

Local Memorials

RELATING TO THE

DE PEYSTER AND WHITTS

AND AFFILIATED FAMILIES,

CONNECTED WITH

Red Hook Township, Dutchess Co., S. N. Y.

" And oft conducted by historic truth,
We tread the long extent of backward time."

THOMSON.

" There is a history in all men's lives,
Figuring the nature of the times deceased."

SHAKSPERE.

" History is the essence of innumerable biographies."

" We leave

Our home in youth—no matter to what end—
Study—or strife—or pleasure, or what not ;
And coming back in few short years, we find
All as we left it outside : the old elms,
The house, the grass, gates, and latches self-same click ;
But lift that latchet,—all is changed as doom."

BAILEY'S "FESTUS."

New York:

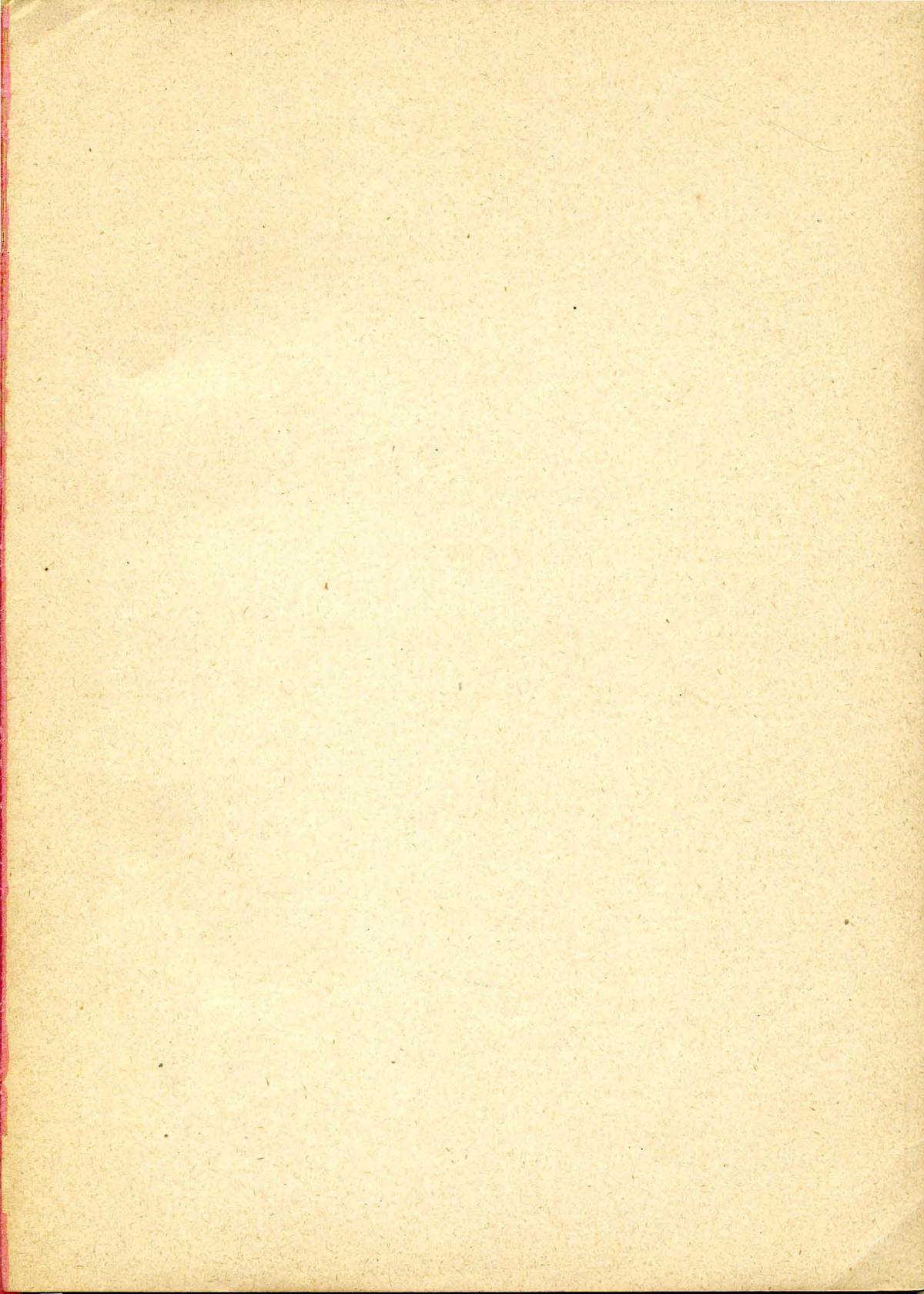
CHARLES H. LUDWIG, PRINTER, 10 & 12 READE STREET.

1881.

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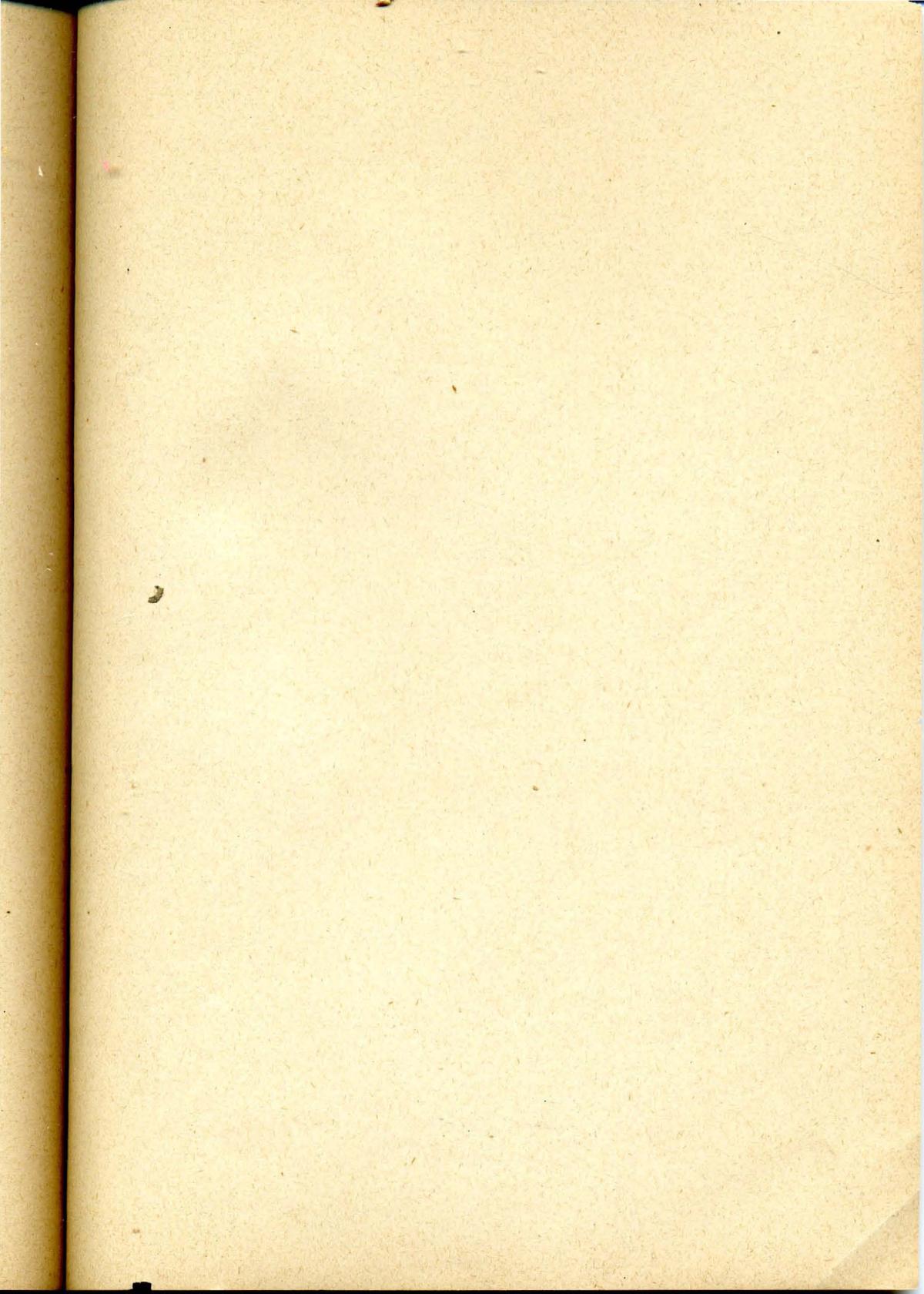
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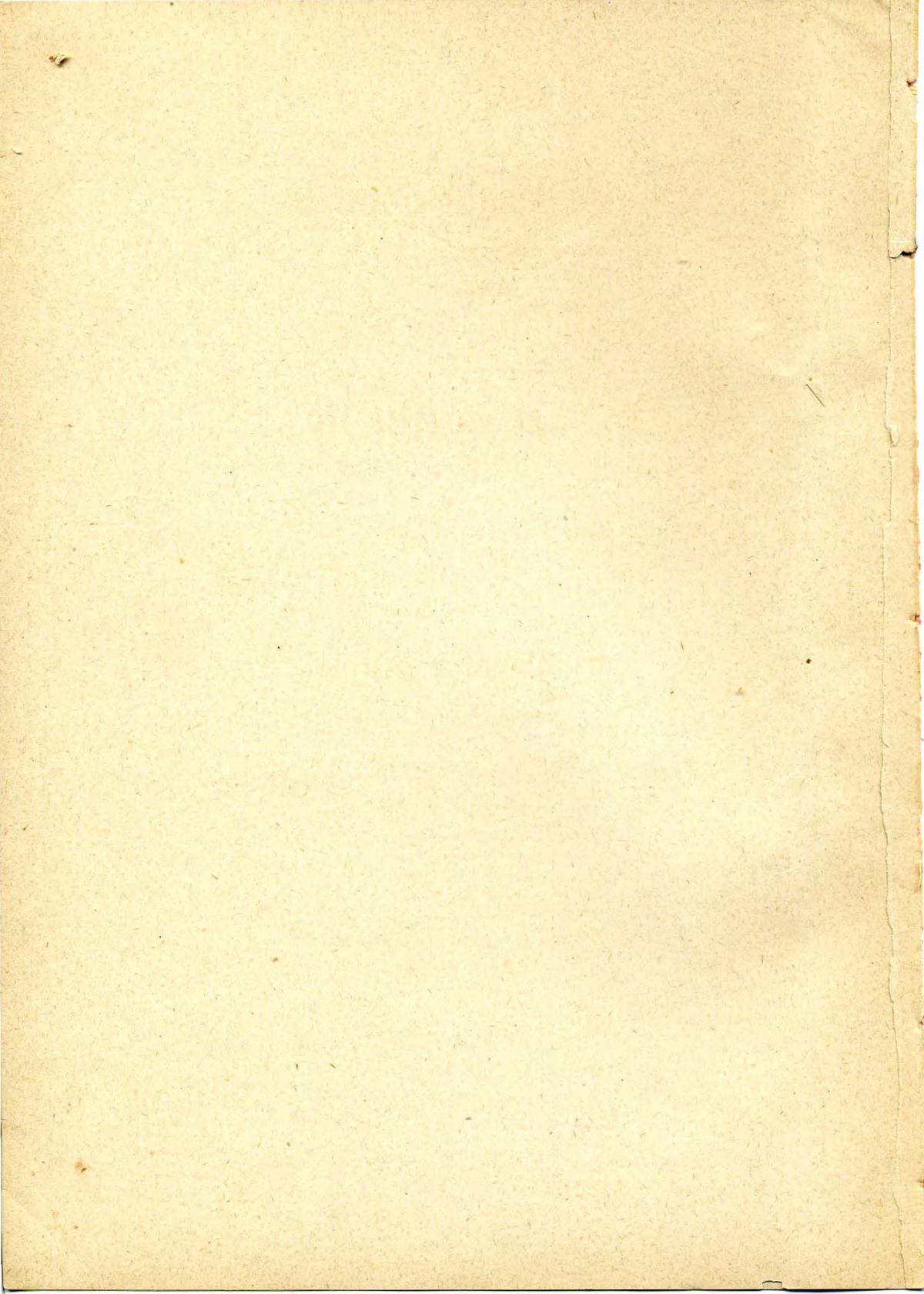
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St. Paul's Church.

RED HOOK, DUCHESS COUNTY, NEW YORK.

"Thy best type, Desire
Of the sad heart,—the Heaven-ascending spire!"
SIR E. B. LYTTON.

Rose Hill.

"Know'st thou this country?"
SHAKSPERE'S "*Twelfth Night*."

"— it is a goodly sight to see
What Heaven hath done for this delicious land!
What goodly prospects o'er the hills expand."
BYRON'S "*Childe Harold*."

De Peyster Family.

"Signor, is all your family within?"
SHAKSPERE'S "*Othello*."

"On Fame's eternall bead-roll worthie to be fyled."
SPENSER'S "*Faerie Queene*."

"Superior worth your RANK requires;
For that mankind reveres your sires;
If you degenerate from your race,
Their merit heightens your disgrace."
GAY.

By "ANCHOR."

(★ J. W. DE P. ★)

cpseud.

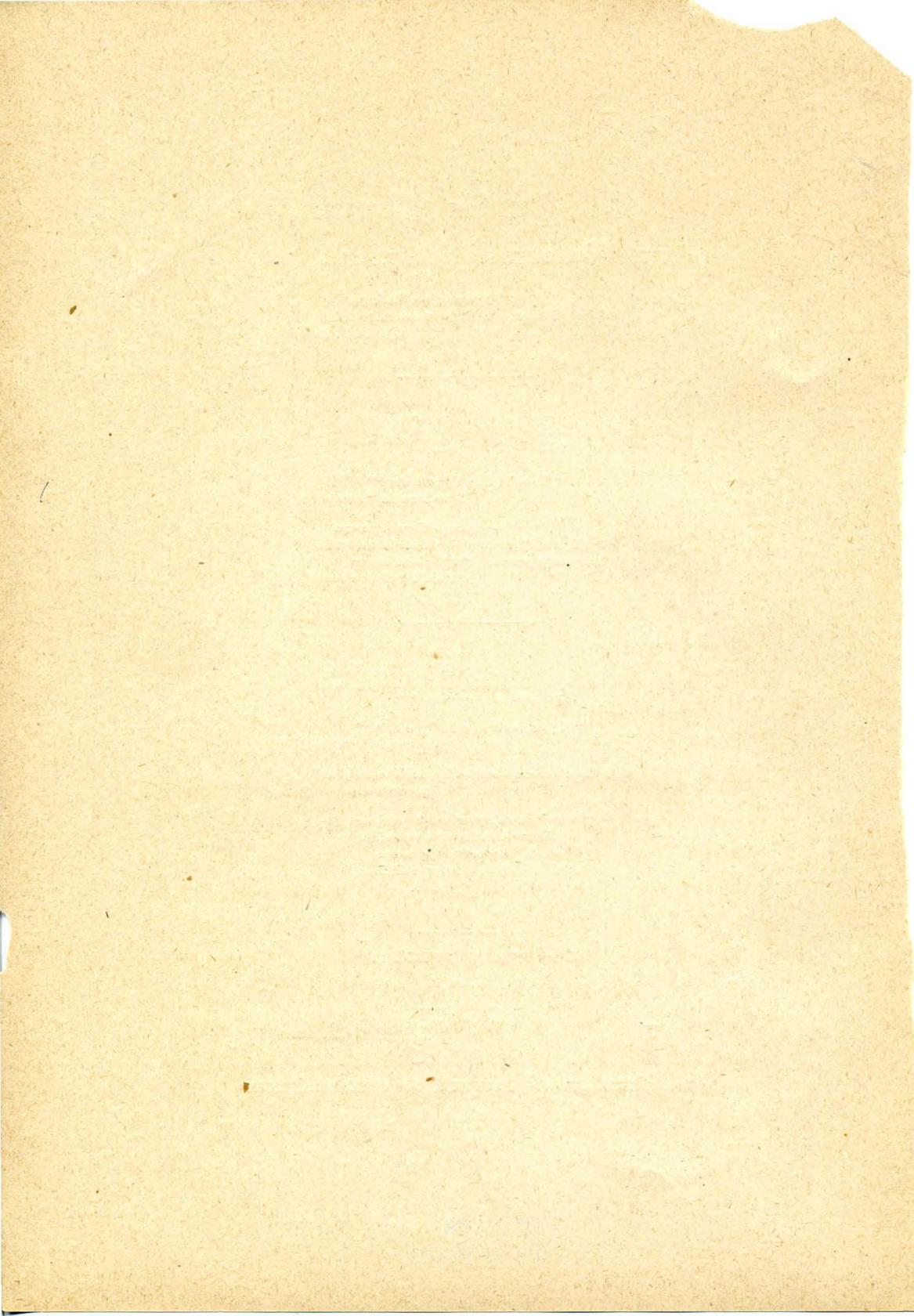
[John Watts De Peyster]
New York?

CHARLES H. LUDWIG, PRINTER, 10 & 12 READE STREET.

1881.

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ST. PAUL'S CHURCH.

'High springs the church, like
Some fount-shadowing palm.'

MILMAN.

"I love the ivy-mantled tower,
Rocked by the storms—"

CUNNINGHAM.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church is situated in the extreme north-west corner of Red Hook (the north-west town of Dutchess county.) The first entry in connection with it, to be found in the records, bears date in December, 1816.

This Church was incorporated agreeably to an Act of the Legislature, State of New York, in 1817, and was admitted into the Union of the Protestant Episcopal Church, State of New York, 21st of October, same year. Rev. Henry Anthon, then Deacon, afterwards Rector of St. Mark's, New York—was the first minister, having commenced his services in the neighborhood of Upper Red Hook Landing—now Tivoli—in December, 1816. The first baptism noted was that of Mary Kimball, and the first burial, Joseph Kimball, occurred in December, 1816.

On the 7th of July, 1818, the corner-stone of the first church building was laid in a lot on the north-west corner

MS. A. d. c. P.

of the main road running east from Tivoli to Upper Red Hook and the Germantown or Telegraph, then known as the River road, crossing the former at right-angles. The structure, unpretending, was of wood, and known as the "White Church," in contradistinction to the Dutch Reformed Church, less than a mile farther to the north, on the same road, which was the oldest place of worship in the town, and recognized far and near as the "Red Church," from its color.

On the 27th of May, 1819, St. Paul's was consecrated by the beloved and revered Bishop John Henry Hobart, who at the same time celebrated the marriage of the Rector. St. Paul's is the second Episcopal congregation organized in Dutchess county, that of St. James, at Hyde Park, being the first.

The first Wardens were Edward P. Livingston, Lieutenant-Governor State of New York, 1831-32, and John S. Livingston, who had been first Judge of Columbia county.

After a zealous discharge of his duties for three years, Mr. Anthon was succeeded in his charge by the following gentlemen, several of whom rose to high dignities or prominent positions: Rev. Nathaniel T. Bruce, M. D., 1820-24; Rev. William Sheldon, 1824- ; Rev. Cicero S. Hawks, D. D., subsequently Bishop of Missouri; Rev. Ravaud Kearny; Rev. John McCarty, D. D., afterwards Chaplain, U. S. A., with General Scott, who held the first Protestant services in the capital of Mexico, and preached

the first Evangelical sermon in the cathedral of that city ; Rev. John Henry Hobart, son of the bishop of the same name ; R^{év.} Henry de Koven ; Rev. R. O. Page ; and Rev. G. Lewis Platt, A. M. The latter is still Rector, having officiated twenty-three years.

The Rev. Messrs. E. A. Nichols, Adams, Bartlett and Punderson also, at different times, have had temporary charge of the church, but not as Rectors.

The original site was selected on account of its central position as to the congregation, who were scattered along the river and River road, north and south, for a distance of over sixteen miles. The building of several other Episcopal churches—three in this town and one in Clermont, Columbia county,—having drawn off a number of members, it was determined to sell the old, and build a new, church. The change was not satisfactory to all, because the grounds had been fenced and improved by one member and a free school erected by several in union, which finally fell into the hands of General de Peyster as sole trustee, in which about fifty scholars were educated by him at one time, many of whom did great credit to the institution.

On June 16th, 1868, the corner-stone of the new Church of St. Paul's was laid with impressive services, and an appropriate address was delivered by the Rector, Rev. G. Lewis Platt, A. M.

The site is beautiful, on new River road, about a quarter of a mile north of the main road from Tivoli station

to Madalin village. The grounds originally contained two acres, of which one and a half were deeded as his subscription to the Church by Mr. E. A. Livingston, and half an acre by General de Peyster as a part of his subscription. The latter gentleman subsequently added another acre to the west, and two acres more were purchased by the congregation to the south. The greater part of the land is handsomely disposed and thickly set with noble trees. The total cost of the structure, including the organ and all complete for consecration, according to one statement was \$18,000; according to another, \$22,000.

The original subscription papers contain the following names: John S. Livingston, Robert E. Livingston and Johnston Livingston, each \$1,500; the Misses Clarkson, \$1,200; General J. Watts de Peyster, \$1,150, besides the land donated; Thomas Streatfield Clarkson and Miss Fredericka Clarkson, \$1,000; Clermont Livingston, \$800; Miss Mary Clarkson, E. H. Ludlow, E. L. Ludlow, Valentine G. Hall, Jr. and Wm. H. Hunt, the present Secretary of the Navy, each \$500; Mrs. Margaret Clarkson and Colonel Frederic de Peyster, Jr., each \$100.

A second call for funds was generously responded to by a majority of the original donors. Thomas Streatfield Clarkson and Johnston Livingston gave each \$500; Mr. and Mrs. Clermont Livingston and sister, \$400; Robert E. Livingston, \$300; Eugene A. Livingston, \$200; Mrs.

Henry B. Livingston, \$150; and E. L. Ludlow, E. H. Ludlow and Valentine G. Hall, Jr., each \$100.

St. Paul's is a building of rough stone, roofed with slate, about 92 feet long and 57 feet wide outside of all, with a spacious chancel to the rear, and a tower and spire at the northeast corner 90 feet high, partly stone and partly timber, surmounted by a large gilt cross. The windows are partly of ground and partly of stained glass between buttresses. There is a semi-sexagonal transept to the south, whose interior constitutes the spacious pews of Johnston Livingston, Esq. and General de Peyster. The style of architecture is pure original English or Norman Gothic, and now that it is almost entirely overgrown with five-leaved or American ivy, popularly known as the Virginia creeper—planted for the most part with her own hands and fostered with care by Mrs. Estelle L. de Peyster—there is scarcely a church to be seen anywhere throughout the land which presents a prettier picture. It faces the east and stands on a sort of esplanade; from this fact, and through the judgment exhibited in taking advantage of the natural disposition of the ground, and moreover, from its resting, as it were, upon a long row of substantial vaults in the rear that seem to constitute a portion of the foundation of the edifice,—the church, viewed from the west, towers aloft with graceful outline amid the original trees, as if constructed upon an elevated artificial plateau. Thence, in every direction, the eye of a visitor rests on beautiful or

pleasing scenery, and to the westward he enjoys a magnificent prospect of the whole range of the Catskills.

The grading around the church was done under the personal superintendence of Gen. de Peyster, and at the expense of Mr. Johnston Livingston and himself. For this a handsome Resolution of Thanks was voted and presented by the Vestry. From the northwest, again, the appearance of the church, springing up among the tall trees and above the vaults, is imposing, and resembles some of the religious structures of Europe which are deemed worthy of especial notice in guide-books.

The vaults, beginning to the south with that of Gen. de Peyster, immediately in the rear of the chancel, were built by Johnston Livingston, by the Estate of John S. Livingston, Col. Louis Livingston, Robert E. Livingston, T. Streatfield Clarkson, the Clarkson family and E. H. Ludlow. Cambridge Livingston has a handsome vault apart, and Gen. de Peyster owns two plots to be used as positions for monuments, some of which have been already set up. James B. Toler, E. A. Livingston, V. G. Hall, Jr. and Col. Frederic de Peyster, second son of the General, each have been purchasers of plots for vault purposes.

Very peculiar arrangements have been entered into by the original subscribers for the protection for all time of their burial-places, so that this "God's acre" is less liable to probable or possible desecration or vandalism than any

other in the country. Even the style of monuments is under the safeguard of a committee, and the jurisdiction of the Vestry is restricted to the church itself and a space of only a few feet outside of the walls of it.

As the grounds are new, the monuments are as yet few and principally erected to members of the Watts and de Peyster families. One of these, quite imposing from its situation and surroundings, of a peculiarly hard gray marble which seems calculated to last forever, bears the name of JOHN WATTS on the east base, and ★ JOHN WATTS DE PEYSTER ★ on the west base and the following inscriptions on two faces, east and north :

In Memory of
 JOHN WATTS,
 born in the city of New York,
 27th of August, 1749 (Old Style),
 and died there
 3rd (6th) Sept., 1836 (New Style) :
 (3d Son of Hon. John Watts, Senior,
 Member King's Council,
 and destined Lt. Gov. Province of New York.
 and of Anne, eldest daughter of
 Etienne (Stephen) de Lancey,)—
 Last Royal Recorder, City of New York, 1774-77;
 Speaker of Assembly, S. N. Y., 1791-94 ;
 Member of Congress, U. S., 1793-95 ;
 First Judge of Westchester Co., N. Y., 1806 ;
 &c., &c., &c.
 Founder and endower of the Leake & Watts
 Orphan House, New York City.
 "VIR ÆQUANIMITATIS."

In Memory of

and of his wife
 Mary Justina Watts,
 youngest Child and Daughter of
 Hon. John Watts, 2d ; and of Jane,—
 [the latter] Daughter of Peter de Lancey,
 “of the Mills,” Westchester Co., N. Y.
 and [of] Elizabeth Colden, Daughter of
 Cadwallader Colden, Royal Lt. Gov.
 and Acting Gov. Province N. Y.—
 Born in New York City, 26th Oct., 1801,
 and died there 28th of July, 1821.

The west and south sides of the plinth have no lettering.

Westward of this is a large and extremely tasty marble memorial of a young and handsome Union officer, who died of the ultimate results of exposure and disease contracted during the Peninsular Campaign of 1862. On the obverse are a few lines, setting forth his name, rank, &c., as follows :

FREDERIC DE PEYSTER, Jr.

Brevet Colonel, N. Y. V.,

Brevet Major, U. S. V.

Born in New York City,

13th December, 1842,

Died at Rose Hill,

in the Township of

Red Hook, Dutchess Co.,

30th October, 1874.

of diseases contracted in the field, with the

Army of North-

Eastern Virginia in 1861,

and with the Army of the

Potomac in 1862.

The reverse indicates where his remains have found their last resting-place, as follows :

(Fourth Corps Badge, Second Division.)
A. of the P.



The mortal remains lie
in his father's vault,
west of the church.

As he discharged both line and staff, or medical, duty in one of the New York regiments which was considered as belonging to the artillery, a ten-pounder Parrot gun which had performed service in putting down the "Slaveholders' Rebellion," is planted at the corner of this monumental plot, which is guarded from intrusion by an apparently simple but costly fence of strong wrought iron standards set in blocks of stone connected by heavy rods of the same metal.

Immediately south of the southern projection of the church, within an enclosure, and guarded by two ten-pounder Parrot guns, perhaps the very ones with which he served, is an obelisk of white marble, sculptured with appropriate military emblems, erected in honor of a young Union artillery officer. It bears the following inscription :

In Memory of
JOHN WATTS DE PEYSTER, Jr.
Major First New York Vol. Artillery,
Brevet Colonel U. S. V. and N. Y. V.

“Greatly distinguished for gallantry and good conduct at the Battle of Williamsburg” (Monday, 5th May, 1862, as Aid to his cousin, Maj. General Philip Kearny), “and no less remarked for his coolness and courage under me (Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker) at the Battle of Chancellorsville” (2d, 3d, 4th May, 1863, as Chief of Artillery, 2d Division, 6th Corps), to Maj. General Albion P. Howe.

After nearly ten years unremitting suffering, the consequence of arduous service in the field, he died 12th of April, 1873, in his native City of New York, aged 31 years, 4 months and 10 days.

Immediately in the rear of the church and against the chancel wall is another marble tablet, lettered as follows :

Third Corps, 1st Div. and Sixth Corps, 2d Div. Badges.



In the Vault beneath rest the mortal remains of Brevet Colonel
JOHN WATTS DE PEYSTER, Jr.
 Major 1st N. Y. Vol. Arty.
 Born 2d December, 1841,
 in the city of New York,
 and died there 12th of April, 1873.
 “A young officer” (whom Kearny styled “as brave as himself”) “of zeal, energy, and fired with a

patriotic ambition.”

(Major Gen. Peck.)

“A soldier of great force in action, and capable by his personal heroism of inspiring others with his own fiery courage.”

(Brig. Gen. Josh. T. Owen.)

“The chivalric gallantry of character and the patriotic devotion to duty which led Col. de Peyster in the voluntary performance of more than duty, to sacrifice upon the altar of his country, his health and the bright promise of a noble manhood, justly entitle him to the favorable consideration of his government and the kind consideration of his countrymen.”

(Maj. Gen. A. P. Howe.)

In every position, as a Staff, Cavalry, and Artillery officer, equally distinguished, he died a martyr for the Union.

In alluding to the vault, special mention should be made of the plain but enduring appearance of the one which belongs to Gen. de Peyster. It is constructed of enormous blocks of Hudson river bluestone, laid in courses, and looks as if it would last as long as humanity requires a place of sepulture; the entrance is closed with a wrought-iron door as strong as the structure itself, and bears a forged iron monogram. Everything seems to be calculated to insure durability. On either side of the entrance are two

other ten-pounder Parrot guns, conceded by the United States Government after the war. They are most appropriate in their position, as they seem to sentinel the last repose of two, who, on terrible fields,

“Knew their voices of old,”

although—as Tennyson beautifully expresses it in his “Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington”—these young soldiers, who

“—heard great ordnance in the field,”

“—in pitched battle heard

Loud ’larums ; neighing steeds and trumpets clang !”
are

“Silent

Forever : and whatever tempests lower,

Forever silent ; even if they broke

In thunder, Silent !”

The facade of Gen. de Peyster’s vault is surmounted by a very handsome sarcophagus in Italian marble, bearing the following inscriptions :

Facing west, obverse—

In Memory of
MARIA LIVINGSTON DE PEYSTER,
youngest daughter and child of
John Watts and Estelle
de Peyster.
Born 7th July, 1852,
Died 24th September, 1857.

Facing east, reverse—

In Memory of
our beloved aunt,
ELIZABETH WATTS LAIGHT,
daughter of
John and Jane de Lancey
Watts.
Died 23d June, 1866,
aged 82 years.

The first, on the obverse, is a record of one of the most remarkable children that ever gladdened the hearts of parents: she realized the hackneyed truism of Shakespeare so often quoted and too often misapplied,

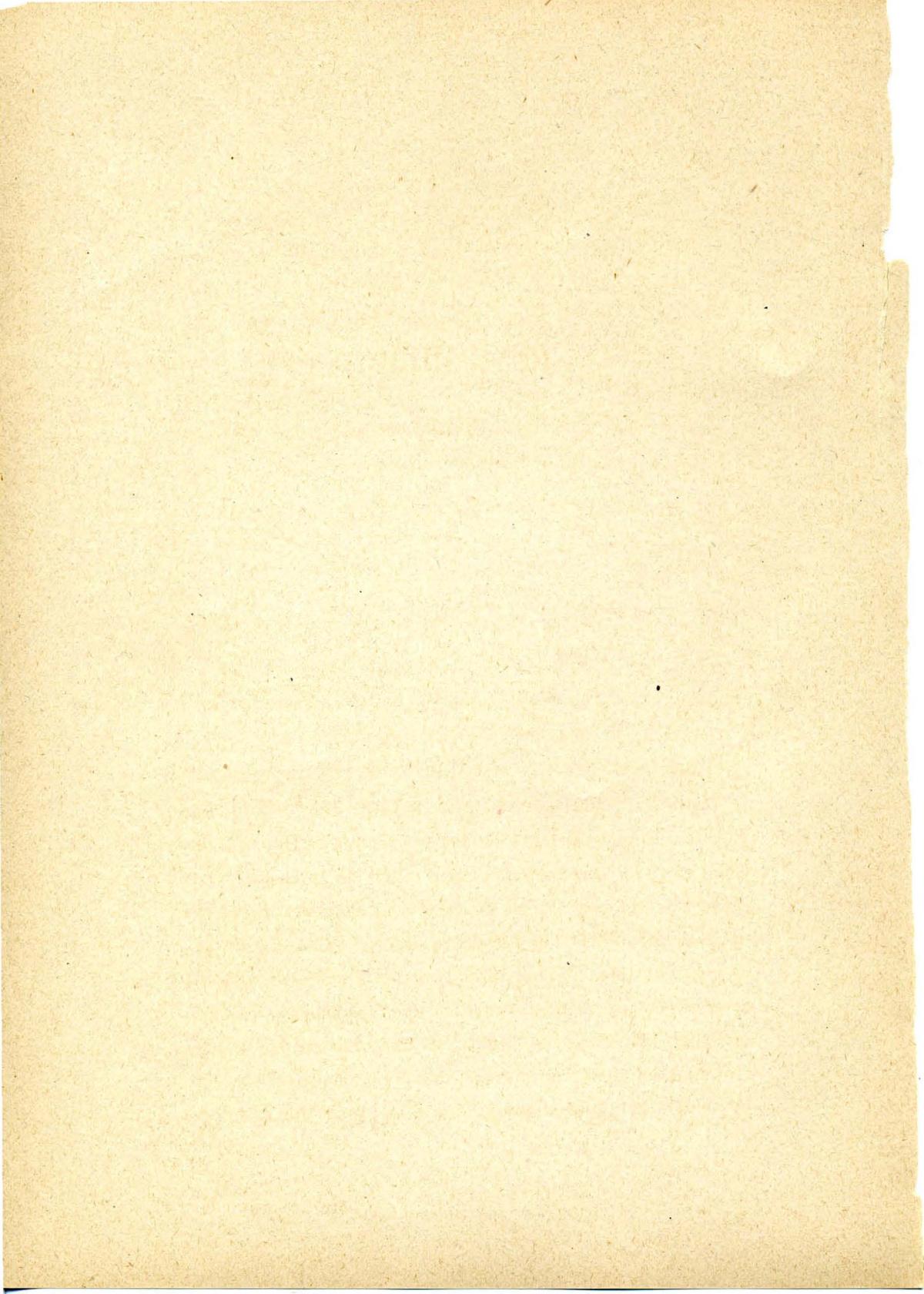
“So wise, so young, they say, did ne'er live long.”

The reverse commemorates the name of one of the best of women; one of noblest examples of self-denial and benevolence. Blessed with means, she employed them almost entirely in doing good and giving pleasure; not through a blind and indiscriminate charity, but by dividing among the needy and “God's poor” over six-sevenths of her income. Such examples of unostentatious generosity are very rare; but her gifts were inherited, for she was the daughter of the Hon. John Watts of New York, who, becoming possessed of a large fortune by the premature death of a noble son, he would not appropriate the funds that came into his hands through such a calamity, but with them founded a Refuge for the Fatherless. Nor would

he take to himself the sole credit for his disinterestedness, but associated with his own name that of the connection from whom the fortune was originally derived and also the idea of such an institution.

Thus this grand charity, whose buildings on the crowning height overlook Central and Morning Side Parks, is known as the Leake and Watts Orphan House. It was so entitled by John Watts, who furnished the endowment. The John G. Leake, whose name precedes his own, was the brother of Major Robert Leake, who married Margaret Watts, sister of the philanthropist. He (John G. Leake) bequeathed his property to Robert Watts, the only surviving son (who died before his father) of John Watts, the founder.

2



ROSE HILL.



"Come, we'll e'en to our country-seat repair."

JOHN NORRIS.

"Cedar and pine [hemlock] and branching [oak],
A sylvan scene; and as the ranks ascend,
Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view."

MILTON.

"Within an ancient forest's ample verge,
But for convenience, and the use of life;—"

NICHOLAS ROWE'S *Tragedy*, "*Jane Shore*."

"Which sloping hills around enclose,
There stands a lonely, but a healthful dwelling,
Where many a beech and brown oak grows;
Beneath whose dark and branching bowers,
It's tides a far-famed river pours:
By nature's beauties taught to please,
Sweet Tusculum of rural ease."

WHARTON.

Rose Hill, the country-seat of Gen. John Watts de Peyster, is one of the loveliest spots conceivable. It is especially so through the care taken to preserve the primeval trees, of which there are nearly fifty varieties upon the grounds. The latter are suffered to remain, as far as possible, in their natural and romantic wildness. There are ravines spanned by simple bridges, precipices, a small artificial lakelet, hills, dales, dells, and curious roads climbing rough elevations; all under the shade of a forest in which evergreens predominate, so that the domain,

overhead, appears almost as green after the deciduous trees have shed their foliage as when they were in full leaf.

The long avenue is another striking feature, and the color of the road-bed, bister grey, harmonizes with the bordering trees, deciduous and evergreen alternating, that form a long continuous arch overhead; midway one patriarchal white oak throws an enormous branch across the road to meet the opposite wild pear and pines, which spring up and mingle their varied green to constitute a massive span such as is rarely seen without the assistance of careful cultivation.

The domain takes its name from the country-place of the owner's great-grandfather, Hon. John Watts, Senior, in the city of New York, on a portion of which domain the General's city residence is erected. This original estate gave its name to a large district of north-east New York a half century since, and embraced the grounds now occupied by Bellevue Hospital. The original title was derived from an estate in Scotland, just outside, but now within, the limits of Edinburgh, wherein the old mansion, "Rose Hill," is still standing, massive and almost intact, although the grounds have been perverted to utilitarian purposes. About two hundred years ago its owner was known from this property as "John Watt of Rose Hill," in connection with the marriage of his daughter, Margaret, to Sir Walter Riddell, Bart., whose family charter dates

back to between 1124 and 1153, and to David, King of Scotland. A number of poems by Burns were addressed to members of this family, of whom the present baronet is the tenth.

“ROSEHILL”—according to a response from Scotland in relation thereto—“is an old estate, or district, about one mile west from Edinburgh on the old Glasgow road, where Gardner’s Crescent and several large churches are built. The Caledonian Railway passes through it. There are two places, or one-sided streets, both called ‘Rosehill Place.’ When Gardner’s Crescent is mentioned in the ‘Edinburgh Directory’ it is called Gardner’s Crescent ‘Rosehill,’ denoting the district or country; but it is nearly all built over and must be very valuable property to the proprietors. Grove street is also part of it; the Canal Basin is on it, and Union Canal passes through it. There are several places ‘Rosebank’ and ‘Rose Crescent’ in the vicinity; it is near Dalay House. It was a beautiful place before it was built over; I remember it nearly fifty years since myself.

“Rosehill House described in this paper is about 2000 feet south-west of the Castle and just north-east of Grove Square, and about 2000 feet west by south of the Grassmarket.

“There is an hospital for decayed merchants and shopkeepers, called ‘Watt’s Hospital,’ in Leith Lincks, near the foot of the Easter road, a fine house and grounds. I have seen it hundreds of times. It was built and endowed with funds left by a gentleman of the name of Watt, who died many years since. It is for people who have been in good circumstances, but decayed; but whether this Watt was connected with ‘Rosehill’ or not I cannot ascertain.”

“Rosehill House is still standing and in very good repair, although likely to be pulled down in two or three years to make room for new houses. It is on the left hand side of Tobago street, as you go west from the Canal Basin to the Haymarket station of the Caledonian Railway, a little bit

past Grove street. It is a large square building, sixty feet square, [plastered] yellow [dull ochre] harled (mottled), within a gate. It is three stories high, four windows in a row on every floor to the front, with a belt of stone above the under-windows; the semi-circle or half-round projection has a splendid view to the west and has windows on each floor. The windows are a good distance from each other, on the old fashioned plan. A modern house of the same size would have twice as many windows. It has a flattish slated roof. There are very large grounds connected with it; the gardens have been let to a market-gardener for many years, but the great portion of the grounds have been used as a coal-depot by the Caledonian Railway Company. The house is occupied by Mr. Burn, coal merchant; although too large for any ordinary family.

“There is [another] good old house called ‘Rose Hall’ on the old Dalkeith road, [at the] head of Blackett place; but Edinburgh has extended so much and been built over, and the old names are altered and forgotten.”

“There is also a place called ‘Rosehill,’ or ‘The Hermitage,’ at Frithfield, near the Baths, East End, Leith Links.”

So dear was their original home, “Rose Hill,” to all of the “Watt” or “Watts” family, that, wherever they locate, they testify their affectionate regard by naming their country-places after the ancestral house near “Auld Reekie.”

Few private residences, on any river, stream or estuary, have been or could be placed in such a position as the Rose Hill Mansion on the Hudson. It stands on a bluff between seventy and eighty feet above tide-water, and about the same distance from the original edge of the steep bank. It commands a view up and down the Hudson of, perhaps,

twenty miles of water, although the eye can detect the course of the stream much farther than this distance, since the eminences, on either side, which mark its course, are plainly visible from the piazza for nearly twenty-five miles to the southward. From the same spot a sea of mountains are in sight: the highest summits of the Catskills; "Hunter Mountain or the Liberty Cap," or "Round Top," 4050 feet, and "High Peak or the Man on the Mountain," are almost directly opposite, while to the south-west stretches away the Shawangunk range. On the night of a National festival, for instance the 4th of July, the symbols of rejoicing, such as bonfires, illuminations and rockets, are plainly visible throughout a vast area.

The channel runs immediately along the shore in front of the de Peyster house, and fishermen who set their eel-pots in the "Pool," say that these require lines between eighty and ninety feet long; so deep is it, in fact, that the largest steamboats have run so close in, that from the brink above a biscuit could have been pitched upon the upper deck. This actually occurred some years ago, before the railroad was built, when a huge day-boat, forced out of its course to avoid a collision with sailing vessels, sheered in so near to the bank that between the vessel and the shore was less than the cast of an ordinary fishing-line. In the era of sailing vessels, over eighty have been counted in sight at once; and at present, at night, very often, from

just north of the "Klein Sopus Light," or "Swaannen Plaat," below Port Ewing, the stream is ablaze with the light of steamboats and their luminous "tows," as brilliant as if it was an aquatic "festival of lanterns." In rarely exceptional years, but more frequently of late, the salt water makes farther and farther up the river, especially in times of drouth, when, its fresh sources and feeders being diminished in volume, the waters of the Hudson become brackish. In such seasons, crabs have been taken within a few miles of Rose Hill, and its owner is perfectly cognisant of the capture of seals in Esopus, or Saugerties, creek, opposite; having seen the fresh and bleeding pelt of one, just skinned, which had been taken in a fyke. According to the old records, a whale once ascended to Albany, grounded and died on a flat; and once, if not twice, within forty years, porpoises were seen leaping in front of Rose Hill. Sea-gulls, driven inland by tempests, often make their appearance in flocks in the vicinity.

Since the Hudson River Railroad so completely marred the beauty of the left bank of the Hudson, it is almost impossible to realize the former beauties of Rose Hill promontory, originally known as "Snake Point," on account of the enormous number of copperheads which frequented its rocks and the dense undergrowth which covered it. It did not take long, however, to exterminate these reptiles. Specimens, some of them enormous, over four feet long and three or four inches through, were killed; and, almost

incredible as the statement may seem, a black snake, twelve to fourteen feet long, was seen by the owner of Rose Hill and other credible witnesses, and hunted by the former, escaping up a tree. Clearing up the woods, but especially burning the leaves—which accumulate annually in enormous quantities—and the branches thrown down by violent winds at different periods of the year, have so completely rid the premises of snakes that even harmless ones are very rarely met.

Rose Hill projects so far out into the river that it is beyond the islands two miles below, which at one time were about in the centre of the wide expanse of water between the main shores. Nearly one-half of this, however—to the eastward, through natural as well as artificial causes—has been gradually—in the course of a century—converted into pasture or bog and a waste of water-weeds. To give a better idea, however, of the projection, steamboats which pass down in front have to sheer in so far in making their landing at Tivoli, a quarter of a mile below, that they disappear from the sight of those looking southward and watching them from the piazza of the mansion.

Rose Hill House itself has grown like one of the old English family houses, with the increase of the family, until in strange but picturesque outline—the prevailing style being the Italian—somewhat in the shape of a cross; it is now 114 feet long by 87 feet deep. The tower in the

rear, devoted to library purposes, rises to the height of about sixty feet. This library, first and last, has contained between twenty and thirty thousand volumes. Such indefinite language is used, because the owner has donated over half this number to the New York Historical Society, the New York Society Library, and a number of other similar organizations in different parts of the United States. As a working library, replete with dictionaries and cyclopædias, in many tongues and on almost every subject, it is a marvel. It is likewise very valuable for its collections on military and several other special topics. From it was selected and given to the New York Historical Society, one of the finest possible collections on the History of Holland, from the earliest period down to the present time. In spite of all these donations it is still a curiosity shop; not only for a bibliophile, but for a *curio*-seeker.

The figures vary from the vast basalt image of Centeotl, the Aztec Goddess of Plenty, from the "House of the Gods," at Toluca—brought thence by Major-General (then Major, U. S. A.) J. W. Phelps—down to exquisite miniature modern bronzes; the swords from the most valuable Damascus blades down to the rude Javanese wood-knife and a Kabyle yataghan brought home from Algiers by the General himself; the firearms, from the first breech-loading rifle ever used by troops in line of battle—invented in 1775 and a present from the inventor, Col. Patrick

Ferguson, who fell in command at King's Mountain, 7th October, 1780; to the General's grandfather, a young and trusted captain under him—down to the most approved breech-loaders of the present time; the pistols, from diminutives of exquisite workmanship (one pair richly inlaid) presented by Governor, the Earl of Bellomont, to Colonel de Peyster over 180 years ago, down through a series representing various changes of locks and mountings, to the "leveling" last improvements in revolvers; the flags, from Union colors which bear the marks of years of battle, down to Rebel standards brought out of captured Richmond by the General's youngest son, who hoisted the *first* REAL *American* FLAG over the captured Rebel capitol and capital; the *curios*, from the seal, cup and fork of the first de Peyster, through seven generations and changes of form and engraving, to curiosities of similar kinds of recent date. A long series of family portraits cover the walls, beginning with a reproduction representing "The Six Worthy de Heers," who drew up the earliest charter of the city of New York—of whom one was Johannis de Peyster, first in the country—through many a distinguished civilian and soldier down to the likenesses of the General's three gallant sons, who, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two, won the brevet of Colonel during the bloody war to suppress the "Slaveholders' Rebellion." The log-books of Arent Schuyler de Peyster, an adventurous navigator, the discoverer of the de Peyster

and other groups of islands in the Pacific, giving the details of his voyages—lie beside records of the even stranger life of his uncle, Colonel Arent Schuyler de Peyster, of the 8th, or the King's Regiment of (British) Foot, who, in early youth, was one of the first British officers to visit and record in verse the beauties of Lake George, embodied in his rare and valuable "Miscellanies," and to erect one of the first buildings in that region: a saw-mill near the falls, worked by the water-power of the rapids of the Niagara.

Among the portraits referred to, embracing likenesses of a number of distinguished soldiers, is one of the General's uncle, George Watts, who, as First Lieutenant, First U. S. Light Dragoons, and Aide-de-Camp to General Winfield Scott, by his coolness and courage saved the life of his superior from the tomahawk and scalping-knife of Indians in British pay—as Scott has often related to friends—when the General had been invited out to breakfast for the very purpose of betraying him to the savages. This was just previous to the battle of Chippewa. General Scott said that on this occasion he made quicker running than at any other time during his life, after setting down untasted the cup of coffee he was just raising to his lips, and abandoning his cocked hat as a trophy.

On a sand bluff, belonging to the present de Peyster property, and overlooking Tivoli landing and post-office, is the oldest graveyard in this section of the country: so

old that there has been no recorded, or remembered, or designated interment within the century. It was once a very pretty spot, shaded with large, wild plum trees, quite a grove. Beneath these, there were a considerable number of funereal tokens, several very costly for the era in which they were placed, besides others of less pretention. The vandalism which denuded the spot of its trees for firewood was not as bad as that which had previously made spoil of the memorials. It is said that the brick supports and foundations of the slabs were appropriated to other uses, and the slabs themselves, in some instances, converted into flagstones. The oldest stone, on which the inscription is legible, is that:

“In Memory of Tryntie (English Catharine) [Benson], wife of Col. Martin Hoffmann, who died 31st of March, 1765.” This Colonel Hoffman was the great-grandson of Martinus Hoffman, who emigrated from Sweden to America and settled at Shawangunk, in Ulster county, New York. He was a man of mark and means. The next in order of time is that of Mrs. Hannah Vosburgh, daughter of Col. John Ashley of Sheffield (? Mass.), wife of Martin Vosburgh, another man of property for his day. She died 30th June, 1764. The next again, in regard to time, is the slab in memory of Mr. Lawrence Knickerbacker, who died 20th December, 1766. The last on which the record is decipherable, has the date of 3d April, 1773; it bears the name of Helena Van Wyck, wife of Zacharias

Hoffman, who appears to have been the father of Colonel Martin-, and the grandson of the first Martinus-, Hoffmann. If so, Col. Martin Hoffman and Tryntie, his wife, are the great-grandparents of Theodore A. Hoffman, the present able and influential postmaster at Tivoli.

Another stone, which was thrown out by the frost, slipped down and was recovered from a barnyard below—and belongs properly to the burial-ground above described—is now set up in the monumental plot belonging to Gen. de Peyster in the rear of St. Paul's Church, facing his vault. The material is red sandstone, and time and frost has rendered the lettering very indistinct; the following, however, is still legible:

“In Memory of John Vosburgh, Was born November : the 5 : 1680 : and Departed this Life May the : 28 : 1775 : Aged : 94 : Years : 6 : Months and : 23 : Days.”

The family of whom deceased was a member are no longer residents of this immediate vicinity, in which they once exercised a considerable influence.

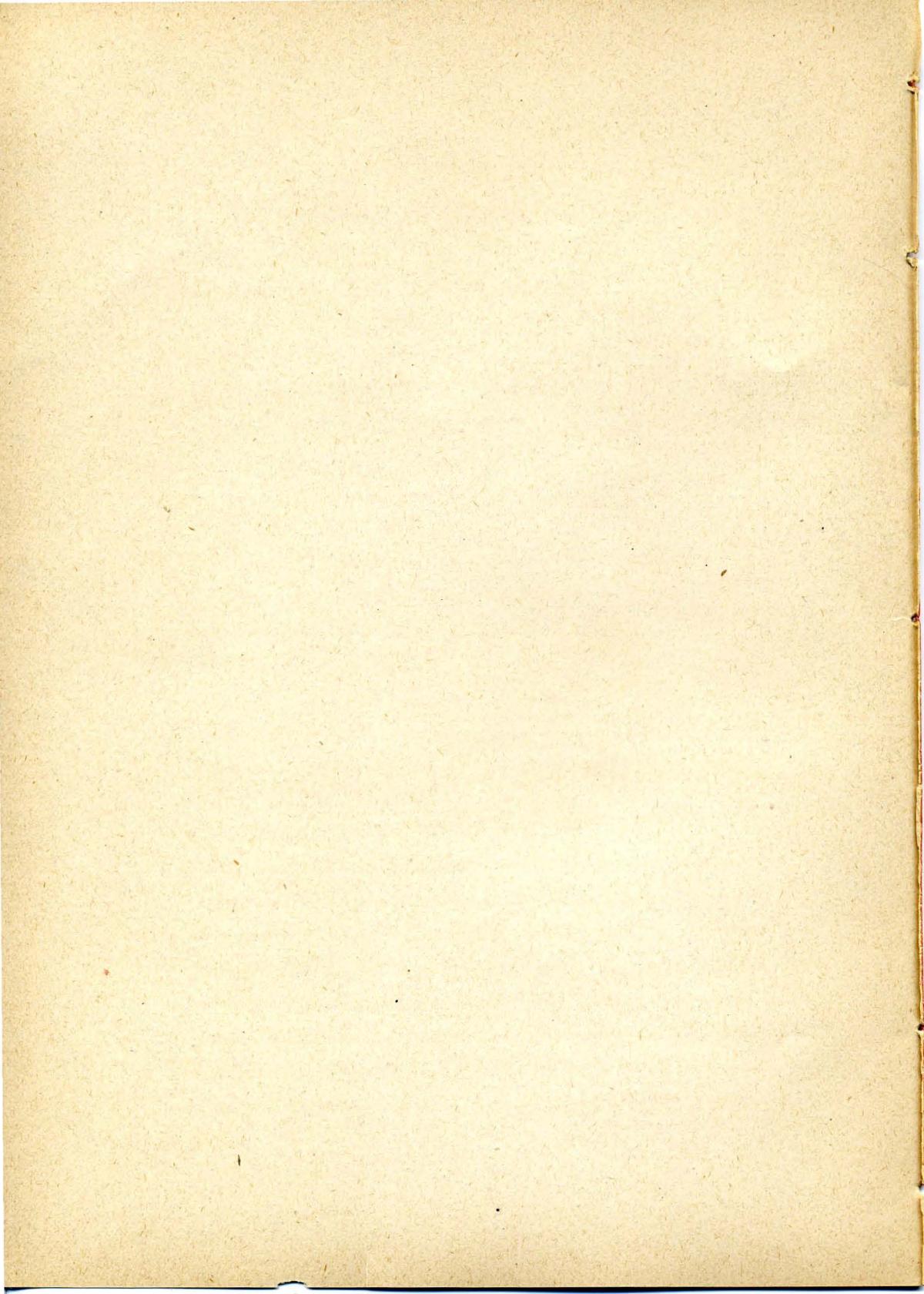
About half a mile south of Rose Hill is the dwelling of his son, Colonel Johnston Livingston de Peyster, “the Chateau of Tivoli,” from which the landing, post-office, station and incorporated village take their name. It was built shortly after the Revolution, for it appears on an old map, very finely executed by the celebrated engraver St. Memin, which bears the date of 1795. At this time the owner, Monsieur de Labaygarre, had been for some time domiciled

in Red Hook, and occupied in developing a succession of visionary projects, all of which resulted in brilliant failures. A mulberry-grove—the germ of a projected vast silk-worm culture—still flourishing on an adjacent hill; the vestiges of pits opened in search of porcelain clay; the surveys of a projected city that was to rival New York and render the enthusiastic schemer as wealthy as Rothschild: all these and more such projects went to water, and only the Chateau and a portion of the *enciente*, or encompassing wall with its oaken postern, remain to recall the memory of a man of grand ideas but of little practical application.

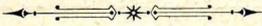
This old home, remodeled so that merely the original octagon centre remains, is now in the possession of Col. Johnston Livingston de Peyster, who enjoys the rare honor of having been breveted up from Lieutenant to Lieutenant-Colonel by the United States, and to full Colonel by his native State, for what he performed when only eighteen years of age. It is likely that he was the youngest Brevet Colonel in the country, and he was worthy of the distinction, for Providence accorded to him the glory which could not be duplicated, of hoisting the “first real American flag” over the capitol of the captured Rebel capital, Richmond; an act which put the seal, so to speak, to the fact consummated thereby, the termination of the War of Secession; more appropriately styled by many, “the Slaveholders’ Rebellion”—the term justly ascribed to it, as selected to appear in the inscription upon

the Soldiers' Monument, erected in Nov., 1866, in the village of Madalin, formerly Myersville, now Madalin P. O., about half a mile east of Rose Hill.

THIS IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORHOOD
TO HER
DEFENDERS,
WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN SUPPRESSING THE
SLAVEHOLDERS' REBELLION
AND SUSTAINING THE
GOVERNMENT
OF THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE.



DE PEYSTER FAMILY.



“ Their choice nobility and flower
Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.”

MILTON.

“ One whose extraction from an ancient line
Gives hope again that well-born men may shine ;
The meanest in your nature mild and good,
The noble rest securéd in the blood.”

WALLER.

“ Nobility claimed by the right of blood,
Shews chiefly, that our ancestors desired
What we inherit : *but that man whose actions
Purchase a real merit to himself,
And ranks him in the file of praise and honour,
Creates his own advancement.*”

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER'S “ *Fair Maid of the Inn.*” 1629.

“ When *real* Nobleness accompanies the *imaginary* one of Birth, the *imaginary*
seems to mix with the *Real* and becomes *Real* too.”

LORD GREVILLE.

“ Gentle deed, makes gentle bleid.”

SCOTCH PROVERB.

It is somewhat remarkable that the idea presented by Solomon as to physical progression in a circle—“ Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither ” [by evaporation gathering into clouds and discharging their moisture in snow, hail, sleet and rain] “ they return again ”—this same rule in many instances applies to families. How often does the exile and even the emigrant struggle and straggle back to repossess himself of, or

establish himself near, or lay down his wearied bones in, an ancestral nest. This rule has certainly applied to the owner of Rose Hill. Two hundred years ago his ancestors owned much land, and successive generations of progenitors resided where they are now to be found. In the very mansion in which his grandfather, Frederic de Peyster, married his wife, Helen Hake, about ninety years ago, General de Peyster found his wife, Estelle Livingston, belonging to the same race. The fact is, all the leading families in the Colony of the New Netherlands, afterwards the Province of New York, had not only become connected by marriage before the commencement of the Revolution, but in many instances they were knit together by the strongest and closest additional ties of blood.

Brigadier-General (M. F. S. N. Y.) Brevet Major-General (N. G. S. N. Y.) JOHN WATTS DE PEYSTER, the owner of Rose Hill, is the immediate representative of two families who exercised a leading influence in the Colony and Province of New York, and filled the most important offices under the Dutch and English administrations, through his paternal and maternal, as well as collateral lines, through reciprocal marriages with Wattses, de Lanceys, Coldens, Livingstons, Beekmans, Schuylers, van Cortlandts and other prominent stems.

The first of the de Peyster family, Johannis I., who came to this country about 1645, was the scion of an exiled or refugee French Protestant family, and was a young man of

means for the period and of unusual ability. However noble or closely allied to the nobility of France, the expatriated Huguenots soon had to turn their abilities to whatever would produce the means of livelihood. Johannis seemed already to belong to the class in Holland whom Sir William Temple styles "Renteneers" (French, *Rentiers*), *i. e.*, those who had means enough to produce a fixed income sufficient to support them comfortably. As Col. Richard Nicolls, the first English Governor, remarked, "he could make a better platform speech than any other man outside of Parliament." This Johannis was descended from one of the unhappy Huguenot families who were compelled to leave France after the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, 24th August, 1572. The other members of this circle were scattered far and wide by this cruel, crimson catyclism. One wandered as far east as Greece (?), others settled in Holland, another in England. Johannis, born in Harlem (Holland)—where he married his wife, Cornelia Lubbertse, a native of the same place—transferred his fortunes to the New World. He brought out with him many curious articles of furniture, some beautiful pictures, portraits, and articles of silver, which for their conception and execution are equal to any manufactured at this time. His first commission on record, was that of Adelborst (or *noble-born*), or cadet in one of the city companies. This shows he must have been very young when he first came over, and consequently it is likely that he returned to

Holland for his wife, who survived him. It may be asked why there is any uncertainty about such important facts in a family history. The answer is as simple as clear. Time, the great destroyer and scatterer, was, in the case of the de Peyster and Wattses, assisted by confiscation, exile, and, worst of all and most destructive to archives, fire! According to a sketch for a picture executed at the period, he was one of "The Six," who were associated to draw up the first charter for the city of New Amsterdam, now New York. He filled, successively, between 1655 and 1677 the offices of Schepen, Burgomaster, Alderman and Deputy Mayor. On the 15th of October, 1677, he was appointed Mayor, but declined the promotion in consequence of his imperfect acquaintance with the English language. His descendants were all distinguished for their public spirit and activity in connection with the affairs of the city. One of his granddaughters was mother of William Alexander, titular Earl of Stirling, major-general in the Continental army. Griswold, in his scarce work, "Washington and his Generals of the Revolution" (I., 165), observes, "the mother (of the Earl of Stirling) was an extraordinary person." Those who knew her personally, and lived to relate their early experiences to individuals still alive, confirmed this remark, adding that her remarkable mental charms and capacity were not more striking than her graces of face and person.

The eldest son of this Johannis I., Abraham I., was one of the most distinguished men in the Colony in which

he was born, 8th July, 1657. On the 5th April, 1684, during a visit to Amsterdam, he married his kinswoman, Catherina de Peyster. This Abraham held successively the offices of Alderman, 1685; Mayor, 1691-5; Judge of the Supreme Court; Member of the King's Council; as presiding officer of the same, acting Governor in 1700; and Colonel commanding the Militia (Horse, one company, and Foot, eight companies, 685 men) belonging to the City and County of New York.

“Col. *Abraham de Peyster* presided occasionally at the Council in 1700, as the eldest member of the Board present, in the absence of Col. Smith, with whose pretensions at that time any one acquainted with the political history of New York must be familiar. In point of seniority Col. de Peyster stood No. 3, Col. Peter Schuyler being also his senior, but he absented himself likewise. *It is singular, as showing how historical events, like fashions in dress, repeat themselves and reappear, that the very principles of government that divided Smith and de Peyster in those days, caused a division in the Cabinet in Canada under the late Lord Metcalf and the constitutional views advocated by de Peyster were only permanently triumphant under the present Lord Elgin.* The progress of the present age is sometimes in a circle.”

In 1706, he was appointed Treasurer of the Provinces of New York and New Jersey. Few men have exhibited more patriotism than he did in crises. This quality was

only equalled by his liberality. Whoever became his acquaintance was speedily transmuted into a warm friend. He was the intimate friend of Richard Coote, Earl of Bello-mont, the best governor who ever administered the affairs of this Colony, Province or State. He was likewise the friend of a man of the most opposite character, the celebrated William Penn, who in one of his letters particularly alludes to the fascination of de Peyster's good humor. Wherever he went he won golden opinions, and he lived long enough to see his children holding or fitting themselves to hold the highest positions in society and public affairs.

Although this sketch will be confined as far as possible to direct descent, still it is impossible not to mention other members of the family who have peculiarly distinguished themselves. One of the grandsons of Abraham I. was the good and gallant Col. Arent Schuyler de Peyster, who received his first commission as Ensign in the deservedly celebrated Eighth, "the King's" Regiment of British Foot, (in 1688, Princess Anne's Regiment) 10th of June, 1755, and rose through a long period of interesting and important service to its command, 12th of October, 1793.

For many years, as Captain and Major, he was stationed on the remote frontier, particularly at Michilimacinae. While at this post his control of the Indian tribes was exercised for good. After the Revolution became a certainty, he more than once was called upon to bring them from the

remotest points—from the Mississippi, down towards St. Louis, W., from the shores of Lake Superior, N. W., and from the colder regions of Lake Nipissing, N.—to participate in operations which culminated in conflicts on Lake Champlain, the upper Hudson, on the Mohawk, at Oriskany, and Hoosic, miscalled Bennington, in 1777. Curious to state, one of his first orders in this connection was dated 4th July, 1776, which will be forever famous as the *nominal*, not the *actual*, Anniversary of the Declaration of American Independence. As a subaltern he was one of the first British officers to explore the region about Lake George, and he recorded the incidents of his visit to these lovely and historic spots in a series of poems, one or more of which were embodied in his “Miscellanies.” This rare work—now almost unattainable—containing a large amount of valuable and interesting information in connection with the Indians and the period, published at Dumfries some ninety years ago, has been a mine for historians in preparing treatises on regions in which he exercised commands or influence. Colonel, then Lieut. de Peyster, built on the site of the Porter mansion, a saw-mill at Niagara Falls in 1767, one of the first, if not the first, civilized construction at that point.

About the end of the XVIII. century, Col. de Peyster settled at Dumfries, Scotland, and resided at a country-seat named “Mavis (Lark) Hall,” and he lies buried under an imposing monument in the chapel-yard of St.

Michael's in that city. Here, "towards the close of his life, having held a royal commission for over fourscore years, he was called upon to embody, discipline and command the First Regiment of Dumfries Volunteers, organized to defend the United Kingdom against the menaces of invasion by the forces of the successive French revolutionary governments. The poet Burns carried a musket in this regiment, and the private and field officer engaged, unknown to each other, in a poetical controversy in the columns of the *Dumfries Journal*. Many of the surviving members of this regiment, to mark their regard for the memory of the deceased, resumed [at his funeral] the habiliments so long laid aside, while a party of the privates carried his body to the grave, supported by the staff of the Dumfriesshire Militia." To this Col. de Peyster, Burns addressed, in 1796, his sparkling verses sometimes entitled "A Poem on Life."

"In his person Col. de Peyster was tall, soldier-like and commanding; in his manners easy, affable and open; in his affections warm, generous and sincere; in his principles, and particularly his political principles, firm even to inflexibility. No man, we believe, ever possessed more of the principle of vitality. Old age, which had silvered his hair and furrowed his cheeks, appeared to make no impression on his inner man; and those who knew him best declare that up to the period of his illness his mind appeared as active, and his intellect as vigorous, as they

were fifty years ago. When the weather permitted he still took his accustomed exercise, and walked round the billiard table or bestrode his gigantic charger, apparently with as little difficulty as a man of middle age. When so mounted we have often fancied we beheld in him the last connecting link between the Old and New Schools of military men."

The nephew and namesake of the colonel, Arent Schuyler de Peyster, junior, was quite a distinguished navigator and explorer of the Pacific and the western coast of America, when both as yet were little known to our people. No sensational romance, ever written, could embody more startling adventures than fell to his lot. Roving over the Pacific, of which there were then few and unreliable charts, he more than once narrowly escaped shipwreck on coral reefs, the existence of which were utterly unknown. On one occasion, at night, the jib-a-jib-boom of his vessel, the "Elizabeth," was actually over the outer breakers of an exterior reef when she came about. The grim horror of the situation and the knowledge of the rich cargo confided to his skill, had such an effect upon the young skipper's mind that when he came on deck the next morning he was told that a large tuft of hair, just above the forehead, had become white through anxiety. During one voyage, in 1809, he discovered several groups of islands to the north of the Fijee Archipelago, one of these comprising seventeen islands. One of considerable

size bears his name, the de Peyster or Peyster Group. Another circlet of islets, surrounding a large lagoon, in the South Pacific, he named after a friend, Mr. Ellice. He was on the South American coast at the same time when the celebrated Admiral Cochrane was operating against the Spaniards, and, the one in blockading the ports, then Spanish, and the other in running the blockade, came in contact more than once. Young de Peyster was very near engaging with his clipper brigantine, a Spanish corvette which undertook to deprive him and his crew of the fruits of a dangerous venture, and the action was only prevented by the interference of his personal friend, the British Admiral Hardy—the officer in whose arms Nelson died—then lying in the harbor of Valparaiso. Hardy intimated to the Spanish Captain-General of Chili, who had invoked his interposition, that if the royal officials did not right the matter, he believed that de Peyster would attempt the capture of the corvette, and the admiral subsequently admitted that he thought de Peyster, despite the disparity of his force, would have been successful. On another voyage from Calcutta to England, the young American ran so close in to St. Helena, in a fog, that he was satisfied that if Napoleon had only been able to take advantage of the circumstance, the captive Corsican could have been carried off from Longwood. When the fog lifted and the proximity of the “Elizabeth” was discovered, the whole garrison and the flotilla of guard-ships were in commotion.

A sloop-of-war slipped her cables and started out to investigate, and it was with difficulty that de Peyster could give satisfactory explanations of his untimely apparition off the island and receive permission to resume his voyage.

Abraham II., eldest son of Abraham I., married Margaret, eldest daughter of Jacobus van Cortlandt. He succeeded his father as Treasurer of New York and New Jersey. His benevolence has been celebrated in the work devoted to a description of the startling "Adventures of Mons. Viaud." The whole city turned out to accompany his remains to their last resting-place. He was a gentleman of large means, and very commanding influence, both personally and through his powerful connections, as Smith in his history admits—although the historian was a bitter political enemy of the de Peyster, Watts, and de Lancey families, and those united to these through blood or marriage. He died 17th September, 1767, universally respected, regretted and beloved. His fifth son, Frederic—from his elegance of dress and deportment, known as "the Marquis,"—was appointed Treasurer in his room. This son Frederic did not serve, but resigned the position to go to France to inherit an estate left him by Madame van der Hulst de Peyster of Rouen.

James I., the eldest son of Abraham II., married Sarah, daughter of Hon. Joseph Reade, Member of the King's Council. Her brother, John Reade, was the owner of the land and point now in possession of Johnston

Livingston, known as Reade Hoek; and from this known circumstance the oldest inhabitants always agreed that the present town of Red Hook took its name. Margaret, the eldest daughter of James, married Colonel Thomas James, commandant of the (single) British Regiment of Royal Artillery. Her three brothers, Abraham III., at the age of 23, was senior Captain in the 4th or King's American Regiment; James II., about 20, was Captain-Lieutenant, commanding Colonel's Company, Grenadiers, of the same regiment; and Frederic I., before he was 18, was Captain of an Independent Loyal Company, known as the "Nassau (Long Island) Blues" and afterwards Captain in the N. Y. Vols. or King's (Third) American Regiment. All these troops were organized by the British government to oppose the rebellion or revolution of the Thirteen Colonies.

The line through Abraham III.—the oldest surviving son—failed through the successive death of all the males, without male issue. James II. left no children; and James (III.) F., the eldest son of Frederic, I., became the head of the family, although Frederic, III., the youngest surviving son, is much the best known and most eminent.

Frederic (I.) de Peyster married in the house of his great-uncle, Gilbert R. Livingston, Helen, only daughter of Commissary-General Samuel Hake, B. A. The house referred to, and doubtless known in 1800 as "Green Hill," was purchased about 1810 by John S. Livingston, and is

now in possession of his youngest surviving son, Col. Louis Livingston. This was the only edifice in this neighborhood spared by the British when they ascended the Hudson in 1777. It was preserved because the owner was a Loyalist and had been an officer in the royal service. The mother of Helen (Hake) de Peyster was Helen Livingston, eldest daughter of Robert Gilbert Livingston, eldest son of Gilbert, second son of the First Lord of Livingston Manor, who settled in Dutchess county; his brothers having their estates in what is now known as Columbia county. Robert Gilbert Livingston married Catharine McPheadres, daughter of a rich landed proprietor, who at that time resided in Dutchess county. He afterwards removed to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where he built the noted mansion now known as the Warner, Sherburne, or Whipple House, described in Brewster's "Rambles About Portsmouth," First Series, Ramble xxv., pages 140-44. Capt. McPheadres, like the Gilbert Branch of the Livingston family, the de Peysters, Wattses, de Lanceys and other kindred stocks, adhered to the crown, and like all the Loyalists atoned for his adherence to principle by the confiscation of his property. Capt. McPheadres returned to England and occupied even as high a social position there as he had enjoyed in America.

James F. (Ferguson, so named after Col. Patrick Ferguson, B. A. the hero and victim of King's Mountain, 7th October, 1780), the eldest son of Frederic (I.) de

Peyster, entered the United States Army at the age of 21, as First Lieutenant of the 42d Infantry, on the 30th March, 1814, and on the 14th next month, April, he was promoted to a captaincy.

Frederic II., youngest and only (1881) surviving son of Frederic (I.) de Peyster, married Mary Justina, youngest child and daughter of Hon. John Watts, II.

Robert Watt or Watts, the first of his family in America, was the second son of John Watt, *of Rose Hill*, thus styled—mentioned in Burke's *Peerage*, 1850, p. 836, and other similar works—in connection with the marriage of his daughter, Margaret, with Sir Walter Riddell, Bart. This Robert, born in Edinburgh, came out to New York toward the close of the XVIIth century and married, about 1706, Mary, daughter of William Nicolls or Nicoll, Esq., of Nicoll Manor, or Islip, on Long Island, N. Y. Robert Watts intended to return to, and resettle in, Scotland, but the death of his first two children at Edinburgh, in 1724, determined his remaining in America. John Watts, the son of the above Robert and Mary, was one of the most noted men in the Colony or Province of New York. After filling a number of public offices, with credit to himself and benefit to his fellow-citizens, he was made a member of the King's Council, and, had the mother country succeeded in putting down the Rebellion, he was destined to be the Lieutenant-Governor and acting Governor of the Province. He was the first President of the New

York City Hospital. His town-house was in Pearl street, near Whitehall, and was consumed in the great fire of 1776, and his country residence, Rose Hill, between the Bloomingdale and Old Post Roads and the East River, and between Twenty-first and Twenty-seventh streets, covered about fifty-four whole- and half-blocks in the XVIIIth ward of the city of New York.

His letters to Gen. Monckton, accidentally discovered in England, and published by the Massachusetts Historical Society, present the best pictures of men and manners, politics and public feeling, just previous to the outbreak of the American Revolution, of any that have been preserved or recovered. Like his son John, he was a monument of affliction. Driven into exile by an ungrateful populace whose rights he had always endeavored to maintain, his elegant property was confiscated; although, through absence from the country, he should have been excepted from the effects of such an iniquitous act of spoliation and vengeance. His noble, stately and handsome wife, Ann de Lancey, died of a broken heart in New York and her husband a martyr to duty and loyalty in exile in Wales, 22d January, 1794, and was buried in St. James, Piccadilly, London. Of their children, Robert, the eldest son, married Mary, eldest daughter of William Alexander, Major-General in the Continental Army, and titular Earl of Stirling; Ann, their eldest daughter, married Hon. Archibald Kennedy and became Countess of Cassilis; Susan married

Philip Kearny and was mother of Maj.-Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny, the conqueror of New Mexico and California; Mary* married Sir John Johnson, Bart., and like her father, suffered the pains of exile and confiscation of property; Stephen, the famous Major Watts, of Oriskany; and John, the public benefactor, married Jane de Lancy, youngest daughter of Peter de Lancy, "of the Mills," Westchester Co., N. Y., and was through his youngest child and daughter, the lovely and intellectual, Mary Justina, the grandfather of Gen. John Watts de Peyster, of Rose Hill.

* * * * *

FREDERIC (II.) DE PEYSTER—father of Gen. de Peyster—occupies an enviable position. After attaining a ripeness of years—85—which is reached by very few in the fullness of health and intelligence, he is reaping a full harvest, the fruits of a life of virtue, industry and ability. He is, and

* The sufferings of this undeservedly unfortunate wife—whose *infant* perished through the sufferings attending her escape from the disloyal Americans—were communicated in a pamphlet entitled "Adventures of a Lady [Mary (Watts) Johnson, wife of Sir John Johnson, Bart.] in the War of Independence in America," written by one of her descendants, married to the hereditary owner of Workington Hall, "the fine castellated mansion of the Curwen family, on a wooded height above the town, 'which was a refuge of Mary, Queen of Scots, after her flight from her defeat at Langside'" (15th May 1568), and printed at Workington, by P. D. Lambe, "Solway Pilot Office," 1874.

has been for years, President of the New York Historical Society, of the Board of Trustees of the New York Society Library and of the St. Nicholas Club. In addition to these he occupies important positions in connection with a number of societies—charitable, literary and business. He has been President of the St. Nicholas Society. He is author of a number of historical works of the highest merit, which have won for him a reputation at home and abroad such as few amateur writers enjoy.

Frederic de Peyster (II.), LL. D., H. F. R. H. S. G. B., has been a Member of the N. Y. Historical Society since January, 1824; Corresponding Secretary, 1827–28; 1838–43; Secretary, 1829–37; Foreign Corresponding Secretary, 1844; Second Vice-President, 1850–63; President, 1864–66, 1873–81; Member of Executive Committee, either by appointment or ex-officio, since 1827.

He was also Vice-President of the Association of the Alumni of Columbia College, Vice-President of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; for over forty years Clerk of the Board of Trustees of the Leake and Watts Orphan House, founded by the father of his wife, Mary Justina Watts; Senior Warden of Ascension Church; Vice-President of the Home of the Incurables; one of three, Committee on Instruction, Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb; Trustee of the Bible and Common Prayer-Book Society; Honorary Member of the Royal Historical Society of Great Britain, &c., &c., &c.;

formerly prominently connected with the Soldiers and Sailors' Home at Bath, Steuben county, N. Y. ; and with the Halleck, and the Farragut, Monument Associations.

He is the author of a number of obituary notices, pamphlets and addresses, amounting in matter and value to volumes, the latest of the series being his "Address on the Life and Administration of Richard, Earl of Bellomont," an exquisite production, both as a literary and publishing effort, illustrated with portraits taken by a peculiar process from originals in possession of the author, and fac-similes of manuscripts from originals among the treasures of the N. Y. Historical Society. The most remarkable facts connected with this address are that it was prepared and delivered by a gentleman 83 years of age, the delivery occupying one hour and three-quarters. How very few persons who have reached this advanced term would have been able to make such a physical effort; much more prepare for it by long and arduous study and labor. It is probable that Mr. de Peyster has ready for the rostrum and printer, unpublished, 1. A Brief Sketch of the New York Society Library, with Proofs of its [comparative? as regards this country] Antiquity; 2. A Review of the Administration of Governor, Col. Benjamin Fletcher, the *bad* predecessor of the *good* Bellomont. Mr. de Peyster's five principal works: 1. The Culture Demanded by the Age; 2. William III. as a Reformer; 3. Prominent Men of the English Revolution; 4. Life and Administration of Earl

Bellomont; 5. Early Political History of New York—have been pronounced by a competent judge as “worthy productions—accurate, logical and scholarly.”

Gen. de Peyster, like his father, has been one of the most industrious of literary workers. He has published a small library of volumes and pamphlets on historical, military and miscellaneous subjects, including poems, besides contributing long series of articles to monthlies, weeklies and dailies, particularly in connection with the American Revolution and “Slaveholder’s Rebellion.” These latter, in themselves, would constitute, if gathered together, a score of volumes, in small pica type, of 500 pages each. They are absolute authorities on the subjects of which they treat.

The following beautiful tribute to the owner of Rose Hill, from the pen of one of the loveliest and brightest young ladies of “blue blood” of New York, and written for a magnificent social entertainment, was endorsed by one of our most enterprising and generous naval worthies, Com. C. H. B——, as “True Poetry and Strikes Home:”

“I know a mind both clear and bright,
 A memory keen and true ;
 A wond’rous power for wrong or right,
 And granted to the few.
 Dost recognize my hero’s fame ?
 And yet I’ll not reveal his name.”

Of all the rewards which the General has received—and they are numerous and valuable—he esteems most

highly, 1, the three magnificent medals sent to him by Oscar I., King of Sweden, for a military Biography of Field Marshal Leonard Torstenson, Generalissimo, 1641 to 1646, the manliest figure of the "Thirty Years' War;" 2, a gold medal, in accordance with general orders, issued in 1851, through the Adjutant-General S. N. Y., for "zeal, devotion and meritorious service;" 3, another medal presented by Governor Washington Hunt, in 1852, as a testimonial of the valuable results of his military investigations in Europe as applicable to the Militia and Fire Departments of his native State and country—reports embodying a vast number of suggestions, all of which the General has lived to see developed in practical application, especially in the Paid Fire Department of the City of New York; 4, the most magnificent badge ever fabricated in this country, set with jewels of appropriate colors, voted to him in 1870 by the Third Army Corps Union, of which the General is the first and one of the only three honorary members permitted by its constitution, for his successful efforts to perpetuate the services of "the glorious old fighting Third Corps, *as we understand it*;" and 5, "the Brevet of Major-General S. N. Y.," conferred upon him in 1866 by Concurrent Resolution, after investigation and debate, of the New York State Legislature. This last honor is the only instance of such a high brevet accorded to an officer, in the same manner, by any State in the Union.

Gen. de Peyster married Estelle Livingston, daughter

of John S. Livingston and Anna Maria Martina Thompson, only daughter of Capt. William Thompson, an officer in the Pennsylvania Line of the Revolutionary army. Strange to say, the General and his wife belong to the same generation—the seventh—the first through the second and the second through the first—from the first Lord of Livingston Manor, and they both resided and still live on land, or adjoining that of ancestors who owned it six generations previous. They had five children—two daughters, the eldest, Estelle Elizabeth, married to James B. Toler, Esq., and the youngest, Maria Livingston, who died a child; also three sons, all of whom were in the Union service, and will be the subjects of especial mention hereinafter.

So few are cognizant of the facts alluded to in the letter following, that its insertion seems a simple matter of duty. The reference to Gen. Cust requires a short explanation. After reading a pamphlet by Gen. de Peyster on “Practical Strategy,” this General Sir Edward Cust, Bart., a Wellington and Peninsular veteran, author of the “Annals of the Wars,” 9 vols., &c., &c., &c., dedicated to his subsequent American friend, as yet unknown, his next work, “Lives of the Warriors (XVII. Century),” 2 vols., published at London in 1869. This Dedication was not a merely formal compliment, summed up in a few words, but a “Letter Dedicatory” of xxxvii. pages. Nor did the esteem end with this. A long correspondence ensued, kept up until just before Gen. Cust’s fatal illness. In his last

the British officer notified Gen. de Peyster that he had had his portrait painted for him, and that it would follow the letter immediately. News by cable of the veteran's decease almost immediately ensued, and his son, the present baronet, transmitted the likeness, elegantly painted and mounted.

[COPY.]

NEW YORK, June 4th, 1869.

DEAR GENERAL :

I see the question agitated by the English press, Who is Gen. de Peyster, to whom Gen. Cust dedicated his last military work? As one who knows, I can answer from several standpoints. First and foremost he is blood cousin of my friend, Major-General Phil. Kearny, who proved himself the best field-fighting general of the war, and who I have no hesitation in pronouncing the most thorough and accomplished general the war produced up to the period of his untimely death at Chantilly, which alone prevented his advancement to the command of the Army of the Potomac, as I have reason to know from repeated assurance of President Lincoln.

Next, I do know that President Lincoln at one time contemplated giving General de Peyster the high military position of chief of his personal staff, an independent organization contemplated, and warranted by the demands and necessities of the occasion, which appointment was overruled by interested parties who were unwilling the General should occupy a position so important and independent.

Yrs. truly,

[SIGNED,]

PET. HALSTED.

Just as, in 1775, the de Peysters adhered to the government under which they had prospered, and paid the last full measure of devotion to Loyalty and Duty to the crown,

just so, in 1861-5, they were found, again, in the front rank of Loyalty and Duty to the Union.

The services rendered to his country by Col. J. Watts de Peyster, Jr., born 2d December, 1841, and died 12th April, 1873, in his native city of New York, are best told in the reports and by the attestations of his superiors, and are almost sufficiently summed up through the quotations inscribed upon his monument, hereinbefore cited.

One piece of duty, however, performed by this young officer, has never been sufficiently dwelt upon, and is best told in the language of another Union officer, Major-General Alexander Shaler, U. S. V., who had the amplest opportunities of judging of its value.

Just after this gallant soldier came back from the war, he met Gen. de Peyster in the street and got talking to the latter about the battle of Chancellorsville, or, rather, Fredericksburg II. Shaler said, "de Peyster, when we were marching down to Bank's Ford, I can recall with what attention we listened to the thunder of Howe's artillery on the heights above. I said to myself, as long as those guns keep on talking at that rate, I feel that we are safe, for they are holding off the Rebs, that would otherwise press us as we continue on down to the bridge of boats. I kept my ear fixed on those guns and, while we were crossing, still on those guns. When we were safely over the river, Howe's artillery was still bellowing away, but the sound came nearer and nearer, and more

and more distinct. Pretty soon the leading regiments of Howe's Division came filing down to the bridge, but the guns were still going. Those guns saved the Sixth Corps. The man who handled those guns must have been a brave and a capable fellow."

Upon this Gen. de Peyster remarked, "Shaler, you are paying *me* a great compliment."

Shaler looked surprised. "Why? How so? What had you to do with those guns?"

"A great deal," de Peyster answered, "the Chief of Howe's Division Artillery was my eldest son and namesake. He handled those guns."

"Well," said Shaler, "I did not know that your son was there. This, however, is a fact, Howe's artillery saved the Sixth Corps that day, and, if your son was in command of that artillery, he proved himself a brave and capable officer."

Gen. Howe sent Gen. de Peyster the most magnificent attest in regard to his son's behavior on this occasion, and Gen. Owens was hardly less eulogistic; Owens told and wrote Gen. de Peyster that his son, Watts, behaved in such an admirable manner that he stayed under fire at the risk of his life to see him handle his artillery and give the Rebels fits.

Gen. Shaler also furnished, about the same time, a communication to this, the same effect:

"I am not aware of the name of the officer who com-

manded Howe's Division Artillery, but all I can say is that *he did his duty well* and in the most admirable manner. Had not Howe been the obstinate and superior officer he ever proved himself to be, the Sixth Army Corps would have 'gone in' under the Rebel pressure at the Bank's Ford. Howe fought his division with distinguished ability and *tenacity*, and the combined action of his infantry and Chief of Artillery deserve the highest praise for the admirable manner in which they discharged their responsible duties. The Howe Division Artillery was handled with great gallantry and effect, and, in conjunction with its infantry supports, they together had a marked effect in perserving the Sixth Corps and in enabling it to make a successful retrograde in the face of a victorious (as to general results) enemy."

Col. Frederic de Peyster, Jr.—born 12th December, 1842, at New York, died 30th October, 1874, at Rose Hill—served comparatively but a short time in the Great American Conflict, but sufficiently long to entail what Lincoln styled the "last full measure of devotion," and finally, through the consequences of his Loyalty, died a martyr to duty faithfully performed. Like his elder brother, how he carried himself in the presence of the enemy and in the field has its best attest in the language of officers of rank and experience who saw and admired him there. Perhaps the most extraordinary achievement in which he participated, was when Gen. B. F. Butler, on the night of

the 13-14 May, 1861, with a wing of the 8th New York Militia and another of the 6th Massachusetts Militia and Varian's Battery of Artillery belonging to the 8th New York Militia, took the perfidious city of Baltimore by the throat and choked it into a sullen submission, which kept it from farther exhibitions of its innate wickedness during the rest of the war to put down the "Slaveholders' Rebellion."

Col. Frederic de Peyster, Jr., married Mary, only daughter of Clermont Livingston (eldest grandson of Chancellor Livingston) of Clermont, proper, and Cornelia, only daughter of Herman Livingston of Oak Hill. They had two children, Mary, who died a few days before her father, and Clermont Livingston, who survives.

* * * * *

Within the last thirty-five years the United States has been engaged in two wars which resulted triumphantly for the National and Union arms. Both of these were virtually terminated by the capture of the Capital (1847) of Mexico, and of the "Slaveholders' Rebellion," Richmond, (1865). In both instances the colors of the United States were hoisted by officers, born immediately adjoining, or in, the town of Red Hook: in the first place by Major-General John Quitman, in the second by Lieutenant (now Colonel) Johnston L. de Peyster. The former was the son of the pastor of the Lutheran—known as the "Stone Church"—at Pink's Corners, or Monterey, on the Old Post Road,

about half-a-mile below the southern limit of the township of Red Hook, who, after the war, returned and had a re-union of his friends at Lower Red Hook, as the representative centre of the neighborhood to which he felt that he belonged. The latter was born at Rose Hill, near Tivoli station, and is now the owner of the "Chateau of Tivoli," from which the locality takes its name. He was brevetted Lieut.-Col. U. S. V. and Col. N. Y. V. for this deed done by him in his eighteenth year. According to the decision of General Scott in 1848 (as cited by Rear-Admiral Preble in his "History of the Flag of the U. S. A.," p. 537), the grateful service of a formal occupation of Mexico was reserved to General Quitman by his hoisting the colors of the United States on the National Palace. In the same manner the honor of raising the "*first* REAL American FLAG," to use the words of Major-General G. Weitzel, over the Capitol of the Confederate States, and the formal occupation of that edifice, belonged to Lieut. Johnston L. de Peyster. This feat he proposed to do nearly a week before the opportunity was really presented, and he carried on his saddle-bow the flag entrusted to him, expecting to encounter the perils of an assault, and he hoisted it assisted by Capt. Langdon, 1st U. S. Artillery. General Shepley looked forward with horror to the storming, which he considered inevitable, as he set forth in an article entitled, "Incidents of the Capture of Richmond," published in the *Atlantic Monthly*

Magazine for July, 1880. Admiral Farragut gave it as his opinion, that the fact that the assault did not take place did not detract in the slightest degree from the credit due to Lieut. de Peyster for his act, which General Grant observed put the seal to the termination of the Rebellion. General Adam Badeau, author of the "Military History of U. S. Grant," wrote to General de Peyster from Jamaica, L. I., 24th Dec., 1880, that General Grant decided that the cavalry guidons are *not* to be considered "National flags." "I shall therefore state [as Gen. Badeau did in his History] that Lieut. de Peyster raised the first flag over Richmond." In his "Life of Gen. Grant" (Vol. III., page 543) Gen. Badeau uses the following words, "Lieut. de Peyster, of Weitzel's staff, a New York stripling, eighteen years of age, was the first to raise the National colors, and then, in the morning light of the 3d of April, the flag of the United States once more floated over Richmond."

A great many invidious persons have undertaken to detract from the glory of the capture of Richmond by Weitzel, on Monday morning, 3d April, 1865, because it was achieved at no cost of blood or life. Ignorance is their only excuse. Weitzel had orders from Grant to assault on the 3d, A. M., and not only to assault, but to do so at the imminent risk of being bloodily repulsed. The idea was, that by this active demonstration, this terrible sacrifice—Longstreet occupying the strongest works in front of Richmond, on the north side of the James, with

numbers superior to those under Weitzel—would, if thus assaulted boldly and persistently—find himself unable, not knowing Weitzel's comparative feebleness of force, to send reinforcements across the James to Lee, and thus the latter [Lee] would not have men enough to garnish, adequately, the defences of Petersburg, and consequently Grant could at length carry his entrenchments and overwhelm the Rebel Army of Northern Virginia.

General Geo. F. Shepley, Chief of Staff to General Weitzel, left a paper explaining all this, which, after his death, was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for July, 1880. He says:

“Every preparation had been made for this assault. Saturday afternoon General Weitzel and one or two of his general officers were occupied in a meadow near Dutch Gap, experimenting with chain-shot and every available form of projectile—firing at a double line of abattis, which had been constructed for the purpose, as nearly as possible like Longstreet's, and endeavoring to break it down with cannon.”

“Sunday was passed in preparation for the attack. Everything gave to the project of the expected battle ‘a rather disheartening outlook.’ In many respects it bore the appearance of the desperate uncertainty of a ‘Forlorn Hope.’”—*Atlantic Monthly*,” July, 1880, p. 19.

It was under these circumstances that Colonel—then Lieutenant—JOHNSTON LIVINGSTON DE PEYSTER, Aide-de-Camp to General Shepley, and consequently attached to the staff of General Weitzel; wrote a letter to one of his

friends, a letter dispatched in the firm conviction that he was about to venture his life in a supreme effort, in which the vast majority of the chances were adverse to his success and to his escaping unscathed.

In order that the carping critic may not allege that this narrative is presented by an interested or prejudiced pen, it is given in the words of Rear-Admiral Geo. Henry Preble, U. S. N., in his "History of the Flag of the U. S. A.," pp. 536-8.

"The honor of raising the colors of the United States over the Capitol at Richmond, on its occupation by the Union forces, was sought for by many gallant men. One young man proposed to do so long before the opportunity was really presented. Nearly a week before the surrender of the city, Lieutenant DE PEYSTER wrote to a young friend :

"MY DEAR LEW :—To-morrow a battle is expected—the battle of the war ; I cannot tell you any of the facts, for they are contraband ; but we are all ready and packed. Anyway, I expect to date my letter soon, *if I escape*, 'March 29, Richmond.'

"I have promised to carry out a bet made by my general, if we take Richmond, to put a certain flag he has on the house of Jeff. Davis, or on the Rebel Capitol, or *perish in the attempt.*'"

"The writer of this letter, then in the eighteenth year of his age, was a member of one of the oldest families of colonial New York, and allied with nearly every family of consequence in that State. He entered the army to seek glory, and doubtless felt that the honor of a long line of ancestors was placed in his especial keeping.

“Six days after the date of his letter the city of Richmond was occupied by the Federal troops; and among the first to enter it was Lieutenant JOHNSTON LIVINGSTON DE PEYSTER. On the pommel of his saddle was strapped a folded flag, the “Colors of the United States.” This flag had formerly belonged to the Twelfth Regiment of Maine Volunteers, of which General George F. Shepley, his chief [Chief of Staff to Major-General Godfrey Weitzel] had been the colonel. It had seen active service in New Orleans, when General Shepley was the military governor of that city, and, some time before the movement on Richmond, the General, in his fondness for the flag, made a wager that some day or other it should wave over the Capitol of the Confederacy. Lieutenant DE PEYSTER carried this storm-flag thus secured not far behind the advance-guard of the army when the city was occupied by the Federal troops.

“General Shepley had entrusted it to him on his promise to take care of it, and to raise it on the flag-staff of the Capitol. The following letter to his mother shows how he redeemed that promise :

“HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE JAMES,
“RICHMOND, APRIL 3D, 1865.

“MY DEAREST MOTHER—This morning, about four o’clock, I was got up, just one hour after I retired, with the information that at six we were going to Richmond. At six we started. The Rebs had gone at three, along a road strewn with all the munitions of war. Richmond was reached, but

the barbarous South had consigned it to ashes. The roar of the bursting shells was terrific.

"Arriving at the Capitol, I sprang from my horse, first unbuckling the Stars and Stripes, a large flag I had on the front of my saddle. With Captain Langdon, Chief of Artillery, I rushed up to the roof. Together we hoisted the first large flag over Richmond, and on the peak of the roof drank to its success.

"In the Capitol I found four flags—three Rebel, one ours. I presented them all, as the conqueror, to General Weitzel. I have fulfilled my bet, and put the first large flag over Richmond. I found two small guidons, took them down, and returned them to the Fourth Massachusetts Cavalry, where they belonged. I write from Jeff. Davis' private room.

"I remain, ever your affectionate son, JOHNSTON."

"Two small guidons, belonging to the Fourth Regiment of Massachusetts Cavalry, were found on the roof of the Capitol by Lieutenant DE PEYSTER and Captain LANGDON, which had been placed there by Major Stevens and Major Graves, members of the military staff of General Weitzel, who had accompanied the party of cavalry which was sent forward in pursuit of the fugitive enemy. By an unauthorized *detour* they raised the guidons of their party on the roof of the abandoned Capitol.

"The hoisting of these guidons failed to secure the grateful service, as it was styled in Mexico by General Scott, of a formal possession of the Capitol at Richmond, and as was reserved to General QUITMAN, in the former case, the honor of formal occupation, by "hoisting the colors of the United States on the National Palace," so

to Lieutenant DE PEYSTER and Captain LANGDON rightfully belongs the honor of hoisting the colors of the United States over the Capitol of the Confederate States, and the formal occupation of that edifice.

“Two days after the event (April 5th) General Weitzel wrote to the father of DE PEYSTER :

“Your son, Lieutenant J. de Peyster, and Captain Langdon, my Chief of Artillery, *raised the FIRST REAL American FLAG* over the Capitol in Richmond. It was a flag formerly belonging to the Twelfth Maine Volunteers. Two cavalry guidons had, however, been placed over the building previously by two of my staff officers ; these were replaced by the flag that DE PEYSTER and LANGDON raised.

“Yours truly, G. WEITZEL, Maj.-Gen.”

April 22d, General Shepley wrote his father :

“Your son, Lieutenant DE PEYSTER, raised the *first FLAG* in Richmond, replacing two small cavalry guidons on the Capitol. The flag is in the possession of Major-General Weitzel ; I enclose a small piece of the flag. The history of the affair is this : I brought with me from Norfolk an old storm-flag, which I had used in New Orleans, remarking sportively, that it would do to float over the Capitol in Richmond, where I hoped to see it. De Peyster, who heard the remark, said, ‘General, will you let me raise it?’ I said, ‘Yes, if you will bring it with you, and take care of it, you shall raise it in Richmond.’ As we left our lines to advance towards Richmond, Lieutenant DE PEYSTER said, ‘General, do you remember your promise about the flag?’ I said, ‘Yes, go to my tent and get the flag, and carry it on your saddle, and I will send you to raise it.’ The result you know.”

“On the 1st of May, 1865, the Governor of the State

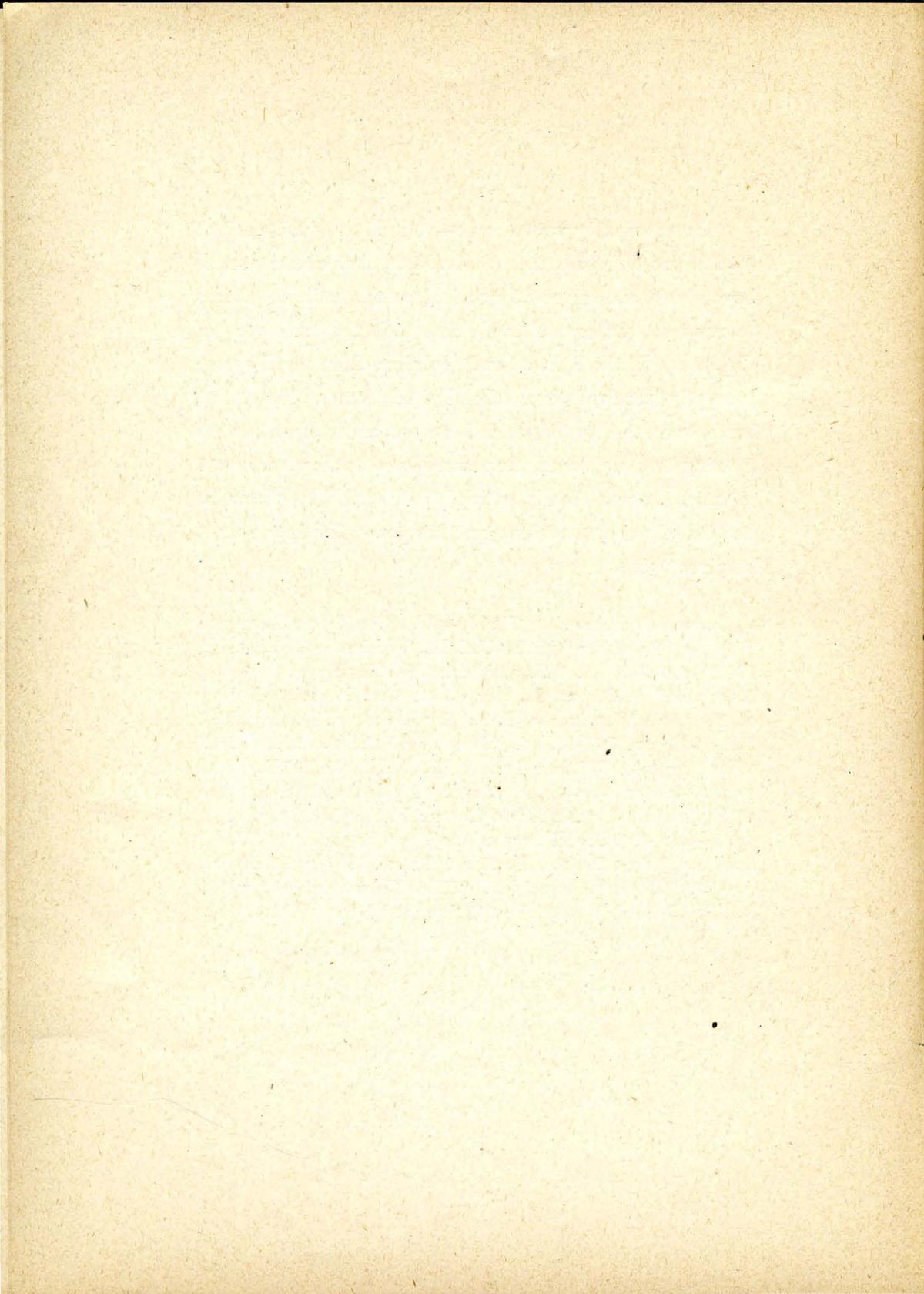
of New York honored Lieut. de Peyster with a brevet Lieutenant-Colonel's commission, for gallant and meritorious conduct, and for hoisting the first American flag over Richmond, Va., after the capture by the Union forces, April 3d, 1865, and as a testimonial of the zeal, fidelity and courage with which he had maintained the honor of the State of New York in her efforts to enforce the laws of the United States, the supremacy of the Constitution, and a republican form of government.

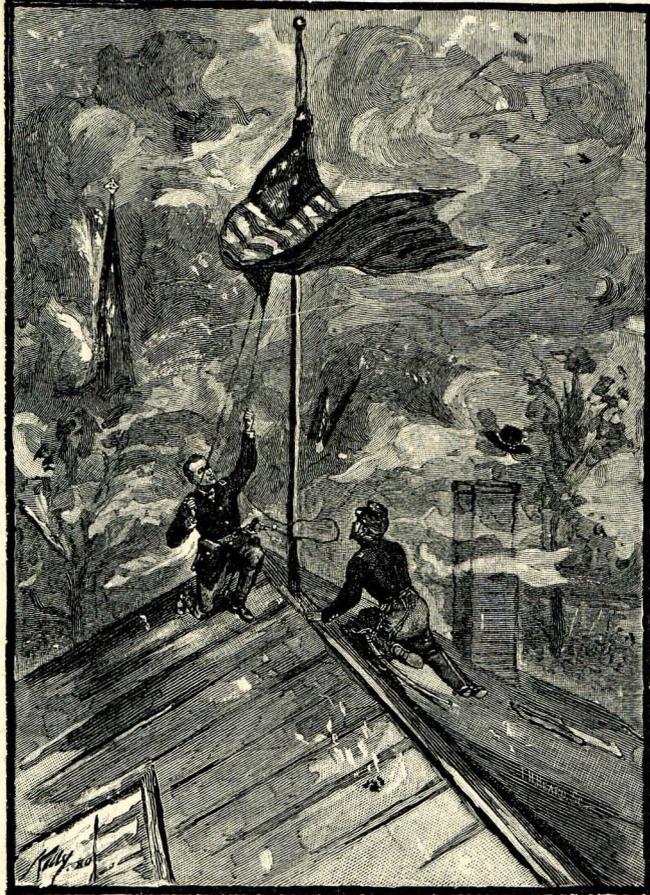
“On Christmas day, 1865, the city of New York, by a formal vote, tendered to him the Thanks of the city, for giving to New York this historic honor. The United States Senate subsequently confirmed his nomination as a brevet Lieut.-Colonel of United States Volunteers for the same service. The Governor of New York finally gave him a brevet of full Colonel for this achievement, which could only be performed once and by one man in the history of the country.

Admiral Farragut, whose name is a synonym for patriotism and every heroic quality, and who endorsed the recommendation for Lieut. de Peyster's brevets, expressed the opinion that the fact that the Union troops were not opposed in their occupation of Richmond, and that Lieut. de Peyster hoisted “*the FIRST REAL American FLAG*” over the Rebel Capitol, did not detract from the merit of the deed. He said the *intent* was all sufficient; that when Lieut. de Peyster undertook the performance he expected

—as he previously wrote home—to fulfil it at the peril of his life, and therefore the altered condition of circumstances beyond his control could not lessen his credit or claims to reward. Other military chiefs took the same view of the case. In the light of such opinions Lieut. de Peyster promptly received from the United States, his native State, and the City for which his direct ancestor assisted in framing its first charter, the rewards and acknowledgments to which he was clearly entitled, and which to obtain he had bravely and cheerfully put his young life in the most imminent peril.

NOTE.—Compare : 1. “The American Conflict : a History of the Great Rebellion” in the U. S. A., by Horace Greeley, II., 1867, pp. 737–8. 2. “Harpers’ Pictorial History of the Great Rebellion,” 1868, part II., pp. 765–6. 3. “Pictorial History of the Civil War in the U. S.,” by Benson J. Lossing, Vol. III., 1868, pp. 547–50. 4. “History of the American Civil War,” by John William Draper, M. D., LL. D., N. Y., 1870, pp. 577–8. 5. *Atlantic Monthly* : “Incidents of the Capture of Richmond,” by Maj.-Gen. George F. Shepley, July, 1880, pp. 18–28. 6. “The History of the First Regiment of [U. S.] Artillery,” Fort Preble, Portland, Maine, 1879, pp. 218, 463, etc. 7. “Boys in Blue.” 8. “The Volunteer.” 9. “The Soldier’s Friend.” 10. “The Citizen and Round Table.”





Hoisting First Real American Flag over the Capitol of the captured Rebel Capital, Richmond, Monday, 3d April, 1865, by Lt.-Col. Johnston Livingston de Peyster, A.D.C.

FIRST FLAG OVER RICHMOND.



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON CITY, May 25th, 1877.

Pursuant to Section 882 of the Revised Statutes, I hereby certify that the annexed documents are true copies of the originals on file in this Department.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the War Department to be affixed, on the day and year first above written.



GEO. W. McCRARY,
Secretary of War.

[COPY.]

WAR DEPARTMENT,
March, 1866.

Case of Capt. Johnston L. de Peyster, 13th N. Y. Art'y—recommended for Brevet Major and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel [was on Gen'l Weitzel's staff, near Richmond].

Referred, to have the name put on the list to be presented to Sec'y. By order of Secretary of War,

[SIGNED,] L. H. PELOUZE, A. A. G.

[SENATOR NORTON.]

[COPY.]

UNITED STATES SENATE CHAMBER,
WASHINGTON, March 7th, 1866.

COL. L. H. PELOUZE,

DEAR SIR :—I would like very much if you would, if you can, add to the memoranda which I gave you the other day for B'v'ts of J. L. de Peyster, that they are given for hoisting the first Union flag in Richmond, April 3d, 1865.

De Peyster was on Weitzel's staff, I believe, performed
 "that feat," and would like to have it so recorded.

Very Resp'tly,
 [SIGNED,] D. L. NORTON.

[COPY.] "ROSE HILL," RED HOOK,
 [Tivoli P. O.] DUCHESS Co., N. Y.,
 7th April, 1877.

To the Hon. GEO. W. McCRARY,
 Secretary of War,
 WASHINGTON, D. C.

SIR:—In presenting this case of my son, Johnston Livingston de Peyster, I might drag in my own services and sacrifices for the Union cause and the Republican party, for which I have received no return from the Federal Government, although they were most generously acknowledged by my own native State, New York, and its Republican leaders.

I never asked any favor from the Federal Gov't except this certificate or statement. It may even be impolitic for me, at this time, to introduce references to my position, action, and influence during the last political campaign, but they can be and will be cheerfully acknowledged by those who are the best judges of the value of such services.

I have the honor to be,

Very resp'y, yr. obt. serv't,
 [SIGNED,] J. WATTS DE PEYSTER, N. Y.

[COPY.] ROSE HILL, RED HOOK [Tivoli P. O.]
 DUCHESS Co., N. Y.,
 7th April, 1877.

To the Hon. GEO. W. McCRARY,
 Secretary of War,
 WASHINGTON, D. C.

SIR:—Colonel Johnston L. de Peyster was a pupil of the Highland Military College, Newburgh, S. N. Y., organized

on a basis intended to resemble West Point. In his sixteenth year (1862) he enlisted quite a number of recruits [to whom I paid extra bounties] for a company, out of whose command he was tricked after organizing it. As he was so young, and as I had two sons already in the field, I succeeded for the time in keeping him out of the service. During the riots in New York city, in 1863, he participated as a volunteer, in the ranks of the 7th Reg't, N. Y. S. National Guard, and behaved remarkably well in the different street fights in which it was engaged. Meanwhile, my eldest son, Major 1st N. Y. Artillery, returned home, completely destroyed, physically, by injuries received and disease incurred in the Peninsular Campaign of 1862, and Chancellorville Campaign of 1863, of which he died, after protracted suffering. My second son was likewise home from the Peninsular Campaign, bringing with him the seeds of the terrible disease of which he, in turn, also, eventually died.

Early in 1864, Johnston Livingston de Peyster, my only surviving son, then in his eighteenth year, was commissioned a Lieutenant in the 13th New York Heavy Artillery, and stationed at Norfolk, Virginia, where he served as Post Adjutant of the battalion garrisoning the forts commanded by Major F. R. Hassler. After recovering from a very severe attack of district malarial fever, which clung to him for many years, he was transferred to the staff of Brigadier-General George F. Shepley, as Aide-de-Camp. In this capacity he won the esteem of his superiors, and was highly commended for his efficiency. When General Shepley was made Chief of Staff to Major-General Weitzel, commanding 25th Army Corps, he took his Aide with him, who then became a member of General Weitzel's military family.

On the night of the 2d-3d of April, 1865, my son, from the signal tower, was the first to discover evidences that Richmond was on fire, and movements tending to its evacuation. The plan then, at first, seemed to be to storm the Rebel works; and he was entrusted with an American flag, with the

intention, in case of assault, to display it, if possible, over the Rebel Capitol, or venture his life in the attempt.

That the place was not assaulted, and that he did not incur this peril, is no fault of his. In the life of Field-Marshal Sir John Burgoyne, B. A., it is mentioned that a young French soldier was decorated, in 1854, because he was the only one of a party of sixty-five left alive after a visitation of the cholera. Now this young man was rewarded militarily for his providential escape from a peril out of the ordinary line of military service proper, and beyond all military calculation. Moreover, Admiral Farragut, in endorsing my application for my son's State brevets, instanced a case of intrepidity, purely and simply moral, as equally worthy of recognition. My son was willing to risk his life to achieve a great result. He perfected his intention. The absence of the peril was not only beyond hope but beyond all earthly probability. At all events, he completely, faithfully and successfully discharged the duty assigned to him, and he hoisted "the first real American flag" over the Capitol of the captured Rebel Capital.

No other man did this, and it could only be done *once*; and by one man, and he, my son, alone, had the flag with him, ready to do it.

When my son was brevetted Lieut.-Colonel U. S. V., it was understood to be for this service, and it was supposed that the brevet commission would set forth the fact that it was conferred as a reward for having hoisted "the first real American flag" over Richmond, but when the commission was received it was found *not* to contain these, so important, words.

Although the Corporation of the city of New York passed a vote of thanks to her eighteen year old son, for conferring this historic honor upon his native city, and the Governor of the State of New York brevetted him Colonel, setting forth in the commission that it was granted for the express reason that he had so hoisted "the first real American flag" [to use the very words of General Weitzel] over the Rebel Capitol; he had no recognition of his deed from the United States: a deed whose duplication was impossible.

I now approach the Honorable Secretary of War, to ask for *this*, my only surviving son, an official statement from the War Department which will supply the omission in the brevet commission, by setting forth that he hoisted "the first real American flag" over Richmond, in order that it may be preserved in the archives of the family, which, in successive generations, have won so many attests of gallant and distinguished conduct upon the battle-field.

The accompanying letters of Major-General Weitzel, U. S. A., and Brigadier-General Shepley, U. S. V., his Chief of Staff, set forth and attest this claim in behalf of my son, Johnston Livingston de Peyster, and suggest the acknowledgment of this first hoisting of the flag, which was reported by the correspondents in Richmond at the time, and is recorded in different histories of the war.

All which is very respectfully submitted, with strong hopes of the favorable consideration and action of the Honorable Secretary of War.

I have the honor to be,

Yr. obt. serv't,

[SIGNED,]

J. WATTS DE PEYSTER.

[COPY.]

UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE,
85 WASHINGTON AVENUE,
DETROIT, MICH., April 4th, 1877.

To the Hon. GEO. W. McCrary,
Secretary of War,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Sir :—In compliance with a request from General J. Watts de Peyster, of New York city, I have the honor to state a fact, which I have heretofore officially reported.

When my command entered and took possession of Richmond, Virginia (the Rebel Capital), on the morning of the 3d of April, 1865, Mr. Johnston Livingston de Peyster, the youngest son of the General, was an acting Aide-de-Camp on

my staff. He entered the city with me, carrying with him a United States flag, that had once belonged to the 12th Maine Volunteers, and which was the first United States flag raised by our troops over New Orleans, on its occupation in May, 1862. On this occasion General Geo. F. Shepley was Colonel of the 12th Maine Regiment, and the flag was presented to him subsequently by the regiment. At the time I took possession of Richmond, General George F. Shepley was my Chief of Staff, and Lieut. de Peyster was an Aide-de-Camp on his staff. Immediately after we entered the city, Lieutenant de Peyster, assisted by my Chief of Artillery, hoisted this flag over the Capitol building, and this was the "first real American flag" raised over Richmond after its fall.

I think that this should be commemorated and recognized ; and I therefore, and also in view of his previous faithful and good service, think it proper that Lieut. de Peyster be granted a brevet for it.

I am, sir,

Very respectfully,

Your obt. servant,

[SIGNED,]

G. WEITZEL,

Major of Engineers,

Brevet Major-General U. S. Army.

[COPY.]

PORTLAND, MAINE,

April 4th, 1877.

GEN. DE PEYSTER,

DEAR GENERAL :—At your request I again state the facts in relation to the act of raising the first flag over Richmond.

As Chief of Staff of that portion of the 24th and 25th Army Corps which constituted the Army of the James, on the north side of the river [after a portion, under Gen. Ord had left to reinforce the Army of the Potomac], I received the first intelligence of the withdrawal of Longstreet's Corps from our front. As this left Richmond open for the advance of the 24th and 25th Corps, under Gen. Godfrey Weitzel, I

immediately, acting under Gen. Weitzel, gave the necessary orders for an advance upon Richmond.

At this time your son, Lieut. Johnston de Peyster, reminded me of a promise I had made him previously.

When leaving my command of the District of East Virginia and North Carolina, for the Army of the James, de Peyster asked me what was to be done with my flag? This was a flag belonging to me, individually, which I had at my headquarters when Colonel of the 12th Regiment of Maine Volunteers—a regiment I had raised in 1861. I had raised it over my headquarters, when military commandant at the occupation of New Orleans and also when Military Governor of Louisiana. I answered Lieut. de Peyster rather sportively. “That flag floated over New Orleans; it will do to float over Richmond.” He said, “If I will carry it up to the Army of the James, and take care of it, will you let me raise it?” I said, “Yes.” When we were leaving for Richmond, at daylight, before the occupation of Richmond, he reminded me of this promise. I said, “Go to my tent, get the flag, and carry it on your saddle into Richmond with us, and you shall raise it over Richmond.” As we entered Richmond, Lieut. de Peyster and Capt. Langdon, Weitzel’s Chief of Artillery, were ordered to raise the flag. De Peyster had with him this flag, and they went together, and de Peyster hoisted it. I subsequently presented the flag to Gen. Weitzel, who has in turn presented it to some public institution in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Most respectfully and sincerely yours,

[SIGNED,]

G. F. SHEPLEY,
late Brig-Gen. U. S. V.

LADY MARY (NÉE WATTS) JOHNSON.

The pamphlet alluded to in note (p. 50, *supra*), "Adventures of a Lady in the War of Independence in America," was by Miss Susan Griffiths Colpoys—daughter of Admiral Griffiths Colpoys, of the British Navy—who married Colonel Christopher Johnson, B. A., sixth son of Sir John Johnson, Bart. She was consequently sister-in-law of Adam Gordon Johnson, third Baronet, and aunt of Sir William G. Johnson, the present and fourth Baronet, the grandson of Sir John Johnson, the second Baronet. The publication referred to was received and the main particulars in regard thereto were derived from the latter. Consequently Mrs. Col. Johnson had every opportunity of hearing all the incidents from those most interested in the narrative and cognizant of the sad facts of the case. It was the youngest daughter of this Mrs. Col. Christopher Johnson that married Mr. Henry Curwen, who inherited the ancestral abode of the Curwens, the historic estate of "Workington Hall," noted as having been the temporary residence or place of detention of Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1568.

The authoress, when she wrote her little book, was staying with her daughter at "Workington Hall," in Cumberland, the northeast shire, or county, of England, looking out upon the Solway Firth where it was traversed by the perhaps deservedly unhappy, but beautiful Queen of Scots, on her passage from Port Mary, in her hereditary realm, to Maryport, in the dominions of her rival, Elizabeth,—where her captivity or actual close confinement of nineteen years was brought to a close by her decapitation, at Fotheringay Castle, three and one-half miles N. N. W. of Oundle, in the eastern corner of Northamptonshire, one of the central counties of England, on the 8th February, 1687. After the accession of James VI., son of Mary, to the crown of England, this castle was razed to the ground. It would have been more to the honor and manhood of James to have exerted his royal authority in striving to prevent the execution of his mother than this endeavor to rehabilitate his credit by exercising his power on innocent stones.

