enemy.

The wily Colden gets upon his feet. Lifting high his glass he loudly gives:

"De Witt Clinton!"

The move is a surprise. It is like a sword thrust, and Van Buren, Swartwout, Rutgers, and other Bucktail leaders know not how to parry it. Jackson, the guest of honor, is not, however, to be put in the attitude of offering even tacit insult to the absent Aaron. He cannot reply in words, but he manages a retort, obvious and emphatic. As though the word "Clinton" were a signal, he arises from his place and leaves the room. The thing is as unmistakable in its meaning, as it is magnificent in its friendly loyalty to Aaron, and shows that Jackson has not changed since that street-corner Richmond oratory so disturbing to Wirt and Hay. Also, it removes whatever of doubt exists as to what will be Aaron's place in event of Jackson's occupation of the White House. The maladroit Colden, intending outrage, brings out compliment; and, as the gaunt Jackson goes stalking from the hall, there descends a storm of Bucktail cheers, and shouts of "Burr! Burr!" with a chorus of hisses for Clinton as the galling background. Throughout the full two terms of Marionette Monroe, Aaron urges his crusade against Jefferson, the Virginia junta, and King Caucus. His war against his old enemies never flags. His demand is for convention nominations; his candidate is Jackson.

In all Aaron asks or works for, the loyal Bucktails are at once his voice and his arm. In requital he shows them how to perpetuate their control of the town. He tells them to break down a property qualification, and extend the voting franchise to every man, whether he be landholder or no.

"Let's make Jack as good as his master," says Aaron. "It will please Jack, and hurt his master's pride—both good things in their way."

It is a rare strategy, one not only calculated to strengthen Tammany, but drive the knife to the aristocratic hearts of the Clintons, the Livingstons and the Schuylers.

"Better be ruled by a man without an estate, than by an estate without a man!" cries Aaron, and his

Bucktails take up the shout.

The proposal becomes a law. With that one stroke of policy, Aaron destroys caste, humbles the pride of his enemies, and gives State and town, bound hand and foot, into the secure fingers of his faithful Bucktails.

Time flows on, and Aaron is triumphant. King Caucus is stricken down; Jefferson, with his Virginians are beaten, and Jackson is named by a convention.

In the four-cornered war that ensues, Jackson runs before the other three, but fails of the constitutional majority in the electoral college. In the House, a deal between Adams and Clay defeats Jackson, and Adams goes to the White House.

Aaron is unmoved.

“I am threescore years and ten,” says he—“the allotted space of man. Now I know that I am to live surely four years more; for I shall yet see Jackson President.”

Adams fears Aaron, as long ago his father feared him. He strives to win his Bucktails from him with a shower of appointments.

“Take them,” says Aaron to his Bucktails. “They are yours, not his—those offices. He but gives you your own.”

Aaron, throughout those four years of Adams, tends the Jackson fires like a devotee. Van Ness is astonished at his enthusiasm.

“I should think you’d rest,” says he.

“Rest? I cannot rest. It is all I live for now.”

“But I don’t understand! You get nothing.”

The black eyes shoot forth the old ophidian sparks. “Sir, I get vengeance—and forget feelings!”

Aaron Burr

From a painting by J. Vandyke.

Adams comes to his White House end, and Jackson is elected in his place. Jackson comes to New York, and he and Aaron meet in the latter’s rooms—pleasant rooms, overlooking the Bowling Green. They light their long pipes, and sit opposite one another, smoking like dragons.

Jackson is the one who speaks. Taking the pipe from his lips, he says:

“Colonel Burr, my gratitude is not wholly declamatory.”

“General,” returns Aaron, “the best favor you can show me is show favor to my friends.”

“That I shall do, be sure! Van Ness is to become a judge, Swartwout collector, while Van Buren goes into my Cabinet as Secretary of State. Also I shall say to your enemies—the Clintons and those other proud ones—

that he from New York who seeks Andrew Jackson's appointment, must come with the approval of Colonel Burr."

Jackson is inaugurated.

"I am through," says Aaron—"through at four and seventy. Now I shall work a little, play a little, rest a deal; but no more politics—no more politics! My friends are triumphant. As for my foes, I leave them to Providence and Andrew Jackson."

CHAPTER XXV—THE SERENE LAST DAYS

AARON goes forward with his business—his cases in court, his conferences with clients. Accurate as an Alvan-ley in dress, slim, light, with the quick step of a boy, no one might guess his years. The bar respects him; his friends crowd about him; his enemies shrink away from the black, unblinking stare of those changeless ophidian eyes. And so with his books and his wine and his pipe he sits through the serene evenings in his rooms by the Bowling Green. He is a lion, and strangers from England and Germany and France ask to be presented. They talk—not always wisely or with taste.

"Was Hamilton a gentleman?" asks a popinjay Frenchman.

Aaron's black eyes blaze: "Sir," says he, "I met him!"

"Colonel Burr," observes a dull, thick Englishman, who imagines himself a student of governments—"Colonel Burr, I have read your Constitution. I find it not always clear. Who is to expound it?"

Aaron leads our student of governments to the window, and points, with a whimsical smile, at the Broadway throngs that march below.

"Sir," he remarks, "they are the expounders of our Constitution."

Aaron, at seventy-eight, does a foolish thing; he marries—marries the wealthy Madam Jumel.

They live in the madam's great mansion on the heights overlooking the Harlem. Three months later they part, and Aaron goes back to his books and his pipe and his wine, in his rooms by the Bowling Green.

It is a bright morning; Aaron and his friend Van Ness are walking in Broadway. Suddenly Aaron halts and leans against the wall of a house—the City Hotel.

"It is a numbness," says he. "I cannot walk!"

The good, purple, puffy Dr. Hosack comes panting to the rescue. He finds the stricken one in his rooms where Van Ness has brought him.

"Paralysis!" says the good anxious Hosack.

Aaron is out in a fortnight; numbness gone, he says. Six months later comes another stroke; both legs are paralyzed.

There are to be no more strolls in the Battery Park for Aaron. Now and then he rides out. For the most part he sits by his Broadway window and reads or watches the world hurry by. His friends call; he has no lack of company.

The stubborn Swartwout looks in one afternoon; Aaron waves the paper.

"See!" he cries. "Houston has whipped Santa Ana at San Jacinto! That marks the difference between a Jefferson and a Jackson in the White House! Sir, thirty years ago it was treason; to-day, with Jackson, Houston and San Jacinto, it is patriotism."

Winter disappears in spring, and Aaron's strength is going. The hubbub, the bustle, the driving, striving warfare of the town's life wearies. He takes up new quarters on Staten Island, and the salt, fresh air revives him. All day he gazes out upon the gray restless waters of the bay. His visitors are many. Nor do they always cheer him. It is Dr. Hosack who one day brings up the name of Hamilton.

"Colonel, it was an error—a fearful error!" says the doctor.

"Sir," rejoins Aaron, the old hard uncompromising ring in his tones, "it was not an error, it was justice. When had his slanders rested? He heaped obloquy upon me for years. I stood in his way; I marred his prospects; I mortified his vanity; and so he vilified me. The man was malevolent—cowardly! You have seen what he wrote the night before he fought me. It sounds like the confession of a sick monk. When he stood before me at Weehawken, his eye caught mine and he quailed like a convicted felon. They say he did not fire! Sir, he fired first. I heard the bullet whistle over my head and saw the severed twigs. I have lived more than eighty years; I dwell now in the shadow of death. I shall soon go; and I shall go saying that the destruction of Hamilton was an act of justice."

"Colonel Burr," observes the kindly doctor, "I am made sorry by your words—sorry by your manner! Are you to leave us with a heart full of enmity?"

The black eyes do not soften.

"I shall die as I have lived—hating where I'm hated, loving where I'm loved."

The last day breaks, and Aaron dies—dies

"What lies beyond?" asks one shortly before he goes.

"Who knows?" he returns.

"But do you never ask?"

"Why ask? Who should reply to such a question?—the old, old question ever offered, never answered."

“But you have hopes?”

“None,” says Aaron steadily. “And I want none. I am resolved to die without fear; and he who would have no fear must have no hope.” So he departs; he, of whom the good Dr. Bellamy said: “He will soar as high to fall as low as any soul alive.”

THE END

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