"General James Potter, of the Pennsylvania Militia, of whom little is known."—See note, p. 18, No. 1, Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 1877.

Intelligent persons who have made Pennsylvania history an object, who have ever consulted Scott, Watson, Day, Hazard, Trego, Reed, Sergeant, Huston, Sypher, or Egle, know a great deal more of General Potter than of the Robert Morton, whose "diary," the above note is intended to illustrate.¹

Active public service in various positions for more than thirty years has left James Potter a record, most of it in printed

¹ This annotation was not made without consideration, as but little was known of James Potter, in general history, commensurate with the services he rendered his State. The view expressed was confirmed by the following extracts from an article printed in the Historical Record, of August, 1872, by Mr. John B. Linn, of Bellefonte, Centre County, Pennsylvania:—

"General Potter," he says, "left a vast quantity of correspondence, embracing letters from all the prominent characters of the Revolution, from General Washington to Lady Harriett Acklaad; yet no memoir has ever appeared of this most trusty of Washington's Generals;" and again, "Yet no one can this day tell where his bones are mouldering." Since the publication of Mr. Linn's article, he has issued his valuable History of the Buffalo Valley, in which we have his later investigations regarding Gen. Potter. The interesting reply that has been elicited will, we think, by its freshness vindicate the truth of the note to "Morton's Diary," as but little that it contains will be found in any of the authorities cited by our correspondent, as containing more regarding James Potter than of Robert Morton, a fact not surprising, as the latter never held any public position, and his journal was only printed on account of the interesting historical data it contained.—Ed.
books, which entitled him to a more extended, if not more respectful notice. Yet this very omission affords an opportunity to inform our readers something of this gentleman, that they may judge what his fellow-citizens thought of him one hundred years ago.

A very extended notice of his career could be prepared from the material at hand. This is judged to be unnecessary. A life of which so much is known and on the record, is quite independent of the decoration of a post-obituary.

A true pedigree, if not a very extended one, is a thing not to be despised, and in attempting to tell of Potter's history, it is proper to trace him from the start, to show that his connections have occupied first-rate position in the great Pennsylvania, outside of the three original counties. That his family have furnished two other General Potters, one United States senator, a governor of Pennsylvania, several members of Congress, law Judges, and representatives in the State Legislature. The General served with great acceptance in civil and military positions; in private life, one of the most enterprising and successful of all our Revolutionary officers. A stout, broad-shouldered, plucky, active man, five feet nine inches in height, of dark complexion, an excellent representative of the Scotch-Irish race. His judgment and energy overcame the want of education. What he had of that was unusually primitive.

John Potter and wife, the parents of General Potter, came to America with John Hamilton and Isabella Potter-Hamilton, a sister of Mr. Potter, in 1741, "aboard ye good ship Dunnegall," landing at Newcastle, Delaware, in September of that year. Mrs. Potter-Hamilton and a child died, and were buried there. She left only one child, Katherine Hamilton, who married in 1760 General James Chambers, of "Loudon," Franklin County. He first met his "Dear Kitty" at "Sheriff" Potter's, in the "neighborhood of Shippen's farm," now Shippensburg. Potter was established in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, in 1746. Upon the formation of the county he was appointed its first sheriff. His commission was October,
1750; his second commission, 1754. This brings us to the James Potter of whom "so little is known".

He was born on "the bank of the river Foyle, Tyrone, Ireland, in" 1729, and was about twelve years of age when his father landed at Newcastle. At twenty-five years of age he was a lieutenant in a border militia company; in 1755 he was captain of a company in the victorious Kittanning campaign under Armstrong, and ever after this the general and he were attached friends. In 1763 and '64, he was in active service as a major and lieutenant-colonel. During all this busy period of his life he was a successful farmer.

He was prominent in the political agitation consequent upon the dispute with the mother country. There was no meeting of the patriotic inhabitants of the then large county of Northumberland, held without his presence and led by his advice. He was a colonel in 1775. Appointed a brigadier-general April 5, 1777,1 with John Armstrong as first; John Cadwalader, second; Samuel Meredith, fourth. In 1781, Vice-President of the State. In 1782, commissioned a major-general. In 1784, one of the council of Censors, and was within a few votes of defeating for President the most distinguished man in the State, John Dickinson. He served in the field in his military capacity through the whole Revolution,

1 The services of General Potter in the Pennsylvania campaign of 1777 were very distinguished. With the troops under his command in the counties of Philadelphia, Chester, and Delaware, he obtained for Washington important information regarding the movements of the enemy, and with great vigilance gave all the annoyance possible to the foraging parties that were sent out of Philadelphia.

On the 11th of December, while the army under Washington were on their march to Valley Forge, after a portion of it had crossed the Schuylkill at Matson's Ford, it was found that the enemy under Cornwallis were in force on the other side. "They were met," writes Washington, "by General Potter, with part of the Pennsylvania militia, who behaved with great bravery, and gave them every possible opposition till he was obliged to retreat from their superior numbers." In the spring of 1778. Washington wrote from Valley Forge, "If the state of General Potter's affairs will admit of returning to the army, I shall be exceedingly glad to see him, as his activity and vigilance have been much wanted during the winter."—Ed.
and was trusted by all its leaders, Washington, Greene, Pickering, Mifflin, and his fellow-brigadiers. His residence was in Penn’s Valley in the present Centre County, from 1772 to the time of his death, in November, 1789, at which moment he was one of the associate or bench of justices of Northumberland County. He left one of the most extensive and valuable estates in Pennsylvania.

Much more could be said of this Pennsylvania militia-man, but it is not necessary to encumber this brief sketch with a record, which has been so faithfully published by the State in the Colonial Records, and the Pennsylvania Archives by Hazard, and as it continues to be by Linn & Egle. His remains rest in the venerable and picturesque burial ground at Brown’s Mill, about ten miles south of Chambersburg, in Franklin County.

General Potter was married twice: first wife, Elizabeth Catheart, of Philadelphia, by whom a daughter—
1. Elizabeth C. Potter, married James Poe, of Franklin County.

Second wife, Mrs. Mary Patterson, of Mifflin County, by whom—
3. Mary Potter, married George Riddles—secondly, William McClelland, of Northumberland County.
4. John Potter, died unmarried.
5. Martha Potter, married Andrew Gregg (U. S. Senator), of Centre County.

HARRISBURG, 1877.