

upon this puzzling character is that he was of unbalanced mind, half crazed by fear of aristocratic and popish plots and by the possession of unlimited power. Regarded from any standpoint, it was a most unfortunate affair, and retarded the growth of the colony not a little. For, despite Leisler's prayer, the spirit of faction survived his death, and for half a century the "Leislerites," as they were called, continued to exercise a disturbing influence on the politics of the city.

When the matter came before King William on Leisler's appeal he decided that the sentence was a righteous one and sustained the judges. On the ground of former loyal services rendered by Leisler, however, he restored to the latter's heirs his estates, which had been confiscated for treason, and four years later Parliament, on the petition of the friends of Leisler, "to promote peace and heal the scars of the civil war," reversed the decree of attainder which had been pronounced against Leisler, thus removing the attainder from his family.

IX. THE APPROACH OF THE REVOLUTION.

FROM 1691 to 1764 the history of New York presents no events of great importance. During this period she grew in wealth, population, and commerce but slowly, the acts of the British government greatly restricting her foreign trade, and the many wars with the French and Indians on the north retarding her growth in numbers. Politically this period was marked by the almost constant struggle of her people for more liberty—liberty of trade, liberty to govern themselves, liberty of speech, and a free press. Some striking incidents and romantic phases of the period may be touched upon briefly.

Governor Sloughter died suddenly about two months after the execution of Leisler,—some said from poison,—and in 1692 was succeeded by Colonel Benjamin Fletcher. This gentleman was a brave soldier who had seen service in the Low Countries; he was a courtier too, shrewd, pliant, persuasive, politic, not to be praised for all that he did, but perhaps the best man for the place that could have been found. He allayed in a measure the angry passions that had been aroused in Leisler's time; he soothed and pacified the Indians, and he practically founded the Trinity Church of to-day, by

giving it the revenues of the King's Farm, which belonged to him as governor; indeed, the inscription on the first Trinity Church built in New York, completed in 1696, stated that it was chiefly "enriched and promoted by the bounty of his Excellency Colonel Benjamin Fletcher."

During Governor Fletcher's reign the privateers brought a great deal of booty to New York. "King William's War," between France and England, which broke out in 1688-1689, put many of this class upon the seas. A privateer was a private vessel commissioned by its government to go out and capture on the high seas an enemy's vessel wherever it might be found. But many of them when once at sea captured all vessels,

whether friend or foe, and thus became pirates, and the common enemies of mankind. It was the scandal of

Governor Fletcher's reign that these pirates were permitted to harbor in the city equally with the privateers, and often in the guise of their more honest brethren. Both classes brought great store of wealth to the city—East India goods, rare fabrics of Teheran and Samarkand, Arabian gold,

ivory, and slaves from the African coast. The pirate captains were marked figures on the streets. One of them is described as having been a slight, dark man of about forty, who scattered gold with prodigality.



He wore a uniform "rich and elegant, a blue cap with a band of cloth of silver, a blue jacket bordered with gold braid and garnished with large buttons of mother-of-pearl." He wore loose trousers of white linen, gathered at the knee into curiously clocked stockings. A long chain of Arabian gold was thrown about his neck, and in his knitted waistbelt gleamed a dagger, its hilt set with sparkling diamonds. Men accoutered like this, treating everybody who would drink to huge draughts of Sopus ale, and throwing golden louis d'ors about as carelessly as stivers, were familiar objects in New York at that time.

But the East India Company, which owned many of the vessels captured by them, soon made bitter complaint to the home government, alleging that the pirates were harbored in New York, and their ill-gotten booty purchased by her merchants; and as Colonel Fletcher was not very successful in catching them, he was recalled, and Richard, Earl of Bellomont, an Irish nobleman of the highest character, who had been very active against the freebooters, was appointed captain general of New York and New England, with special orders to stamp out piracy.

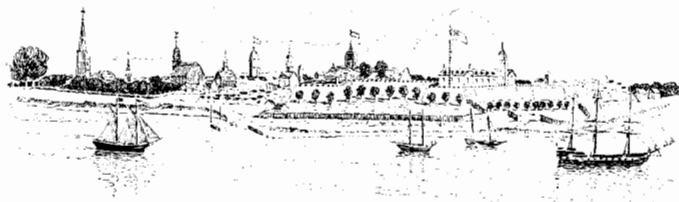
But Bellomont did not make a very successful governor. He was too austere, cold, bigoted, prejudiced; he arrived with the fixed idea that the chief men of the colony, including Fletcher, were imbued with piracy, and had no hesitation in so stating publicly. Almost his first official act was a very unwise one: he restored to the families of Leisler and Millborne their estates that had been forfeited, and as these had by this time

passed into the hands of third parties, who had bought legally, the attempt to evict them nearly caused a riot, and at once excited factional feelings that had nearly died out. He did not show any greater tact in his attempts to suppress piracy and smuggling, and to recover from the great landed proprietors and the churches the large grants of land which Fletcher had given them. To stamp out the former he seized goods and arrested persons simply on suspicion, dismissed the highest officials without a hearing, and removed members of the council to fill their places with men of his own party. To remedy the latter evil he prepared a bill vacating all land grants made by former governors, and prohibiting any one person from holding over one thousand acres of land. One of the grants aimed at by this law was that of Domine Dellius, a Dutch Reformed clergyman of Albany, who had first secured it from the Indians, and later had had it confirmed by Fletcher; another was the grant to Trinity Church. Because of this zeal without knowledge the governor very soon had arrayed against him the clergy, the principal men of the colony, the merchants, and the king's officers. His only friends were the Leislerites, and soon the province was torn with the quarrels of the factions. Colonel Fletcher meantime was clamoring to have his accounts with the colony settled, that he might go to England with his vouchers and have his conduct as governor investigated by the Lords of Trade. Having served under the crown for thirty-five years without reproach, he said, he did not think he should become a castaway in the rear of his days.

Governor Bellomont died suddenly on the 5th of March, 1701, and was buried under the chapel of the fort. What would have been the outcome of his government had he lived it is impossible to say; as it was, he left the colony in much worse condition than he found it.

King William died on March 8, 1702, and was succeeded by Queen Anne of the Stuart line, who proved so excellent a ruler that her subjects called her "good Queen Anne." She was very charitable, especially to the struggling colonial churches. Among other gifts she bestowed on Trinity Church. In 1705, the Annetje Jans estate, a tract of some sixty acres lying above Chambers Street, on the west side of Broadway, which now, with the King's Farm before mentioned, yields princely revenues.

In 1725 quite an event occurred in the birth of the first newspaper New York had ever seen—the "Gazette."



New York in 1720.

It was but a mite when compared with our present mammoth editions, being printed on a half sheet of foolscap paper. It contained almost no local news, foreign letters and customhouse entries taking up most of

the space. William Bradford, printer to the government, was editor and proprietor.

After nine years the "Gazette" found a rival in a new paper called the "Weekly Journal," and edited by John Peter Zenger. Zenger was a German Protestant who had been forced from his home on the Rhine by the armies of France, and coming to this country with Governor Hunter in 1710, a mere lad, had been apprenticed to William Bradford. Now grown to manhood, he turned his guns on his former teacher; for the "Journal," being the organ of the Whig or people's party, was bitterly opposed to the "Gazette," which was the organ of the governor and council, the conservatives, the vested interests. Whatever the "Journal" could do to bring into contempt the "aristocrats," as it called the governor and his party, it did. It attacked the governor, the council, the assemblymen—everybody and everything connected with the ruling class. Squibs, lampoons, ballads, witticism, satire, whatever would serve its purpose, all were made use of without stint. At last the people had an organ in which to make their wants and grievances known, and they appreciated it; it was the forerunner of the "Heralds," "Tribunes," "Suns," "Worlds," and "Journals" of a later period.

Bradford replied, defending the governor and his party; but his editorials lacked the pith and vigor of Zenger's, as you will see if you go to the public library and ask to see the journals in question. At length the government did what was best calculated to heighten the people's respect for their editor and increase his influence: it declared four issues of the "Weekly Jour-

nal" "libelous," and ordered them burned by the public hangman, at the same time directing the mayor and aldermen, who were of the popular party, to attend and witness the ceremony. But the spirit of resistance was abroad, and the mayor and magistrates refused to obey the order; they said it was arbitrary and without warrant of law. Then Governor Cosby, a weak man, and his advisers went still further: they seized Zenger and threw him into prison on a charge of criminal libel. Where he had had one friend before he now had ten. Men rallied not so much to his aid as to the defense of a free press, and to the right of the people to criticise their officials. The excitement spread to the neighboring colonies, where the issue of the trial was awaited with the greatest interest. The leaders of the popular party in New York at this time were two lawyers named James Alexander and William Smith; both at once volunteered to defend Zenger. Smith had been recorder of the city, and was noted for his captivating eloquence; Alexander had been surveyor general, and was also noted for legal ability as well as for his silver tongue. Unfortunately, their zeal led them to make a grave mistake at the outset: they boldly challenged the legality of the commissions of Chief Justice de Lancey and of Justice Phillipse, the two judges who composed the court that was to try Zenger, on the ground that they were not worded in the usual form, and had been issued by Governor Cosby without consent of the council.

Judge de Lancey was of Huguenot ancestry, of the aristocratic party, stout, florid, pompous in manner, a great stickler for the dignity and prerogatives of his

office, and held this plea of the attorneys to be a gross contempt of court. As soon as he could command his voice, he said: "You have brought it to that pass, sirs, that either we must go from the bench or you from the bar," and he excluded them from further practice, assigning John Chambers to defend Zeuger. There was no appeal for the disbarred attorneys in that day; but they were men of resources, and they hastened to Philadelphia, and secured, to assist Chambers, Andrew Hamilton, reputed the ablest and most eloquent advocate then in the colonies. At the same time, through the press and by private conversation in the clubs and coffeehouses, they made public the story of their own wrongs and the merits and demerits of the case.

When the trial was called, in July, 1735, Hamilton appeared eager for the fray, and was greeted with shouts of approval by the people, who saw in him the champion of popular rights. His first reply to the indictment was that the articles in the "Journal" could not be libelous, because they were *true*. Bradley, the king's attorney general, took exception to this plea, and quoted the old English law that even the truth if repeated with intent to injure another was libelous, and punishable as such.

So for weeks the legal battle raged with varying fortunes to the combatants, and for weeks the entire body of the colonies watched and waited to see if the press was to be muzzled, or left to be the Argus-eyed exposé of official corruption, and the defender of the people's rights. At length, after a charge by the judge unfavorable to the prisoner, the case was given to the

jury, who, after being out but a few moments, returned with a verdict of "Not guilty."

The people received it with shouts of approval, and were so delighted that they would have borne Hamilton to his hotel on their shoulders, but he would not permit it. The corporation, however, tendered him a banquet, at which he was presented by the mayor with the freedom of the city in a gold box; and the same evening a grand ball was given in his honor. In this first openly avowed and distinct contest for their rights, the people won a great victory.

The closing days of British rule in New York were marked by the founding of one of the city's noblest institutions, Columbia College. By 1751, after many years of effort, the sum of £3,443 had been raised by lottery and public subscription to found a college in New York, and a bill was passed by



King's College in 1758.

the legislature naming ten trustees to take charge of it. In 1752 the vestry of Trinity Church offered to give a site and the necessary grounds for a campus. This offer was accepted, and in 1753 the trustees invited the Rev. Dr. Samuel Johnson, an eminent clergyman of that day, to be the first president. His salary was £250 a year. The college was first opened in the autumn of 1753, in the vestry room of Trinity Church, with an entering class of ten. On August 23, 1756, the corner stone of

a new building was laid by Governor Charles Hardy with appropriate ceremonies. Its site and grounds covered the whole block now bounded by West Broadway, Barclay, Church, and Murray streets, and the new building was first opened to students in May, 1760. During the Revolution no sessions were held, the building being used by the British as a hospital. On the return of peace the college was reorganized and its name changed from King's to Columbia.

X. THE PEOPLE UNDER BRITISH RULE.

VERY soon after the British came the tone of society in New York was almost wholly changed, the English language, customs, and manners largely supplanting the Dutch. New York, with the large influx of immigrants from England and the New England States, became a miniature London, English to the core. She celebrated with fête and procession the birthdays of the king, queen, and members of the royal family. She donned the outward and visible signs of mourning at their decease. The governor and his official family, the officers of the garrison, the patroons, professional men, and retired merchants formed an upper or court circle and gave tone to society. In place of the simple, domestic, democratic social system of the Dutch came in the English one of classes. London fashions soon became popular, although, as William Smith, a local historian, observed, "by the time we adopt them they become disused in England." London tradesmen, tailors, peruke makers, and teachers came with them, and greater elegance in dress, equipage, houses, and furniture was the result.

Among the distinguished company that accompanied Governor Andros in 1678 was the Rev. James Wooley, who had recently taken holy orders, and who