

## CHAPTER VII.

### SIRES AND SONS OF THE REVOLUTION.

1777-1783.

THE occupation of different parts of the territory of New York by the British forces compelled the provincial congress, or, as it was later styled, "the convention of the representatives of the State of New York," to quit the city of New York, and subsequently to convene at Harlem, King's Bridge, White Plains, Odells, Fishkill, and Poughkeepsie. A committee having been appointed on August 1, 1776, to frame a constitution, a draft of one was submitted on March 12, 1777, to the convention, and, on April 20, the instrument was adopted. Among its noteworthy provisions were those relating to the qualifications fitting a male inhabitant of the State of proper age to exercise the privilege of an elector. The possession of a freehold of the value of twenty pounds, or of a leasehold of the annual value of forty shillings, qualified one to vote for a member of the assembly, and that of a freehold of the value of one hundred pounds, clear of all indebtedness, for a senator. Senators were required to be freeholders, but no property-qualification determined the fitness of an elector to be an assemblyman.

The convention of the representatives of the State of New York by an ordinance for organizing and establishing the government of the State, ordered that the sheriffs of the counties of Albany, Ulster, Orange, Westchester, Dutchess, Tryon, Cumberland, Charlotte, and Gloucester to cause elections to be held for members of assembly for the respective counties in July. As it was then impracticable, on account of the presence of the enemy, for electors in the southern district, the county of Westchester excepted, to choose representatives, it was further ordered that the persons named in the said ordinance should respectively be representatives in the assembly for the city and county of New York, and for the counties of Suffolk, Queens, Kings, and Richmond, until the electors they represented should be enabled to elect representatives.

On July 9, 1777, the returns of the first elections were made to the council of safety of the State. Brigadier-General George Clinton, who was elected