

favourite horseback exercise. Thenceforward he resided chiefly at a country seat on the East River, just beyond what were then the City limits. Here Washington Irving composed the history of Astoria; here the project for the gift to the City of an "Astor Library," to be permanently open to the public, was conceived; and here, looking out upon the movement of the ships that passed by Long Island Sound, whose suggestions and associations must have been a perpetual interest and inspiration, his life faded peacefully away.

Mr. Astor's portrait expresses his character with unmistakable distinctness. It is a face that speaks of method and penetration and lucidity; of a reserved and meditative habit; of patient courage and masterful resolve; of forethought and suggestiveness and common sense—precisely the qualities expressed throughout his despatches to his agents. He was a man intense in action, who early divined the astute philosophy that the secret of success is concentration; that ingenuity often brings the improbable to pass; that amid the emergencies of this haphazard world, the ultimate reliance, under Providence, is oneself; that whoever attempts great things without believing in his own power to achieve, is certain to fail. He



was blessed with the excellent nervous system of one who has sprung fresh from the people, and abstemiousness and sobriety preserved to him a reserve of staying power that sustained him through many troubles and sorrows. He was wont to say jestingly that an ounce of practice is better than an ocean of theory, and professed the practical man's scorn of visionary experiments. None knew better how to make the utmost of opportunity, or to adapt the means to the end. In a period of extraordinary financial expansion and development, and the floating of promiscuous securities and the promoting of many doubtful ventures, he was a man of inflexible truth and probity. He never asked advice, believing his own judgment to be as reliable as his neighbours', and content to make his own mistakes rather than theirs. In the midst of indefatigable industry, a vein of sentimental sadness, of which his private papers give repeated indication, tinged his thoughts with a strange and retrospective pathos. Perhaps this was but a trace of the reverie of one who, grown meditative as the shadows lengthen, and passing the joys and loves and triumphs of a lifetime in review, catches beneath a thousand memories their inevitable undertone of tears.

Among the souvenirs I possess of my great-grandfather are two medals—one