

A HISTORY
OF THE
ACHESON FAMILY
ON THE PATERNAL SIDE.

BY
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OF WASHINGTON, PA.

PREPARED AND PRINTED FOR THE PRIVATE USE OF THE
FAMILY, A.D. 1877.

S. A. CLARKE & CO.
PITTSBURGH.
1878.

NOTE.

THE surviving children of David and Mary Acheson, deceased, viz., Alexander, Catharine, Margaret, William, George, James, Ellen, Marcus, and David, for the first time after the lapse of more than thirty years, all met together at the old homestead, Washington, Pennsylvania, on the occasion of the death of their mother, which occurred August 2, 1872. Her funeral took place on Sunday, August 4. On the day following they repaired to the graves of their parents, in Washington Cemetery, and there agreed that they, and the survivors of them and the last survivor, would annually revisit the graves of their parents on the 31st day of October, the anniversary of their marriage.

At the annual family meeting, held October 31, 1877, the following narrative on the paternal side was read by A. W. Acheson, and ordered to be printed for the private use of the family.

PREFACE.

THE duty assigned me of preparing a family history on the paternal side, I fear, has been but imperfectly performed. Not until entered upon, did I begin to realize how much had been lost from neglected opportunity. Our father was communicative, and loved to talk with his children. I might readily have acquired knowledge of many interesting particulars respecting his early life and education, as well as concerning his brothers and sisters, parents and grandparents. Born and reared on the family estate in Ireland he revisited it in his old age, and, as will hereafter be seen, had his attention turned particularly towards his ancestry. With all this I was familiar at the time, but it never occurred to me to talk with him on the subject. It is a source of deep regret that information so invaluable to the family historian should thus have been irreparably lost. I

have had to depend upon his Irish correspondence and his own record, made at an early period, unaided by our grandfather Acheson's family Bible and private papers. Our grandfather's eldest son, George, survived him more than thirty years, and died at an advanced age on the old Irish estate a few years before our father. Nothing came from Ireland at that time, to my knowledge, but the letter announcing his demise. More than a quarter of a century has elapsed since our father's death, and it is not probable that anything could now be gleaned beyond what is here narrated.

A. W. A.

OCT. 31, 1877.

HISTORY.

THE Achesons are of Scottish extraction. The family name originated most likely in the old custom of adding to the Christian name that of the father, by way of distinction. At first the name was probably called Archieson,—thereby meaning the son of Archie, an abbreviation of Archibald,—the patronymic expressing the name of the ancestral chief, or head of the clan.

The writer has sometimes wondered why the name Archibald was not introduced into his father's family. A sense of fealty may have prevented it. Moreover, it might have led to confusion to have had two Archibald Achesons living at the same time and on the same estate. Certain it is, in so far as is known, the name of Archibald was never bestowed on a son of the collateral branch of the Acheson family.

After our father was stricken down with paralysis, leaving his mental faculties much impaired, the writer was present at a family discussion about

naming a new-born grandchild, when our poor, bedridden parent startled us with the exclamation, "By all means call the child Archibald." I doubt, however, had he been in his sane mind, whether he would have made the suggestion, as he must have regarded the name as the exclusive property of the leading branch of the family. I cannot otherwise account for his not conferring on one of his numerous sons the prenomens of the Scottish ancestor from whom both branches descended.

The Acheson family came originally from Gosford, Haddington County, Scotland. With the materials at my command, I am unable to trace their history beyond the beginning of the seventeenth century.

In the early part of the reign of James the Sixth of Scotland and First of England, all the landed estates of the native Irish chiefs within the province of Ulster, in the north of Ireland, were confiscated to the crown, as the result of a general rebellion began at the close of Queen Elizabeth's time. These estates were parcelled out to Scottish and English adherents. Among the former was Archibald Acheson, who was educated to the law, became Secretary of State for Scotland, and was advanced to a baronetcy. He obtained from the king large grants of land in several of the counties of Ulster, which led to

the permanent settlement of the Acheson family in the north of Ireland.

Our father, writing from thence in 1840, says : "Our forefather was full cousin to Sir Archibald Acheson. His name was John, and he accompanied the Gosford family from Scotland to Ireland and settled in Glassdrummond, where our family have lived ever since." From whence came the name Glassdrummond, I cannot tell; the family seat was in County Armagh, embracing the castellated town of Market Hill.

In our father's record, his Scottish progenitor is spoken of as the brother of Archibald Acheson. The relationship may here be carried back one degree, to the first descent from the common ancestor.

The transfer of the family from Scotland to Ireland, according to the same record, took place about 1604, when the two branches were represented by the first cousins, Archibald and John.

Our interest centres in the collateral branch, of which John Acheson may be styled the Irish progenitor. However, I may state briefly that, in 1776, Sir Archibald Acheson, a lineal descendant of the Sir Archibald of King James's time, was elevated to the Peerage, as Baron Gosford, and afterwards became a viscount. His successor was created an Earl in 1806, and dying the year following, was succeeded by his son, Archibald

Acheson, the late Lord Gosford, Governor-General of Canada, who was made a Peer of the United Kingdom, under the title of Baron Warlingham, afterwards changed to Baron Acheson.

It is to be presumed that the lapse of time would weaken the family tie and otherwise affect the status of the collateral branch, though continued residence upon the estate and participation in the family name might serve to keep alive the relationship. The Archibald Acheson, or Lord Gosford of our father's day, treated him with considerate kindness on the occasion of his last visit to Ireland. Nevertheless, our family were but tenants on the Gosford estate, regarded with more consideration because they bore the name and were of the blood of the old Scotch baronet.

The lands occupied by our forefather, John Acheson and his descendants, were held upon leases for lives in being, yielding a nominal or small rent to the proprietor. These lives were generally selected from the family—the father and two of the sons constituting the lives of the lease. When the three lives expired, it was optional with the proprietor to renew the lease; but in our family it was always renewed.

Prior to our grandfather Acheson's time, I find little in our family history worthy to narrate. The name of George, to designate the eldest son, seems to have taken the place of John for several

generations, though John was still retained as a family name; and we have an account of a famous John Acheson who fought on the side of King William, and assisted in driving James the Second out of Ireland in 1689. Our father, either because he disapproved the change, or from loving recollection of a deceased brother, restored to its place the ancestral name John, by conferring it upon his first born son—fit representative of his race—true type of nobility—pre-eminent for personal and mental endowments above his brethren. But he did not forget to call another son, George, after his Irish progenitors, and in his old age he actually conceived the idea of transferring this son back to Ireland, to continue the family name upon the old estate at Glassdrummond, under the patronage of Archibald Acheson, Earl of Gosford.

If our family was distinguished for anything it was for longevity. The most remarkable instance is that of our father's great-grandmother Little, whom he records as having been born in 1658, and dying in 1778, aged one hundred and twenty years. He frequently spoke of having been nursed in infancy on her knee. He was eight years old when she died.

Our grandfather, George Acheson, was born in 1724, and died 11th of July, 1812, aged eighty-eight years. Our grandmother, Elizabeth Acheson, was born in 1728, and died 29th of July, 1808,

aged eighty years. I am unable to give the date of their marriage; it must have been about 1754.

Grandmother Elizabeth Acheson, I make no doubt, would be a very attractive personage in our family history, if we had the means of forming a more intimate acquaintance with her. From the little I have been able to glean, I have longed for more, and feel disposed to inveigh against cruel time for covering over so much of gentle goodness and true womanhood, of which I can catch small glimpses through the misty gloom. What may have been her polish of manners, or education, I cannot tell. At that early period educational advantages for females in the north of Ireland, I fear, were not readily attainable. All that our father says in his record of the mother who loved him so dearly is, that "she was the daughter of David Wier, a Belfast merchant, who had two ships at sea besides other smaller craft." Without exaggeration, however, I think I may say of her, as I can say of our maternal grandmother, Catherine Wilson, that she was a woman of great natural endowments and of decided religious character. And I can safely say the same of our grandfather, George Acheson. He was for many years an elder of the Secession church at Market Hill, of unblemished character, and held in the highest esteem by his landlord and kinsman, the Earl of Gosford, as was strikingly manifested long after

our grandfather's death, in that nobleman's interview with our father in London in 1840.

One thing seems quite clear. Our grandparents, as respected worldly things, were free from corroding care; and, judging from their surroundings and circumstances in life, they were above the level of ordinary tenants on an Irish estate.

I will now proceed to give some account of their descendants. They had seven children, five sons and two daughters. I will name them in the order of their ages,—George, John, Thomas, William, Hannah, Ellen, and David.

Of uncle George Acheson, I have but little to narrate. He followed his brother John to the United States as early as 1785, and remained there for some time after the arrival of our father. When he returned to Ireland does not appear; but he did go back, and ever afterwards lived a bachelor life at the old homestead. He died in 1846, at the advanced age of eighty-nine years.

Uncle John Acheson was the first of the family to leave Ireland. His determination was caused by domestic trouble. He was married about 1782 to Mary Hogg, by whom he had two children, Jane and Hannah. The latter was born some months after he left Ireland, and it was fated that he should never behold her. I am not able to unravel the cause of the matrimonial dissension which led to his expatriation. If he was to

blame in any respect, the after-conduct of his wife deprived her of the sympathy of his family. She renounced her children, and cast them upon their grandparents. The unhappy separation proved to be final. John Acheson was a man of great energy of character and of remarkable business qualifications. He had not been long in this country before he was extensively engaged in trade. He was employed by the United States Government in furnishing supplies to the army in the Indian wars, and he carried on the mercantile business not only at Washington, but at several other important points. He was a man of generous impulses. It was owing to his influence that his brothers and sisters were induced to emigrate to the United States, and I doubt not, as long as he lived, he assisted them with his purse and provided them with homes and employment. I am induced to think his overdrawn pictures of American life gave our grandmother Acheson fearful impressions of the wickedness of the new country, and filled her pious mind with dreadful forebodings of evil for her younger sons. His early death was a great shock to her, aggravated as it was by the sad circumstances attending it. He died suddenly, in 1791, whilst crossing the Allegheny Mountains on horseback, on his way to Philadelphia, and from an expression in one of our grandmother's letters, I fear his grave

was not only unvisited, but undiscoverable. There is no record of the place of his death or burial.

This was the first death in the family, and it struck down one who was well entitled to wear the name of our Scotch-Irish progenitor. Uncle John died in the prime of life; he could not have been more than thirty-five years old. His unexpected loss had large influence in shaping the destiny of other members of the family, especially of his sister Ellen, whom he tenderly loved. Of his two daughters, Jane died in early life; Hannah was sent to this country in 1807, in charge of Rev. Thomas Campbell, father of Alexander Campbell, the distinguished founder of the Disciples' Church to whom in 1809 she was engaged to be married, but for some reason she broke off the engagement. She accepted him, however, as her religious teacher, and became one of his devoted followers. She remained single, and was an inmate for many years of our father's family, but afterwards obtained a room and lived by herself. I have a dutiful letter written by her from Glassdrummond, in 1804, to her guardian, in which she sends her love to her "Uncle Thomas and his lady and little Nancy" (meaning the future Mrs. Judge Baird). This is the only epistolary memento I have of cousin Hannah, save one. After her death her private papers were destroyed, with the exception of Alexander Campbell's love

letter, which I preserved as a literary curiosity. I remember her as she appeared in my childish days,—a slim, comely woman of thirty, of rather a romantic turn of mind; a worshipful admirer of Emmett, the young Irish patriot, who threw away his life in 1803 in a vain attempt at rebellion. She brought with her from Ireland an engraved copy of his farewell address to his countrymen, with his bust thereto affixed. And when quite young, I remember to have seen her, with tears in her eyes, apostrophize it as her martyred hero, whom she loved next to her Saviour. In after-years she became a reserved, undemonstrative woman, withdrew herself from society, and passed a solitary life in the seclusion of her own room, where she died in 1837, at the age of fifty-two years. She lies buried in the family lot, near our sister Mary Jane. I have been thus particular, because cousin Hannah was our father's ward and a member of his household, with whom the writer, in his youth, was more familiar than with any of his other female cousins on the Acheson side.

Uncle Thomas Acheson, or as he was familiarly called, General Acheson, came to this country from Ireland about the year 1786. He settled in Washington with his brother John, and spent his whole life here. After the death of the latter, he formed a partnership in business with our

father, which extended over their joint lives. In 1809 he built the mansion house, on the main street of Washington, now owned and occupied by the First National Bank, in which he resided till his death. He had a turn for military affairs, and in the War of 1812 with Great Britain was commissioned a commissary general in the army of the United States. He was a man of pleasing address and popular manners, and wielded great influence in town and country. The writer, when commencing his professional life, can well remember how General Acheson's contemporaries spoke of him as a man greatly beloved by the people, whose loss was deplored throughout the whole county of Washington. He died in 1815. Young as I then was, I can recollect his grand military funeral, and particularly his black horse, with his military trappings, led by Alexander Darns, his colored attendant, in the procession, next to the bier. His wife was Jane Cummins, by whom he had five children,—Elizabeth, George, James, Hannah Jane, and Thomas. Elizabeth became the wife of Benjamin S. Stewart, Esq. They both died in 1838, leaving three children, one of whom was Benjamin S. Stewart, who was killed at Hilton Head by the bursting of a shell in the war of the rebellion. The other two died in infancy. George Acheson was a fellow-student of the law with the writer. He died in early life of con-

sumption. James C. Acheson married and settled in Wheeling. He died there a few years ago, leaving surviving him his wife, Lavinia, and four children,—Thomas, James, Mollie, wife of David Linn, and Harry. Hannah Jane Acheson was for many years an inmate of Kirkbride's lunatic asylum at Philadelphia, where she died shortly after her brother James. Thomas Acheson is the only survivor of the general's children.

Of our uncle William Acheson I have scarcely anything to record. He was the only one of grandfather Acheson's sons who never left Ireland, but spent all his life at Glassdrummond, in the old homestead. He died unmarried some time prior to 1840. Old Mr. Farley, who came from the neighborhood many years ago, described uncle William to me as a portly, handsome man, very fond of horses and dogs, and much addicted to the chase.

Aunt Hannah Acheson was married in Ireland to James Shields, and became the mother of four children before she came to the United States, which was about 1800. I have not been able to ascertain where they settled, or to trace their after-lives, and I can only give account of three of their children, William, Thomas, and George. William Shields, the oldest son, who was born March 23, 1792, resided for a number of years at Nashville, Tennessee. He acquired considerable prop-

erty, and died December 16, 1837, leaving two children, William Clay and Amelia Shields. After the death of their father and mother they were sent by their guardian to our father, in whose family they lived and died, both of consumption, before attaining their majority. They lie buried side by side in the family lot. Thomas Shields was in the employment of our father as a clerk as early as 1820. His health failing, he went to South America, but afterwards returned and settled at Nashville, where he died a few years after his brother William. George Shields resided in Washington County, Pennsylvania, where he married and had two children, Hannah and Thomas, both of whom are living. He was of unsound mind for many years, and so remained till his death.

Aunt Ellen Acheson was the youngest, and, I imagine, the favorite daughter and sister. She was married in Ireland to Joseph McCullough, who seems to have possessed in a high degree the esteem and affection of grandmother Acheson. Shortly after their marriage they were induced to emigrate to the United States by her brother, John Acheson, who promised to give his sister Ellen fifteen hundred dollars to start them in life. This must have been in 1790-91. A sore disappointment awaited them. Either immediately before or after their arrival, John Acheson suddenly died. In bewailing this misfortune, I fear grand-

mother Acheson was disposed unduly to censure her sons Thomas and David for not fulfilling the promise of their brother John. She seemed to have forgotten that our father was not more than twenty-two years old at the time, and that both brothers were more or less dependent on their elder brother. It is likely the sudden death of uncle John brought great loss to his estate, but whatever he left belonged to his wife and children. She was not slow to set up her claim, and went so far as to endeavor to reclaim her children; but in this she was foiled by the appointment of father and General Acheson as their guardians. To return to aunt Ellen. The disappointment seems to have caused the sudden determination of her husband to bury himself in the wilds of Kentucky, to the poignant grief of our good grandmother, whose sorrowful apprehensions were soon realized. There is a traditionary account that, a few years later, aunt Ellen died of grief at the untimely loss of her husband by some untoward accident. It is certain they did not live many years after their removal to Kentucky. They left two children, George and Nancy, who were brought to Pennsylvania after the death of their parents. By a family arrangement, George was sent to Cumberland County to be brought up by his father's kindred, and Nancy was left in the joint care of her uncles, Thomas and David Acheson. George

McCullough grew to manhood, married, and died long since. His daughter Ellen, whom some of us knew when she was a girl, became the wife of Rev. Dr. McGill, of Princeton. She died a few years since.

Nancy McCullough was reared partly in the family of each of her uncles. In her early womanhood she was married to Hon. Thomas H. Baird. The marriage took place at the old mansion house of General Acheson. She died a few years ago, after a long wedded life and serene old age, having survived her distinguished husband for a brief period, leaving behind her numerous descendants, children and grandchildren, to mourn her loss and cherish her memory.

I come now to the Benjamin of the family and the one in whom we take the deepest interest—our own father, David Acheson. There is no record of his birth, but I feel well assured that it occurred in the year 1770. I must pass over in silence the whole period of his youth, for there is not the scrape of a pen to be found respecting him prior to 1788, when he had attained the age of eighteen years. I must, however, express my conviction, based on his writings and correspondence, as well as upon my personal knowledge, that he received a tolerably thorough English education. In the spring of 1788 he left Ireland to join his brothers, John, George, and Thomas, in this

country. I doubt not the persuasions of uncle John overcame the scruples of his parents, added to his own determined purpose to seek his fortune in the new world. It must have been a hard struggle with our grandparents to allow their youngest boy of eighteen to encounter the perils of the ocean, and separate himself from them, perhaps, forever. A good Providence, however, permitted him to visit them again in their old age and receive their parting blessing.

I have before me the certificate of the pastor of his father's church, furnished him on the eve of his departure, which I copy :

“The bearer, David Acheson, intending to remove to North America, this, therefore, is to certify that he is a young man of a sober, good conduct, and son of Mr. George Acheson, an elder of the Seceding congregation of Market Hill, in the County of Armagh, Ireland. This is given under my hand, this 30th of April, 1788.

“DAVID ARROTT,
“*Minister.*”

Here also is the receipt for his passage on the ship on which he sailed.

“Received from David Acheson, four pounds in full, for his passage on the *Friendship*, Captain

Rue, for Philadelphia. Belfast, 14th of May, 1788, for Messrs McKidy and Stevenson.

“CHARLES FOWLER.

“£4.00.”

I think I know whence came these four pounds. From certain allusions afterwards made in our grandmother's letters, I am led to the belief that she had endeavored to detain our father by putting obstacles in the way of his leaving her, one of which was the expense of the outfit, and in this pretext our grandfather may have joined. But there was a resolute will at work shaping our father's destiny to which our grandparents were constrained to succumb. There is a curious circumstance showing the interest his brother John felt in him and his determination to bring him to the United States. On the 1st of February, 1788, John Acheson, then resident at Washington, Pennsylvania, ordered to be shipped from New York to Belfast, Ireland, ten casks, containing sixty bushels of flaxseed, costing thirty-six pounds, consigned to our grandfather, George Acheson. The shipper's bill, which is before me, states that it is for account of John and David Acheson. This was about three months prior to his sailing from Belfast, and was no doubt intended to overcome the last obstacle by furnishing our father with the means to defray the expenses

of the journey. And here I must notice an interesting fact connected with this flaxseed transaction. The shipper's letter, written from Philadelphia, February 26, 1788, states that Dr. Absolom Baird, who was a surgeon in the army of the Revolution and grandfather of our cousins here present (Susan, Jennie, and Ellen Baird, daughters of our uncle, George Baird, deceased), was then "in town," and would take charge of certain important papers for our good uncle, to be handed to him at Washington, thus showing that the friendship which existed in after-years between Dr. Baird and our father had its origin in the intimacy of the former with John Acheson at an early period in their lives.

Our father made a safe voyage, landed at Philadelphia, and proceeded at once to join his brother John at Washington, who immediately took him into business and gave him an interest in his contracts with the United States Government, for furnishing Indian supplies, and cavalry and pack horses for the use of the army. These contracts covered a period of four years, from 1787 to 1791, and seem to have been resumed by father after the death of his brother John. I have before me duplicate sight drafts drawn by the quartermaster-general, United States, on Major-General Knox, of Revolutionary fame, and Secretary of War under General Washington's first administration, in favor

of John Acheson, and on James McHenry, Secretary of War under his second administration, in favor of David Acheson, for army supplies. I find also accounts of mercantile expeditions from Pittsburgh to New Orleans, carried on in 1790-91 by the two brothers, accompanied with a written document in the Spanish language, granted to David Acheson by the Spanish authorities at Natchez, authorizing him to convey his merchandise within their territory.

In the spring of 1789 he received a letter from his mother, which I will here introduce in order that her descendants may have some impression of her character. Let me premise that she was in her sixty-first year, and was writing to her boy of nineteen, from whom she had been separated for a whole year. Her fears were evidently excited more for his moral and spiritual than his temporal welfare. Grandmother Acheson drew her inspiration from the Bible. Her proverbs, if not of Scriptural origin, partook largely of the spirit of Scripture. She lived a retired life, remote from the bustle and temptations of the world, and was a simple-hearted woman, given much to prayer and pious contemplation. With these thoughts in our minds, I submit the letter for perusal.

“GLASSDRUMMOND, May 4, 1789.

“DEAR DAVID,—

“This comes with my love to you, hoping you will beware of what risk you run from your connection with wicked men. How few behave as lively Christians amidst abundance of this world. Most men are eternally ruined by its being their portion here; hell must be their portion hereafter. My dear, never love the world. It promises comforts but pays with sorrows. Riches are rather to be feared than sought, least they prove silver bars in our way to Heaven. They are indifferent in themselves and become good or bad as they are used. You may put a price on them, but they never can put a price on you. You must answer to God for them, but they cannot answer for you. Whatever you make an idol of will be a cross to you, if you belong to Christ, and a curse if you do not. Man was not made for the world, but the world for man. Indeed, riches are but dust, and man a lump of vanity, compounded of sinfulness and misery. It is those who live near Christ, and are ashamed of their best deeds, that study to be perfect before God and desire to live in the Lord, on the Lord, and ever with the Lord. God’s least things are of more importance than the world’s greatest things. Men never trust their own hearts but they find them deceitful, and never trust Christ but they find him faithful. If we freely confess

our sins to God he will hide our secret sins from the view of the world. Dear David, amidst your prosperity never let the vanity of the world lead your mind off your duty to God, and always shun such company as leads to vice. Take God's people for your companions and his word for your rule; let it be nearer to you than your friends, dearer than your life, sweeter than your liberty, more pleasant than all earthly comforts. Have no companions but such as will be kind to your soul, keep a due distance from wicked men, least you be infected by their sinful action. My dear, it is amongst my greatest troubles that I was so careless of your soul. My conscience checks me. O! what opportunities of serving God have we wasted—how impossible to recover these countless moments, so vilely cast away in the service of sin. What an awful loss do souls sustain that sleep away the morning of their youth in Satan's bosom, careless and unconcerned—cursed pastimes which detain and draw us from prayer and reading God's word, which, if you neglect, you may expect a shocking visit from him on the morning of the last day. My dear, study to lay in Christ, lay up and lay out for Christ. Let your soul be like the hungry birds, early seeking after God, your best food.

“I think you have forgotten your promises to me in not writing a full account of your affairs, and in not doing all in your power to send home

George, whom we think great long for. If your brother does not come home as you mentioned in your last letter against the fall, we would be glad if you would come over yourself to see us. You may let John know the Messrs. McCunes have turned bankrupts, and have made up all their friends with nothing. Remember me to cousin Nicolas Little and his wife. You did not satisfy me about some things I wanted to know. Remember me to John Leeman and wife; tell her I have not forgot the love of our youth, and am much obliged to her for the account she gave of my son John. I am sorry to think that your brother makes so light of our troubles. Joseph is away, Simeon is gone, and he took Benjamin also. These things stand harder with me than at the first, but they will all cease when we sit down on the bank of the river of life and enjoy the riches not depending on the help of man. No more, but remain your tender and loving mother till death.

“ELIZABETH ACHESON.”

Our father indorsed on the back of this letter the date at which it was written, and after reading and re-reading it, I doubt not, amidst smiles and tears, placed it carefully away amongst his private papers, where I found it eighty-seven years afterwards.

It is but fair to our grandfather that I should,

in this connection, furnish a specimen of his epistolary writing. Here is one of his letters, written nearly ten years later, when he was seventy-three years old, addressed to Thomas and David Acheson, Merchants, Washington, Pennsylvania.

“GLASSDRUMMOND, Dec. 25, 1797.

“MY DEAR CHILDREN,—

“I wrote you in September, in which I gave you a sketch of the political state of our country, together with an account of the circumstances that have occurred here latterly. The aspect appears more favorable at present. Indeed, under all circumstances, things are more settled than could have been expected, considering the cruel acts of tyranny that have been and are daily imposed on the people. Your mother and myself enjoy a pretty good state of health, considering our advanced stage in life. We have every reason to bless the bountiful giver of all good for his mercies in enabling us to live comfortably as can be expected in being bereft of you. My dear children, I sincerely pray that the Lord will protect you and bless you in all your undertakings. I have, in several former letters, stated to you the situation that I am in about my lands. You being the only lives that are now alive, you must know that one of you must come home. Let nothing hinder you, as you may rest assured that if you do not

come, the landlord will take every advantage, particularly as he is disposed to injure those who are not very much attached to the administration. The lease, you well know, is of great value, having it at seven shillings per acre, and I could rent it for at least forty shillings besides my other place of thirty acres. David and myself are the only lives; therefore, I wish David to come, if possible. I intend to sell it, but unless the lives are here, it would not come near its value. Therefore, when you consider that I have so much depending, indeed, I may say my all, one of you should come home as soon as possible. If you come, you may rest assured that you shall not lose by it, and believe me to be and remain your affectionate father,

“GEORGE ACHESON.”

This letter was written in time of great political excitement in Ireland, in which our family seem to have largely partaken on the liberal side. Our staid grandfather appears to have forgotten for the time his allegiance to his chief, regarding him as a stern landlord, ready to disown the tie of name and kindred, and take advantage of any forfeiture that might occur. Leases such as grandfather's seem to have required the production of the person upon whose life the lease depended at stated periods, as the best proof that the lease had not expired by its own limitation. His fears, how-

ever, were groundless, and of this his sons must have been well assured. They did not respond to the urgent call upon them to return to Ireland to prevent their father's expulsion from the estate of his ancestors. It was not until five years later that our father went back to Ireland and saw his aged parents for the last time.

I cannot, of course, give our father's replies to the letters of his parents. I have, however, found on the fly-leaf of a memorandum book a copy of a portion of one of his letters to his father, which I will here insert.

“Although I am far separated from you, yet I never, never cease to think with a delightful sensation of affection of the most beloved and best of parents. When I reflect on the care and attention you bestowed upon me, the pains you took to instruct my youth in every good and virtuous thing, I often wonder how it is possible that children should ever be ungrateful to their parents. For my part, my bosom ought to be filled with gratitude and love towards you; indeed, I am confident that I never can repay what you have done for me; but to know that I still retain your affection and your blessing will repay me a thousandfold for all I ever done for you. May I then ask,—shall I not expect,—that my dear father will write me from time to time, and, above

all, that he will pray for his ever affectionate son."

This letter was written in the spring of 1800, when he was in great grief over the loss of his first wife.

I must return now to an earlier period in his life. From 1788 to 1791 he was constantly employed in mercantile transactions. The death of his brother John seems for a time to have unsettled his mind as to his future course, and it was at this period he turned his thoughts towards the law as a profession. He began the study with James Ross, then a distinguished lawyer residing at Washington; but, as he informed the writer, he did not pursue the study beyond "Blackstone's Commentaries," having resolved to embark again in business with his brother Thomas. The partnership thus formed was successfully and harmoniously conducted during their joint lives.

In 1795, when in his twenty-fifth year, he was elected by the Republican party to represent Washington County in the State legislature. In 1796 he was renominated. Mr. S—— was at that time a candidate for Congress. He had been State senator the preceding year, and during the session of the legislature had voted on the opposite side from father on some questions then regarded as of great political moment. This gave

rise to bad feeling, and the friends of Mr. S——, shortly before the election, published anonymously in the *Western Telegraph* a fierce personal and political attack upon him. He made a prompt and vigorous reply over his own signature, which I will here copy, for the purpose of illustrating the force of his character, which those who knew him only when age and misfortune had overtaken him, might fail to appreciate, and in order that his grand- and great-grandchildren may have some knowledge of him as a political writer.

“FOR THE WESTERN TELEGRAPH.

“‘O would mankind but make great Truth their guide,
And force the helm from avarice and pride,
Then soon would reason o’er the world prevail,
And error, calumny, and falsehood fail.’

“MESSRS. PRINTERS,—

“A public attack has been made on me in your last paper, by a writer styling himself ‘Another Enemy to Deception.’ A long train of villainies are brought in charge against me, among which are untruth, misrepresentation, a barefaced attempt to mislead the people who have heretofore honored me with their suffrages, and an attack on the immaculate character of a certain senator.

“These are heinous offences, and justice to myself calls for their refutation. I know but one person capable of coming forth with charges against me

so replete with malice, and so embellished with falsehood ; and perhaps the pointing that person out to the public, and informing them how much he is interested in the issue of the approaching election, would be sufficient to convince them that the attack was founded altogether in jealousy and malevolence. But a tenderness for his character, though he has manifested none for mine, prevents an avowal of his name. I am well satisfied, however, that he has thrown off the mask of duplicity and the garb of pretended friendship ; much safer is an open and avowed enemy (and as such I now look on him) than a concealed one. He has now opened his hitherto masked batteries of deceit, falsehood, subtlety, and hypocrisy.

“A tale is to be unfolded that will harrow up my soul,” etc. But, amidst all these threats, can it be possible that he is himself so immaculate as to be void of apprehension ? To him I shall now address myself.

“ Say, I pray thee, hast thou no fear for thy presumptuous self ? I’ll tell thee what thou art ; I know thee well.”

“The charges against your bosom friend S —, whose character has been dear to you from time immemorial, are incontrovertible facts, to be found on record. The truth of the statement made, and the observations upon it, I am ready to maintain, if you or any of your adherents are hardy enough

to deny them. Your attempt to explain away the evil tendency of the land bill in question would answer very well could the people be so easily blindfolded by your artifice as you would wish; but, unfortunately for you, they are too much enlightened to be made dupes of. The charge against Mr. S—— appears as a misrepresentation to those only whose interest it would be to have it so.

“With regard to the charge of ‘*mum*,’ I acknowledge that *mum* was my creed and *no* my reply when you were so importunate with me to vote in favor of the land bill, against the Virginia resolutions, and the removal of the seat of government. Had my answer been *yes* at that time, it is more than probable I should, at this time, have had your support, instead of your enmity, as well as Mr. S——, who, upon the same occasion, you found to be of a more complying disposition. The charge against me respecting the reduction of my pay is too insignificant to merit an answer, and as for the *horrid* tale that is to be unfolded, I am ready to meet it in the most terrifying dress you can put it, confident that it will derive none of its terrors from truth.

“‘*Vent all thy passions and I’ll stand the shock, calm and unruffled as a summer sea, when not a breath of wind flies o’er its surface.*’

“Although you stand forth the *avowed* champion of aristocracy, do not think that, like the mon-

archs of old (who chained their captives to their chariot wheels, and forced them to join in the general acclamations and exult in their own slavery), to compel by your threats a free man to desert the cause of truth ; be assured that although but young, you will find that I am not to be intimidated by your threats nor overawed by your influence.

“It is not the evidence of your pen that will convict me, nor is it at the bar of your favorite junto that I am to be tried. The public are in possession of a knowledge of my conduct, and to their tribunal I appeal.

“DAVID ACHESON.”

We must not suppose that these bitter political philippics were productive of great or long-continued personal animosity. It was but the style of the times, and the combatants afterwards became reconciled.

The election came off seven days later, when he received 1819 votes, the highest number polled, his colleague, William Hoge, receiving 1423 votes. What greatly added to his triumph was the humiliating vote of 486 cast for Mr. S., who was beaten by Albert Gallatin.

In 1797 he was re-elected, and in 1804 was chosen again to represent Washington County in the legislature for the last time. Whilst he was

in public life, the general as well as the State government had its seat at Philadelphia, and he was thus brought into familiar acquaintance with all the noted men of the time, including President Washington, for whom he ever cherished the highest admiration. I have before me a written invitation addressed to our father to dine with General Washington, as follows:

“Mr. Acheson is requested to dine with the President on Thursday the 23d inst., at four o'clock precisely.

“Feb. 14, 1797.

“DAVID ACHESON, Esq.”

He always looked back on the scenes connected with this part of his life with peculiar pleasure. In this connection, I must refer to an interesting circumstance which I cannot but think relates to this period of our father's life. The Dublin correspondent of the *Boston Globe*, in a recent letter published in that journal, makes the following statement:

“One article in the Loan Museum I may mention, because I regard it of very great interest. It is a miniature portrait of George Washington, contributed by J. Acheson Tysle, Esq. It is exquisitely finished and in perfect preservation. Mr. Tysle tells me his great-uncle, Mr. Acheson,

who was a great friend of General Washington, and lived in Philadelphia, had the miniature taken from life and sent it to Mr. Tysle's grandfather, then living in the north of Ireland. The letter which accompanied the gift was shown me, stating the fact that the painting is from life, but unfortunately there is no mention of the artist's name. The expression is somewhat different from that of any other portrait I have seen of Washington, and I think it is more pleasing. I regard the miniature as one of the most interesting things to an American to be found in the whole collection."

The coincidences lead me to the belief that the Mr. Acheson here spoken of is none other than David Acheson, our father. Of the picture, I have no knowledge other than what is furnished above; but I have taken steps to verify my belief, by addressing J. Acheson Tysle (whom I suppose to be an off-shoot of the Acheson family) through the Loan Museum at Dublin.

He continued to take great interest in public affairs after the close of Washington's administration, and was actively engaged, along with William Hoge, Dr. A. Baird, and others, in promoting the Republican cause, of which Thomas Jefferson became the representative in national, and Thomas McKean in State politics. He was an ardent admirer of Jefferson, and the documents in my possession show that, as the corresponding

member of the Republican committee for Washington County, he labored assiduously in the great presidential contest with Adams. I have before me letters written to him in 1799 by Alexander J. Dallas, the distinguished secretary of the commonwealth under Governor Mifflin, and afterwards under Governor McKean, vindicating the latter from malignant aspersions of his private character, and urging greater efficiency of party organization to ensure his election to the gubernatorial office. These letters stimulated the Republican leaders and led to the adoption of what is known as the delegate system in Washington County. Our father was one of a special committee appointed by a public meeting to address the people, recommending this plan of representative action.

As a newspaper writer he did not escape adverse criticism, and was sometimes blamed for the productions of others. It is pleasant to refer to a courteous apology of a rising young lawyer, who, in after-years, endeared himself to the people of Washington County by his purity of character, affability of manners, marked ability as an advocate, and disinterested patriotism as a statesman :

“The publications in the *Reporter*, under the signature of ‘Junius,’ reflecting on Mr. D. Acheson, were made under the excitement occasioned by a warm public contest about the appointment of a

judge, and under the impression that he was the author of the publications in the *Examiner*, under the signature of 'Democrat.' It now appears that he was not the author of 'Democrat.' I, therefore, acknowledge my regret at having made those publications reflecting on Mr. Acheson, and that they were made under mistaken impressions.

"TH. M. T. MCKENNAN.

"June 4, 1819."

The reference here is to his nephew by marriage, Hon. Th. H. Baird, for whose appointment as judge he was a strenuous advocate, and thus brought upon himself the suspicion of having written some newspaper articles offensive to the friends of Thomas McGiffin, Esq., the distinguished opponent of Mr. Baird for the judgeship.

In the spring of 1799 his first marriage took place. His wife was Elizabeth Young, daughter of Samuel Young, of Philadelphia. On April 30, 1800, his mother wrote the following congratulatory letter to him and his wife :

"GLASSDRUMMOND, April 30, 1800.

"DEAR CHILDREN,—

"Give me leave to congratulate you, and believe me that I sincerely wish you all the happiness that this world can afford in the marriage state. My dear children, I wish to give you a few words of

advice, and as the Lord is my witness, I wish you may follow. Make it your study, in the first place, to seek and serve the Lord, and keep the Sabbath holy, and follow not the vanities of this world. Love retirement, for that will improve your mind and fit you for duty both to God and man. I cannot help offering you a few advices. By the most affable, affectionate behavior endeavor to secure the esteem, the friendship, and the love of your wife. If you get these three links fast, nothing but death can dissolve your union. That affection is sure and lasting which is founded upon esteem and real friendship, and a desire to promote each other's good. Prefer the company of your beloved wife to that of your dearest friend; thus shall you, hand in hand, travel over the rugged paths of life in peace; the world will look to you as to an example worthy of imitation, you will answer the end of your creation, and the Lord God himself will behold you with complacency, and give his blessing to all your undertakings. I have little to say concerning your duty as a parent till you shall be honored with the name of a father, which, if you should ever be, I hope you will make it your study and pleasure to bring your children up in the fear of God, that they may be a comfort to you and blessing to society, so that both they and you may reap the fruits of your faithful care and watchfulness over them. Dedicate them, like

Samuel, from their birth to the service of God, and he will take care of them as they grow up. Many parents make great rejoicing at the birth of a child, but how few wrestle like Hannah with God in their behalf. Many are solicitous to heap up large fortunes for their children, but let it be your ambition and aim, by the abundance of your prayers, to secure to them a large inheritance above the skies. May the Lord give his blessing to you and to what I have written. No more, but remain your loving and affectionate mother,

“ELIZABETH ACHESON.”

(P. S.)

“Dear David, I am happy to hear that you are taking notice of your sister’s children.* There is a blessing attends them who take care of the orphans. Excuse these trifles, as they will be the last. Remember my kindest love to your wife.

“ELIZABETH ACHESON.”

Our grandmother was in her seventy-second year when she wrote this letter. How different would it have been had the dear old lady known the true state of affairs! It is a curious fact, that at its date, her new daughter-in-law, to whom her “advices” were addressed, had been sleeping in her grave for more than two months. I can

* His sister Ellen’s children.

only account for this upon the supposition that there was great irregularity in the transmission of foreign letters, and that the news of our father's marriage had not reached Ireland until the spring after it took place. The following is copied from our father's record :

“ Eliza Young Acheson, born on Monday night, the 10th February, 1800, about half after eleven o'clock P.M. Mrs. Acheson departed this life the 27th of February, at half after eight o'clock P.M., Thursday. Interred on Saturday following at Canonsburgh meeting-house, half after one o'clock.”

The untimely loss of his wife, who had not reached her twenty-first year, was a sad blow to him. Her infant daughter was sent in charge of her nurse, and under the care of General Acheson, to her grandmother, Elizabeth Young, at Philadelphia, by whom she was brought up. The infirm health of our dear sister, Eliza Y. Woodward, now in her seventy-eighth year, has prevented her from being present on this occasion, in compliance with our invitation, but we have her affectionate letter from her home at Cleveland, Ohio, conveying her assurances of sympathy and love.

In November, 1802, our father sailed for Ireland to visit his parents, and whilst abroad travelled through Ireland and England. He kept a journal which lies before me, showing he was an observant traveller. After a half year's absence,

he returned to the United States in the spring of 1803.

His second marriage took place at Washington, Pennsylvania, on the 31st day of October, 1805. This is the seventy-second anniversary of that happy event, and the time so appropriately set apart for our family meeting. For the past five years we have kept our pledge to one another, and after standing to-day once more around the graves of our honored parents, we have assembled in the old family mansion, to revive pleasant memories, and recount events of the past linked with their and our human destiny. From the point now reached, our family history widens in its course backward and forward, and I must leave it to our brother James, to whom we have assigned the pleasant task of tracing the maternal side, to depict our mother, Mary Wilson, when a blooming bride of eighteen she united her fate with that of our father. There was considerable disparity in their ages. He was in his thirty-fifth year; but the union, as we all know, was a most happy one. He took our mother to Philadelphia, and there set up afresh his family altar. I must pass over the pleasantest part of their married life. For nine years they continued to reside at Philadelphia, where four children were born to them—John, Alexander, Catharine, and the first David.

In 1814, our father, believing that he had ac-

quired sufficient wealth to enable him to live at his ease, returned to Washington and set about immediately to build the mansion house wherein we are now assembled. The writer well remembers the grand ceremony of house-warming which took place in these parlors in the winter of 1815-16. Our father thought he had achieved a large fortune and lived in corresponding style, regardless of the changes of time and circumstances. He invested largely in town property and its improvement, and consumed gradually his surplus means in the expenses of living. At length a change came. In 1831, by the great depression in real estate, and pressing pecuniary liabilities, he found himself suddenly reduced to poverty. All his property was sold on execution at ruinous rates. The writer was then just entering upon his professional life, and could not do much to stay the torrent. He is thankful that through the generosity of his uncle, Marcus Wilson, he was able to save the mansion house for his mother. The direst misfortune consequent upon these sad reverses was the loss of our eldest brother, John, who, on their first approach, animated with the hope of restoring the family fortunes, abandoned his literary pursuits to embark in mercantile speculations in the territory of Arkansas, where he fell a victim to disease, on the 4th of July, 1833.

I must pass over those dark days. When our

father was seventy years old he determined to revisit Ireland. All his brothers and sisters were then dead, excepting George. Our father was the last life of the leases so long held by our family in the Gosford estate. His brother George was in helpless old age, and something was necessary to be done for his protection. So, in the spring of 1840, he set out on his last visit to Ireland. I cannot lay my hands on his well-remembered letter to our mother, announcing his arrival at Glassdrummond, in which he spoke of his melancholy feelings on coming back to the home of his childhood and witnessing the changes time had wrought. He went straight to the graves of his father and mother, and casting himself down, recalled to memory their tender care over his youth and the yearning love wherewith they had followed him through all his after-life. He wrote frequently to different members of his family during his stay in Ireland. I will refer to two of his letters to our brother George, which will be interesting to his descendants :

“GLASSDRUMMOND, June 27, 1840.

“MY DEAR GEORGE,—

“It is about five weeks since I arrived in Liverpool, and it seems to me an age. I am now, and intend to remain during my stay in Ireland, at the mansion of my late father. The situation is

beautiful and romantic. The dwelling-house is of stone, built about sixty years ago. The ground around the house is called a park and contains about three acres. It fronts on a public road which runs due east and west. The house fronts the road, but stands fifty feet from it, and along the road bounding the park runs a beautiful cropped thorn hedge. This line is straight and extends along the road four hundred yards. The house is in the centre. Besides this, the park is circular, surrounded by ditch and hedge such as I have stated. The garden, containing about half an acre, is situated back of the buildings, and also surrounded with a hedge. In front of the house are two stone pillars and a handsome fancy iron gate; a gate also enters the park above, and another below the buildings. The lower gate and avenue leads to a fine spring and to a gold mine in the park, formerly worked but now abandoned. The west or lower end of the park is planted with trees of various kinds, principally pines, say at least five thousand, and many of them now reaching the height of twenty to thirty feet, thereby darkening all around and leaving only four feet of a walk between the plantation and the garden hedge leading to the spring and mine. Besides this, adjoining the circular hedge, a great number of young pines are now peering from five to twenty feet above it with a happy effect. All the fields on

this place are divided by hedges. The farm that falls to me is called Sebuchan, situated half a mile from here, equally as good land but not so well improved. I have just returned from London, where I went to see the Earl of Gosford, late Governor-General of Canada. I was introduced to him by his Excellency the Minister of the United States at the Court of London. The Earl received me in a very kindly manner, but when I came to tell him that I was a son of George Acheson, late of Glassdrummond, deceased, he immediately jumped from his seat, ran to me and took hold of both my hands in his. 'What!' said he, 'a son of George Acheson. Any and everything in my power shall be done to serve you; tell me what your desires are, and if in my power they shall be gratified.' We had a long conversation. He inquired about my situation and family. He said, moreover, that our forefathers all came together from Scotland and settled in Ireland. I will now give you some account of our ancestors. Sir Archibald Acheson, Baronet of the House of Gosford, in Scotland, was Secretary of State to King James the Sixth of that kingdom, who granted him, the said Archibald, an estate in Ireland. Our forefather at that period, it appears, was full cousin to Sir Archibald Acheson. His name was John, and he accompanied the Gosford family from Scotland to Ireland, and settled in Glassdrummond,

where our family have lived ever since. My grandfather's name was George. He died about one hundred and twenty years ago. My father's name was George. He was born about 1726. He married Elizabeth Weir, daughter of David Weir, of Belfast, who was a respectable merchant. When he died he was the owner of two ships besides smaller craft. I have the power now, through the courtesy of the Earl, of tracing up our ancestors. I can assure you not a stain ever was cast on any of them. I have received a pressing invitation to visit Gosford Castle, and the Earl told me in London he would have been glad if he had been at home, in order to have entertained me at the Castle. He said that he would be home in July. He will do all I want, and I shall ask him to give you some appointment. Pay, therefore, every attention to your law studies. You must understand law to suit him in any agency. Your affectionate father,

“DAVID ACHESON.”

When he wrote this letter he was revolving some grand scheme whereby the old homestead so long held by his family might be secured, in *perpetuam*, to his son George, and the Achesons of the collateral branch resuscitated in Ireland. To this end he addressed a letter to Lord Gosford, at London, from whom, on the 11th of July, 1840,

he received an answer, in which that nobleman kindly pointed out the difficulties in the way of his exercising such power over his estate, and expresses his regret that he could not show his "desire on this occasion to gratify one of a family who have lived so long on the property." Our father's proposal was doubtless inconsistent with the tenure by which the lands were held, and his good sense soon led him to abandon altogether the idea of converting our brother George into a British subject.

He was detained in Ireland by the condition of his brother's affairs much longer than he expected. His own health became impaired and his spirits affected by the delay. Here is his second letter to his son George:

"GLASSDRUMMOND, MARKET HILL, January 28, 1841.

"MY DEAR GEORGE,—

"Your esteemed letter of the 16th October I duly received, but have delayed answering it until I could give you some certain account when I should be ready to return. . . . I am so anxious to leave this country on account of my health. I have suffered much from its climate being so wet and damp. I have not been well since the last of July. Weakness of stomach and indigestion is my general complaint, which has, moreover, unfortunately fell on my nervous sys-

tem, and which I am fearful I shall never surmount. Indeed, my dear son, it is with difficulty that I now write you these few lines, such is the state of my nerves. The people of Ireland I find in a poor and miserable situation. Under these circumstances, and from what I have experienced in this climate, I should not feel freedom, even if an opening offered, of recommending your accepting of it. However, when I have the pleasure of seeing you, I will tell you all. The Earl of Gosford is now, and has been at his castle for some time. I find him a very pleasant and kind-hearted man, and very friendly to me. I often visit him. He says it would give him pleasure to serve any of my sons, but that at present he has no suitable situation. However, upon my return to the United States, 'should I conclude to send you and write by you to him a letter of introduction,' he 'should certainly use his interest to get you a situation.' Besides the climate of Ireland, I confess many other things appear not very agreeable or pleasing to me, especially the immense difference in society. Here aristocracy reigns and governs in all the pride and pomp of birth and wealth. To me, who have been brought up in a country where merit only entitles to favor and reward, as it should do, the contrast is striking and evidently in favor of the United States. I forgot to mention in my former letter, that I had

a grand-uncle who served under 'King William' during what is called the Revolution of 1688. He was in the celebrated siege of Londonderry, which is an ancient, walled, and strongly-fortified city and seaport on the northwest coast of Ireland. It sustained a severe and memorable siege in 1688-89. Its gates were shut on the 7th day of December, 1688, against the Irish and French army under King James, and it was finally relieved, and the siege raised 1st of August, 1689. Some thousands during the siege died from hunger, etc., and when relieved there only remained *a pint of meal a man, and nine old horses.*

"A new and improved telescope has lately been invented by an Irish gentleman, which is believed will be of an immense importance when completed. By this improvement, I understand, the haze or dark shade which has hitherto obscured all views through telescopes, and which has rendered in some measure useless Herschel's great one, will be entirely removed, so that however distant the view may be, it will be divested of all haze. The improvement consists of one or more reflectors, etc., attached to the instrument.

"I have collected, and I intend to get more, curiosities to form a cabinet, or give them to the college. I wish you would collect some. I have three small boxes, two of them containing specimens from the 'Giant's Causeway,' which I will

barter away, when I arrive in the United States, for others. By the industry of young men cabinets have been formed which have been valuable, and sold sometimes for large sums. And above all, my dear George, review and improve your studies. Learning, you may be assured, is of the first importance wherever your lot may be cast; and, indeed, it is time for you now to think seriously of these matters, as doubtless you will. I sent you a newspaper some weeks ago, and I may hereafter send you more, but I do not expect to write you again before I leave. I have also sent Alexander papers, but I have not written home since November. I intend writing early next month. My mind is continually dwelling about you all. Time appears long and passes heavy, and especially now during the winter. Give my love to Catharine and to the children, and to Mr. Davis. Hoping to have the pleasure of seeing you all early in the summer, I am, my dear son, ever your affectionate father,

“DAVID ACHESON.”

At length, having made a satisfactory arrangement for the comfort of his aged brother, he returned from Ireland in the spring of 1842. He wrote to Lord Gosford, advising him of his safe arrival, and received from him the following letter in reply :

“WARLINGHAM HALL, 26th May, 1842.

“DEAR SIR,—

“I was very glad to receive your letter informing me of your safe arrival, after a tedious and tempestuous passage. After so long an absence how gratified you must have been to join your family again. Your many friends near Market Hill will be rejoiced to hear about you. You carried with you the best wishes of all there who had the pleasure of making your acquaintance. I hope matters are going on to your satisfaction, and that your country may rapidly recover from the distractions which have lately prevailed, and that the blessings of peace may be long continued to you. We are waiting to hear the result of Lord Ashburton’s mission. The resources of your country are so great, that, with economy and good management, you must soon recover from your embarrassments. I trust nothing may occur to disturb that friendly intercourse between your country and this, which I consider so essential to the real interests of both. What you state confirms the impression I had received as to the means resorted to to defeat Mr. Van Buren. I shall always be glad to receive a letter from you when you can find time to write to me, and if it contains a good account of yourself and family it will be the more acceptable. There is no particular news to send you from Market Hill. All there is much in the same state as when

you left it. I hope to be there shortly, and if I hear of anything likely to interest you, I shall let you know. With every wish for your welfare and happiness, I am, dear sir, yours very faithfully,
“GOSFORD.”

Upon the death of his brother George, in 1846, the tenancy of our family in the Gosford estate ceased and determined, and the old Irish homestead which John Acheson, our Scottish ancestor, acquired, and where his descendants were born and reared for two hundred and forty-two years, was by them vacated forever. The Earl of Gosford, the friend of our grandfather and father, died in 1864. Another Archibald Acheson reigns in his stead, but I doubt very much if he has any knowledge of the descendants of his forefather's cousin of King James's time; and to us who were born out of Ireland, it matters but little. It may be pleasant to know whence we came, but in this free land every one must carve out a name for himself, and “worth makes the man.”

The remaining portion of our father's life was uneventful. In the year 1848 he was stricken with paralysis. He survived the stroke several years, but with his mind shattered and bodily powers greatly impaired. This called forth that devoted nursing by our dear mother so well remembered by us all. At last, on the 1st of De-

ember, 1851, our afflicted father was relieved from his sufferings, and quietly expired in the room we are occupying now—the study of our dear brother, Rev. Dr. Brownson.

To his surviving children I need say but little of his character. He did not possess the financial talent of his brother John, nor the popular address of his brother Thomas, but he excelled them both in general information. In his earlier life he was a great reader and kept himself wonderfully posted up in the current history of the world, and was conversant with all the changes, ancient and modern, wrought by war and diplomacy in its systems of government. In the familiarity of the home circle he was a very instructive talker. The writer can recollect when he was a small boy, of his being subjected to enforced silence during the winter evenings whilst he read aloud to our mother from ancient history and from the British classics, of which he had about one hundred volumes.

His disposition was gentle and his manners unobtrusive. There was a great deal of playful tenderness in his intercourse with his children.

We have no good picture of him. The portrait by his grandson, David A. Woodward, was painted from memory after our father's death, and although it may be good as a work of art, does not represent him as he appeared to the writer in his later years. There is in the possession of our sister

Ellen a miniature portrait in clay taken of him at Philadelphia, by a process said to be lost by the death of the inventor, which our mother highly prized, but time and accident have greatly impaired its value.

As the oldest living child of his second marriage, the writer enjoyed greater opportunities of knowing both parents—our mother in her prime and our father in the vigor of middle life. Most of my brothers and sisters knew them after adversity had beclouded their skies and the struggles of life were upon them. In their parental love we were equal sharers, and happy are we if each and all of us can say from the depths of our hearts that we made a full requital for all the tender care they bestowed on us.

NOTE.

THE following obituary appeared in the *Washington Examiner* at the time of our father's death. Who the writer was is not known, but it was not from the pen of any member of the family:

For the Examiner.

DAVID ACHESON.

Death is taking one and another of our old and cherished friends from our midst, admonishing us to prepare for the grim messenger, that we too may ere long be summoned to pass the portals of the grave. The last *Examiner* announced the death of DAVID ACHESON, Esq., at the advanced age of eighty-one years, an early citizen and respected individual of the borough of Washington, where he had lived between fifty and sixty years past, excepting a brief space of time in the city of Philadelphia.

Mr. A. was a native of Ireland, and came to this country and town at an early age. My acquaintance with him enables me to say that he was no ordinary man; and, until within a few years previous to his decease, was much in the society and in the enjoyment of the confidence of public characters. He was an accurate and close observer of public and political affairs as connected not only with our own government, but also with the prominent nations of Europe, of the diplomacy of which, as well as of their policy, there were but few private men of his day, retiring and unobtrusive as he was, who better understood,

or could more accurately delineate. His judgment and conclusions, which were always deliberate and well matured by his deep thinking, strong mind, were valuable and very highly esteemed by those acquainted with him, whether in public or private life. Thus during the period of vigorous manhood he enjoyed a most extensive popularity and influence in the State of Pennsylvania particularly, and with many of her most distinguished individuals in her political party history and government he was on the closest terms of intimacy; hence his opinions and counsel were always much sought after and greatly valued.

Although Mr. Acheson's political action was unalterably identified with the Democratic party, in the ascendancy and progress of which he took a very active and leading part, there was no acrimony or party hate in his composition or course as a politician; on the contrary, he was even kind, forbearing, and charitable in a remarkable degree to those arrayed in opposition, and who towards himself had been abusive and bitter in the great political contests he passed through, rather judging them as associate men, aiming honestly at the same results, but influenced by erroneous opinions; and in this respect I believe it may be truly said he has left the world without an enemy, neither hating nor deserving to be hated of any man. Much might be said in recurring to the period of acquaintance with our deceased friend, without doing more than justice to his memory.

As a private friend, and in social life, Mr. Acheson was a man of ardent and sincere attachments; and where personal effort or labor were needed, he never faltered or shrunk by reason of apparent difficulty or threatened danger, ever willing and ready to serve his friends, at whatever responsibility or personal risk, by day or night, at home or abroad.

Of David Acheson in domestic life, it may be said, he was a pattern of deep, tender, abiding affection; and by his surviving widow, numerous children, and extensive connections, his

removal will be long and particularly felt. He was a man of a most vigorous constitution, and enjoyed good health up to March, 1848, when he was stricken with paralysis, from the effects of which and subsequent prostration consequent thereon, his bodily frame gave way, after much suffering to himself, and the constant, watchful attention and nursing care of a devoted wife and children for a period of three years and nine months.

Mr. Acheson was religiously inclined, and for many years previous to his illness attended religious services in the Associate Church of this place.

During his long confinement he was often and much religiously exercised; and, except at times when his rationality was interrupted by extreme bodily suffering, evinced the resignation of a sincere Christian to the Divine will—leaving the comfortable assurance to his surviving friends that he had “lain hold of the strong consolation in the Gospel;” that he has passed from “death unto life”—“to another and better world.”