

COL. AARON BURR. [123]

It would be impossible in a work of this kind to ignore the life and services of such a character as Aaron Burr, even if there was any desire of doing so; it would be equally impossible for the compiler, having after careful study, reached certain conclusions regarding him, to ignore them, and write in the strain of calumny and reproach, which has obtained with most writers in treating of this remarkable man—for remarkable he was beyond cavil—remarkable in his ancestry, his achievements, his unexampled misfortunes, and unexampled fortitude. His was a strong character though a faulty one—a character that commands respect and admiration, while at the same time one cannot avoid noticing and commenting upon many defects. In this work the compiler proposes to treat of him with independence, without undue bias, and certainly without prejudice, stating only what he believes to be the truth in regard to his life and character.

The reader will please remember that his object has been to prepare a careful, accurate sketch of his distinguished subject, for preservation in a family memorial, and that he disclaims any competition in point of literary merit or finish, with the biographers that have preceded him; and further, if any one feels impelled to differ from the views herein advanced, he asks from them fair and honorable treatment, deprecating the harsh invective and coarse abuse that has hitherto assailed all who have dared express a favorable opinion of Aaron Burr.

To gain the end desired, it will be necessary to treat of his earlier career with almost the pitiless brevity of a compendium. He was born in the parsonage of the First Church, Newark, Feb. 6, 1756. Before the second year of his life had passed, it was clouded by the death of his father, mother, and grandparents, and he was left to the hazardous experiment of being reared in an uncle's family, who, however conscientious, was, it is evident, no fit custodian for such a genius.

This uncle was Timothy Edwards, the eldest son of President Edwards; he resided at Elizabethtown, N. J., and at the age of three the little Aaron became an inmate of his family. Left an