

CHAPTER XXV.

THE HAMILTONS OF QUEENSTON, KINGSTON AND HAMILTON.

THE most prominent man in Upper Canada more than a century ago was the Honorable Robert Hamilton. The Hamilton family was a numerous race whose ancestors came from Scotland. Energetic and ambitious they had unbounded influence in their day. They were among the most successful men of their time, amassing great wealth in their varied undertakings. They could justly lay claim to almost royal ancestry. Their ancestor was Alexander Hamilton of Silverthorne Hill, whose tenth descendant was John Hamilton, Minister of Bolton, born in 1714 and died in 1797. His wife was Jane Wright, and had by her three sons and one daughter.

The eldest son of the Minister of Bolton was Honorable Robert Hamilton of Queenston, Upper Canada, who died in 1809. He is described as a merchant of Niagara, member of the Land Board at that place, member also of the first Executive Council of Upper Canada in 1791, and first Judge of the District of Nassau, extending from the River Trent on the Bay of Quinte to Long Point on Lake Erie. During the American Revolution Mr. Hamilton, in partnership with Richard Cartwright, established a store on Carlton Island near the military post which was known as Fort Haldimand, carrying on an extensive trade with the Indians. After the war closed Mr. Hamilton removed to Queenston and was appointed one of the local judges, having Lieut.-Colonel John Butler as his colleague on the bench.

Captain Patrick Campbell, who visited Niagara in December, 1790, wrote: "Mr. Robert Hamilton, a gentleman of the first rank and property in the neighborhood, and one of the Governor's Council, came also to wait on me and invite me to his house, an honor I readily embraced. He and Mrs. Hamilton were so very obliging as to go along with me in their oak sled to see the grand Falls of Niagara."

When the Duke of Kent, the ancestor of our present King, visited Niagara Falls, he and his party lunched at Mr. Hamilton's on their way back, where the Indians performed a war dance.

The Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt wrote in 1795: "Mr. Ham-