

THOMAS COLLINS.

"On Sunday, March 29th, 1789, at his seat at Belmont, near the village of Duck Creek Cross-Roads, in the county of Kent, departed this life Thomas Collins, Esquire, President, Captain-General, Governor, and Commander-in-Chief of the State of Delaware, aged fifty-seven years; and on Tuesday, the 31st, his remains were respectfully inhumed in an ancient place of sepulture belonging to his family, the pall being borne by our Representative in Congress, the Privy Council, and the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas, followed by a very numerous concourse of his afflicted and sympathizing fellow-citizens, where a discourse highly adapted to this melancholy occasion was delivered by the Rev. Mr. Roe, pastor of the united parishes of Christ Church and St. Peter's.

"Mr. Collins descended from English ancestors, who settled early in this country, and bestowed upon him all the learning that was to be acquired in those times; and though he never enjoyed the benefits of a liberal or collegiate education, yet a thirst after knowledge, joined to a strong natural and masculine understanding, assisted by an intense application to business, sufficiently atoned for that want, and counterbalanced that fortuitous desideratum. The easy affability of his temper, added to a benevolence of soul, soon endeared him to his countrymen, and secured the affections of the majority of his fellow-citizens, by whose suffrages he was elected to the office of High Sheriff of Kent County, a post at that early period of considerable honor and advantage, in the execution of which, for the term of nearly four years, he acquitted himself with zeal, reputation, and integrity, to the entire satisfaction of his constituents. After the expiration of that term, he was successively delegated to the important trust of a legislator until the late memorable Revolution.

"Upon the general dissolution of the old government in 1776, he was appointed one of the Council of Safety for the Delaware State, the only executive power then in being, and afterwards was chosen a member of the convention for the purpose of framing a new constitution, under the authority and auspices of Congress. His next appointments were to the chief command of one of the first regiments of militia and military treasurer for the State. On the promotion of the late Governor Rodney to the rank of a major-general, Mr. Collins succeeded to the command of the county brigade. In the beginning of the year 1777 General Collins headed his native militia to the camp and head-quarters at Morristown, New Jersey, and endured, in common with his fellow-soldiers, all the fatigue and hardship of that memorable campaign. During the same year, when the troops under the conduct of General Sir William Howe passed through the upper part of New Castle County, he commanded a small army of observation and picket on the lines of the Maryland and Delaware States, and was opposed as a covering corps against the Germans, under Lieutenant-General the Baron Knyphausen, and so hung upon

their flank and rear that he effectually secured the country below from the ravages of these mercenary marauders; all these military services being performed at his own private cost, without any charge or expense to the government.

“He was successively elected to the House of General Assembly and the Legislative Council, of which last he was chosen Speaker, and continued as such until removed to the office of Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas; and from thence, as a full and complete remuneration for his many past faithful services, he was finally, and by the unanimous voice of both Houses of Assembly, exalted to the presidency and supreme command of the State of Delaware. In this last eminent situation on this pinnacle of civil preferment he lived without pride, governed with ability, abstracted from oppression, and died with composure and resignation, beloved, regretted, and lamented by all honest men. The urbanity of his soul was manifested in the whole tenor of his actions,—not only benevolent in theory, but abundantly beneficent in practice,—his private bounties keeping pace with his public donations. As a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, he evidenced the sincerity of his attachment to that denomination of Christians in [the] building St. Peter’s Church, at Duck Creek, towards which he was the chief and principal contributor. Yet notwithstanding his predilection to the Church of England and its professors, the catholicism of his sentiments embraced all mankind in the affectionate circle of charity and fraternal regard. Though his salary as commander-in-chief was not considerable, yet he resigned the emoluments arising from marriage and tavern licenses (being part of that salary), equal to the yearly interest of nine or ten thousand pounds, to the use of the State, to be applied to such public and benevolent purposes as the Legislature should think proper. This generous abdication of lucre is unprecedented among our American governors, and was never surpassed but in the conduct of our late worthy general and commander-in-chief—the most illustrious President of the United States.

“Rest, then, in the bosom of everlasting peace, thou upright governor, disinterested patriot and statesman,—thou kind husband, thou most affectionate, indulgent father and gentle master; and while thy loss is lamented, in all the bitterness of human anguish, by a youthful son and three amiable daughters, let them wipe off the tear of filial regard and dry the torrent of unutterable sorrow, and in consolation remember that the beloved parent, who now sleeps in the dust, and whose kind indulgences they shall never again experience, has by a series of industrious pursuits, governed by the strictest rules of honor and probity, left them in possession of a patrimony superior to their wants and beyond the reach of adversity.”—From the *Delaware Gazette*, a paper published at Wilmington, Delaware, vol. iv. No. 202, Saturday, May 2d, 1789.