

ample patrimony, his uncle made free use of it in his education, and provided for him an excellent tutor, Mr. Tappan Reeve, who some years later became his brother-in-law, and later still was widely known as Chief Judge of the Supreme Court of Connecticut, and founder of the Litchfield Law School. So precocious was the boy, that at eleven he was ready for college, and applied to the faculty of Princeton for admission, but was refused solely, as he himself said, "on account of his years and inches." He contrived, however, to triumph over the faculty by entering the sophomore class two years later, in 1769, and graduated with distinction in September, 1772.

The year that followed was spent partly at Princeton, among his books, and partly at Elizabethtown in pursuit of those manly sports which young men of fortune sometimes affect. During this year too, the subject of a profession was much in his thoughts. His friends and the Presbyterian world generally expected him to choose the profession which his father and grandfather had so adorned. Conscience, and the silent influence of the dead impelled him in the same direction. On the other hand, he had no doubt imbibed much of the speculative French philosophy then so rife, and which, while it questioned the truth of revelation, pointed to the attainment of fame, and the indulgence of passion as the chief means of obtaining happiness. In this state of indecision, he became in the fall of 1774, an inmate of Dr. Bellamy's famous school at Bethlehem, Connecticut. This gentleman was the successor in theology of President Edwards, and his reputation for learning and piety attracted to his home so many candidates for the ministry, that it assumed quite the character of a theological seminary.

Here Burr fought the great battle of Armageddon.

We cannot give the details of the conflict, or say how largely the result was due to the absurd and repelling system of theology then in vogue, but we know that the result of his studies was a conviction, to use his own words "that the road to heaven was open to all alike," and that he resolved there to maintain henceforth an imperturbable silence on religious matters. There is however no evidence that he adopted extreme atheistic views.

In the fall of 1774, we find him a law student with Tappan Reeve, now the proud husband of pretty Salhe Burr, and principal of a law school at Litchfield, Conn., which had already become famous. For a few months only Burr pored over his musty law-books, then the guns of Lexington summoned him to arms with thou-