

CHAPTER VIII.

The reader will perceive by the correspondence in the preceding chapter, that provision had been made, although tardily, to succor Schoharie. Many well disposed citizens in McDonald's descent through the southern settlements, seeing no assistance at hand, anxious for the safety of their families and property, accepted his offered protection of royalty—while not a few joined in the wake of the tory chief, to swell his already formidable numbers. In his approach to the more thickly settled parts of Schoharie, he could have numbered several hundred followers—Indians and loyalists—armed with various weapons, which number rumor, with her many tongues, greatly multiplied. It is not surprising that the comparatively small body of militia assembled at the house of John Becker—a part of which house is now standing—felt themselves too weak to oppose their enemies unaided. They, however, began barricading the windows and doors of this stone dwelling; and deputed two of their number, Vrooman and Swart, to go to Albany for assistance.

Henry Hager, of North Blenheim, late a judge of Schoharie county, very kindly furnished the author with a manuscript of some facts relating to Schoharie. He states that McDonald reached the river above Brakabeen, on Sunday the 10th of August, and “marched up and down the road, stationing guards, &c.” As the enemy were over-running the valley, Henry Hager, grandfather of my informant, then over 70 years old, was anxious to inform the *patriot* party below of the invader's progress and espionage along the valley. There was no whig near with

whom he could consult—indeed the Hager family was the only one, for a distance of several miles, that had not either already joined the enemy's standard, or accepted of his proffered protection: he therefore started to do the errand himself, a distance of nearly nine miles. Leaving home about sun-down, he had proceeded but a short distance when he was brought to a stand by an emissary of royalty; who demanded where he was going, his business, etc. His good judgment readily prompting a reply, he feigned business with a blacksmith living below. The sprig of his majesty informed him that the man he wished to see was in a house near by. He was permitted to enter and do his errand, which was to order some small job. We suppose the interview between Mr. Hager and Vulcan to have been on Sunday: the latter told him he would do his work, and that he might call for it as early as he pleased next morning. Leaving the infected house, Hager again encountered the man endowed with brief authority, who granted him permission to return home.

It was nearly dark when the aged patriot left the tory sentinel. Proceeding a few hundred yards on his way home, until out of sight of the enemy, he went down a bank of the river which he forded, and by a circuitous route, reached the *Stone House* in safety and communicated the approach of the invaders. Capt. Jacob Hager, his son, was there at the time. He had returned with a party of Schoharie militia from the northern army but a few days before, where he had distinguished himself in several hazardous enterprises, transporting cannon to Fort Edward, etc. On Monday morning Col. Vrooman, fearing Swart and his comrade might not reach Albany in season to obtain assistance, sent Capt. Hager and Henry Becker on the same errand; with instructions to keep the woods whenever there was danger of meeting with detention.

At this juncture of their proceedings, in the afternoon of the day on which Hager and Becker had left, Col. John Harper—whose duty the reader will remember, required him to look to the protection of Schoharie—arrived, to consult with Col. Vrooman and the Whigs there assembled, on the best course to be adopted un-

der the circumstances. It was readily agreed that the friends of equal rights assembled, or likely to be in season, were too few to oppose successfully McDonald's progress. No time was to be lost, as it was expected the band of outlaws would reach that vicinity on the following day: in order, therefore, to get aid in season to be of service, it was thought advisable for a messenger to proceed immediately to Albany on horseback. Col. Harper volunteered his services, and although the day was far spent, he mounted and set forward. Knowing that it would be extremely hazardous to pursue his journey in the night, he rode about five miles and put up at a public house then kept by John I. Lawyer, mentioned in Chap. III. of this work: in the latter part of the war his son, Jacob Lawyer, Jr. was its host. This ancient inn stood near the old Lutheran parsonage. The building is still standing on the premises of Chester Lasell—*Mrs. W. G. Michaels.*

On the night Col. Harper staid at Lawyer's, there was quite a gathering of Indians and tories, at the tavern known in those days as, *The Brick House at the Forks of the Road*,* distant from the former inn about a mile and a quarter. The object of this meeting of genial spirits, was, no doubt, to receive and communicate intelligence from and to the royalist party above, and also to learn tidings from such as kept an eye on the movements at Lawyer's tavern. A whig (George Warner, Jr. of Cobleskill) who was a watchman secreted with others that night, along the fences south of the *Brick House*, to note the motions of the enemy, assured the author that he saw individuals all night passing and re-passing—whom he supposed communicating with the McDonald party.

Col. Harper, having secured his horse and taken supper, retired early to an upper room, and locked the door, but did not think it prudent to undress. Some time in the evening, a party from the *Brick House* arrived at Lawyer's. The object of their visit being made known to the landlord, which was to get Harper to accom-

* This house, now owned and occupied by Cornelius Vrooman, stood in the forks of the old Albany and Schenectada roads. It was a two story dwelling at the period of which I am speaking.

pany them to their rendezvous, he expostulated with them for intruding upon the rest of his guest, but to no purpose, for *see him they would*. Knowing that he was near an infected district, Col. Harper had taken the precaution to leave a light burning. Hearing an unusual noise below, he seized his pistols and stepped to the door, and while listening to learn the cause of his disturbance, he overheard the suppressed but earnest voice of the landlord on the stairs, urging the intruders not to ascend. Said he—"For God's sake, gentlemen, desist! for I tell you he is a soldier, terribly armed, and some of you must die before he will be taken!" Expostulation was in vain, and the landlord was thrust aside by the tory party, which rapped at the door of his guest. With pistol in hand he opened it; threatening death to the first man who should step over its threshold. The intruders then made known to him the object of the visit, and the intrepid Harper, with a pistol in each hand, replied, "I will be there in the morning, but attempt to take me there to-night at your peril!" Seeing him thus armed, and knowing from the flash of his eye that his threat would be executed, the party quailed before him and withdrew. He again locked his door, and was not afterwards disturbed.

Col. Harper started next morning, about 8 o'clock, armed as on the night previous, with a sword and brace of pistols. Crossing Foxes creek bridge, which stood where the present bridge now stands, without any opposition, (some writer has erroneously stated that a Tory sentinel was on the bridge) he rode up to Mann's tavern, as I have been credibly informed by an eye-witness,* fastened his horse, and went in. He was in the house but a few minutes, came out, remounted, and started off on the Schenectada road, via. Duaneburgh, for Albany. He rode a small black mare, with a white stripe in the forehead, which started from the inn up-

*David Warner, of Cobleskill. At the time alluded to, he states that he was a lad about ten years of age; that he then boarded with Capt. Mann's father, and went to school near Foxes creek; that several boys, himself with the rest, had assembled after breakfast near the tavern to go to school. The morning was unusually pleasant. It was not usual, at that period, to see a stranger, with holsters, upon his saddle. Mr. W. also saw Col. Harper return next day with cavalry.

on a pace, struck a gallop near the top of the hill, and soon bore the rider out of sight. He had disappeared but a few minutes, before five Indians arrived at Mann's, and entered the cellar kitchen, followed by the boys, who were still at play in the street. Within half an hour, two of Captain Mann's horses, a black and a roan, were brought before the door, and two Indians, Seth's Henry,* a tall, dark Schoharie chief, sometimes familiarly called Set, or Sethen Henry, and David, a small Indian, before noticed, mounted them, and started at a full gallop on the road Col. Harper had taken. The Indians, in pursuit were armed only with knives and tomahawks.



COLONEL HARPER CONFRONTING THE INDIANS.

For a distance of several miles, at that period, there was scarcely a house on the old Duaneburgh road. As Col. Harper drew near Righter's place, he discovered that he was pursued. Passing over a knoll, or turn in the road, which hid him from his follow-

*The name of this Indian's father was Seth, and his own Henry; he was known in the war by the name in the context.

ers, he dismounted, drew his sword from its scabbard, and stuck the point of it in a dry stump before him, and holding a pistol in each hand, ready cocked, he leaned back against his horse, and awaited the approach of the Indians, the tallest of whom he had already recognized. Riding at a rapid rate, and before they were aware of their proximity, they drew very near the object of their pursuit. The instant they saw him, they reined up, within reach of his pistols. Not choosing to risk a shot, he exclaimed in a voice and manner that carried terror to their savage breasts—*“Stop you villains—face about and be off this instant, or these bullets shall whistle through your hearts.”* The Indians, seeing him thus armed, dared not advance, and wheeling their horses, sullenly withdrew. It is said, however, that Set dogged him, at a respectful distance, a good part of the way to Albany. I have been enabled to be thus circumstantial, from having conversed with several individuals who received from Col. Harper's own mouth the account of his pursuit soon after its occurrence, whose statements do not vary in anything material.

Col. Harper's arrival in Albany, on Tuesday, August 12th, is thus noticed in the Journal of the Council of Safety the following day. Christopher Fiero stated to that body that one Du Boise, who left Albany the evening before, reported “That every road from Schoharie is obstructed and filled up by the tories there; that Col. John Harper had escaped from thence, and that Col. Vrooman, with about twenty-five whigs, had fortified themselves in a house there.” Under the same date on the Council's Journal, I find the copy of a letter written by that body, to Col. Pawling, on the subject of Gov. Clinton's letters, previously inserted, which reads as follows :

“Sir—We enclose you two letters received from the Governor, by which it appears that he is very anxious to have the party detached for Schoharie. We have received information that Col. Vrooman, with a party of whigs, is besieged there by the tories.

“It is necessary that he should be relieved immediately. You will therefore be pleased to issue your orders this night for two hundred drafts to be made from your regiment; after which you will, agreeably to the Governor's directions, repair to this place,

and confer with the Council about the most practicable means of executing your plan.

"We are extremely sorry that so much precious time has already been lost by the miscarriage of your letter." [The above letter was signed by the President and forwarded by a light-horseman; after which the Council] "Resolved, That Gen. Scott, R. R. Livingston, and Maj. Tappan, be a committee to assist Col. Pawling in executing the secret expedition,"

Col. Harper, unadvised of the proceedings of Gov. Clinton and the Council, on his arrival in Albany, applied either to the Albany committee, or Col. Van Schaick, then in command of that military station—or, what is quite likely, to both—for assistance; and a small body of cavalry was granted him. The company consisted in rank and file of twenty-eight stout looking men.* They were well-clad, wore caps, and made a fine military appearance. By whom they were commanded, the author has been unable satisfactorily to learn. The old citizens of Schoharie all assert that he was a Frenchman, and spoke imperfect English. The party, conducted by Col. Harper, left Albany in the evening, and riding a good part of the night, arrived in Schoharie early on Wednesday. One of the party had a trumpet, the first, probably, ever heard echoing among the mountains of Schoharie—an occasional blast of which is said to have carried terror to the hearts of the *evil doers*, and produced an effect equal to that of *an army with banners*.

On arriving at the *brick house*, a halt was ordered. Mine host hearing the warlike sound of the trumpet while it was yet a little way off, fancying no doubt that he heard his own death knell in every blast, fled to a barrack† of wheat on his premises, where he snugly ensconced himself beneath its sheaves; thinking, that

* Col. Stone, who, in the *Life of Brant*, (see chapters 14 and 16, vol. 1,) has adopted Campbell's erroneous date of this transaction, placing it in 1778, gives the name of Capt. Woodbake as the commanding officer of the party. The Schoharie people say that was not the commandant's name. Stone also puts down their number at 200: but six or eight persons still living in different parts of the county who counted them, state their number to have been only twenty-eight.

† The word *barrack* is both German and Dutch. In the Schoharie and

"The man who lives to run away,
May live to fight another day."

The commandant of the little squadron assumed a terrifying aspect, as, half drawing his sword, and rising in his stirrups, he demanded of Mrs. Mann, who had been summoned to the door for the purpose, in imperfect English, the whereabouts of her husband. The good woman, who should not at that time have been so frightened as to turn deadly pale, assured the speaker she could not inform him. In fact she did not herself know. The premises of the tory were then strictly searched for his person, even to the barrack in which he was concealed: and several troopers ran their swords down into the wheat sheaves beneath which he lay, without discovering him.

A small number of men who were found at the brick house, with some exceptions, submitted to the authority of the American officers, and destroyed their *royal protections*, with the promise of pardon for accepting them. A few who had been very active among the tories were however arrested, among whom was the malicious Indian, David; who had gained notoriety by his attempt on the life of Chairman Ball—his pursuit of Col. Harper, and the aid he had rendered the British cause in the capacity of messenger—he having just arrived from the camp of McDonald, when arrested. The troop then proceeded to the public house of Jacob

Mohawk valleys, much hay and grain was formerly deposited in barracks—indeed, such depositaries are considerably used there at the present day. They are commonly made by erecting four upright poles or posts, so as to form a square, firmly set in the ground, or held at equal distances by timbers framed into them above the ground. The upper part of the posts is perforated with holes, and a roof, made of a quadrangular form, terminating in a vertex, rests upon wood or iron pins thrust through those holes. The roof is usually constructed by framing two timbers, crossing at right angles, and secured by side pieces, into which are framed four upright poles, firmly secured at the apex above. The roof is sometimes boarded and shingled, but usually thatched. When a barrack is to be filled, the roof is raised to the top of the corner posts, and the hay or grain in the sheaf is stacked beneath it: and as the contents are removed the roof is let down. Some barracks have a floor, and are so constructed as to last many years, subserving most of the purposes of a barn. They are generally built with four corners, but sometimes with more. Soldiers' huts are, by the French, also called *barracks*.

Snyder, a whig living a little distance east of Mann's to obtain refreshments; in the mean time the news of Col. Harper's arrival from Albany with troops having *wonderful music*, spread up and down the valleys of Foxes creek and Schoharie, with almost lightning rapidity. Leaving their work unfinished, the friends of *Liberty* began to assemble, and many good citizens who had only been waiting to see a prospect of succor in case they espoused their country's cause, now did so cheerly. Stone's account of there having been a large body of tories, with scarlet patches on their hats assembled at Capt. Mann's, to whom that officer was making a speech on the arrival of Col. Harper and his party, needs authentication.

On the evening of the day on which Col. Harper left the *Stone House* to obtain assistance, McDonald and his followers descended the river to the residence of Swart, as stated in his diary, where they encamped over night; taking quiet possession of the premises, and helping themselves bountifully to the best the house afforded.

As soon as the steeds of the cavalry were rested, and themselves refreshed, quite a party of militia variously armed having already assembled, preparations were made to advance and meet the enemy, about six miles distant. The militia, some of whom were mounted and others not, were officered by Col. Harper for the occasion, and accompanied the cavalry. David, the Indian captive, was fastened by a cord around his wrist, to a fellow prisoner. The little army a few hours after its arrival in the valley, moved up the river, at the inspiring sound of the trumpet, which laughed among the *encrinital* and *trilobital* hills—and danced far away in the distance. Those who had been the most boisterous for King George, were, as if by magic, all converted into *Congress-men*; after hearing the voice of the vociferous Frenchman, and that of his musician speaking to his distant auditors with a *brazen tongue*. No musician ever rendered his country more evident essential service, unless perchance he was rivaled by *Anthony Van Corlear*, of Knickerbocker memory. At times the militia who were on foot, were obliged to take a

dog trot to keep up with the excited commander of cavalry, while the sweat of the brow as it coursed adown their sunburnt cheeks, denoted their blood to be at fever heat.

After proceeding about five miles, as the troops were passing an alder swamp, in Hartman's dorf, the prisoner David, watching a favorable opportunity, slipped the cord from his arm and ran into it. The party were halted, ordered to surround the marsh, and shoot down the captive if he attempted to escape. The mounted militia who knew the ground, led the cavalry round the swamp; and the Indian being observed skulking from tree to tree, and just ready to emerge in the direction of the river, was instantly brought down by a pistol shot in the back, with the exclamation, "*Ganno! ganno!*" The commanding officer, impatient at the delay, ordered one of the militia men to advance and shoot him. He was then lying partly upon his side, his head was resting upon his hand, and his elbow upon the ground, while his eye calmly surveyed his foes. George Shell, of Foxes creek, (who sometime after bravely assisted in the defence of Major Becker's house,) advanced from the ranks, presented his old fire-lock and attempted to fire. *Click, click, click*, said the old rusty lock—while its antiquated cylinder remained cold and silent. "*Tam te Meleshee guns!*" exclaimed the officer; as, riding forward, he snapped one of his own pistols, which missed fire, and ordered his troopers to shoot him. A pistol snapped by the man next the captain also missed fire, but that in the hand of his follower exploded, sending a bullet through the Indian's head. As those pistols were snapped, the Indian turned round to avoid seeing them. He was left in his gore, and the party resumed their march. This Indian was the first person killed in the Schoharie settlements in the Revolution; and I have been thus particular in detailing the circumstances attending his death, because the manner of it as related in the *Life of Brant*, where he is misnamed *Peter Nickus*, is so very far from the truth as stated by several eye witnesses.*

* Jacob Becker, Jacob Enders, and George Warner, who were militia men present.

David Ogeyonda, although a notorious offender, would not have been slain had he not attempted to escape while a prisoner. The story of his having been "inhumanly hacked to pieces" by the cavalry, *is not true*. It is a well-known characteristic of the Indian, that whoever does an injury to one of his blood, incurs his hatred and revenge. This same Indian had several sons, who, knowing all the circumstances attending their father's death, not only remained friendly to the American cause, but Yon, probably the oldest, rendered the citizens of Schoharie no little service during the war.

On arriving at the Stone House, a ladder was raised against it, and the prisoners taken at Mann's were compelled to mount upon the roof, which was not very steep, when the ladder was removed, and they were placed in temporary and somewhat novel confinement. A squaw among them, is said to have rendered the situation of a prisoner, named Weaver, so uncomfortable, that he requested Jacob Enders to remove her.

The party had been at Middleburgh but a short time, when a woman by the name of Staats, known in the valley by the unpoetic cognomen of *Rya's Pup*, was seen approaching the Stone House in the direction of the river, nearly half a mile distant. She halted soon after being discovered as if hesitating about advancing, when the officer of cavalry beckoned to her to come forward; upon which she faced about and ran the other way. Two troopers were sent in pursuit, and captured her while fording the river; and each seizing a hand they turned their horses and rode back to the house, to the great amusement of its inmates, and discomfiture of the prisoner who was almost—*out of breath*. After panting a while, she was enabled to answer the interrogatories of the American officers. She said she had just come from the camp of McDonald—that his numbers were very great—and that he was then preparing to march down and capture the Stone House and its inmates.—*George Warner and Jacob Enders*.

On receiving this information, the troops were sent to collect several fences to aid in throwing up a temporary breastwork around the house, that they might be the better able to repel an

attack. After waiting sometime, however, for the appearance of the enemy, it was thought advisable by the Americans who were somewhat respectable in numbers, to proceed to meet him. On arriving near Swart's place, two miles distant from the Stone House, it was ascertained that the foes were on the retreat up the valley; and it was only by a rapid movement of the mounted troops that they were overtaken at the *Flockey*.* At this place Adam Crysler resided before the war—it is now the residence of Samuel Lawyer. The house which is situated at the upper end of Vrooman's land, is pleasantly located upon a bank which slopes to the road. A brook or mill stream runs at the base of the bank near the road, between which and the river was formerly a small swamp. As the Americans drew near, they found McDonald had made a stand on the lawn in front of the house, prepared to give them a warm reception. A few shots only were exchanged, when the cavalry, at a long and terrifying blast of the *trumpet*, dashed impetuously among the Indians and tories; who, panic struck, took to their heels and fled up the river. They were pursued but a short distance as the ground above was unfavorable for cavalry; besides, it was nearly dark, and the latter were much fatigued, having rode about forty-five miles since the evening before. David Wirt, lieutenant of the cavalry, was killed in this encounter, and two privates wounded, one Rose, mortally—who died three days after. Angelica, a daughter of Col. Vrooman, assured the writer in 1837, that she furnished the winding sheet for Lieut. Wirt—who was the first man that fell in Schoharie defending the principles of a free government. Wirt was shot as was afterwards learned, by one Shafer, a royalist. What loss the enemy sustained in this brush is unknown, few, however, chose to stay long enough to be killed. The cavalry returned to the Stone House and encamped for the night. As it was then supposed that madam Staats had been sent down by McDonald to afford him an opportunity to escape, she was sought for on the return of the Americans, but had *stept out*.—*Mattice Ball, Jacob Van Dyck and others.*

* The name for this spot as known among the old inhabitants, and doubtless signified, *ground near a swamp*.

The enemy retreated up the river through Brakabeen, and by way of the Susquehanna laid their course for Niagara. Judge Hager states, that upwards of twenty male citizens went off from Vrooman's land, Brakabeen, and Clyberg (Clay hill,) with the enemy; among whom were Adam Crysler, Joseph Brown, several of the Boucks, Beckers, Keyzers, Mattices, Freemires, William Zimmer, one of the Schoharie committee, one Shafer and one Kneiskern. He also adds, that while the enemy remained in Schoharie, *they doubtless lived well, as they were in a land of plenty.*

On the return of the light horse, as nothing appeared to criminate the father of Capt. Mann, who was inoffensive and considerably advanced in life, he was suffered to remain at liberty—and as the title to the *brick house* and valuable farm adjoining is said to have been vested in *him* and not his son, it was never confiscated to the republic.

Not long after the cavalry and militia had proceeded up the valley, Capt. Mann came down from his hiding place, crossed the river below the mouth of Fox's creek, and secreted himself under the Karighondontee mountain, at a place where a small stream of water has cut a ravine. The next day, David Warner, the lad before mentioned, and John Snyder, with a basket of food, went in pursuit of him. They crossed the river and followed up the ravine before named, just above which, seated in a cavity of the rock, they found the object of search, *smoking a pipe and fasting*; with an apology for a fire, a few brands smoldering in the recess. Mann had very wisely taken with him from home a tinder box and matches, as the chosen place of secretion was infested by *rattle-snakes*; and it being usually damp, was a cold place at night even in midsummer. The little nook in which Mann was found by his friends, is a familiar one to the Schoharie geologists, who have been there to obtain *strontian*, especially if they ever chanced to be there, as the writer once did, in a very heavy shower. The ravine alluded to, affords the geologist some of the most beautiful deposits of *fossil moss* found in Schoharie county.

When Mann heard his friends approaching, his fearful apprehension was aroused, but on hearing their familiar voices calling him by name, he readily discovered himself. From his mountain retreat, he shortly after went to Kneiskern's dorf, several miles further down the river, where he was concealed by friends until fall; at which time, he surrendered himself to the military authority established in the valley, by which he was transferred to Albany for trial. The following paper will show the time when Capt. Mann became a prisoner.

"Schoharie, Dec. 8th, 1777.

Gentlemen of the committee:—We have taken it upon us to let George Mann come in, by a sufficient bail-bond, which we thought he could not get; but since he did, we would not affront the people, and took it; and if you think that it is not sufficient, let me know it, for I am ready now to act against the *tories* to the utmost point which is in my power, if the other committee are willing to join: if not, I will no longer be a committee man.

"Gentlemen, I beg one favor of you, which is, to give me intelligence in what form we are to act with the tories now: so no more at present.

"I remain, sirs,

"Your friend and well wisher,
"JOHANNES BALL."

Owing to the great influence and respectability of his whig relatives and neighbors, Mann's trial was kept off until the war closed—when, a very liberal policy having been adopted toward those who had committed no very flagrant act, he was set at liberty, and returned home to the bosom of his family and the quiet possession of his property. From the fact that he surrendered himself a prisoner, instead of trying to flee to Canada, there can remain no doubt but that his views had undergone a change in regard to what course he should from the beginning have adopted. He had early, beyond a doubt, been warmly solicited by the friends of royalty, and the most flattering inducements, to advance their cause. But a life of repentance showed his error in judgment to have been of the *head* and not the *heart*,—while his firm and willing support ever after of the newly established order of things, fully atoned for his single offence.

From a long and intimate personal acquaintance with the descendants and other relatives of Capt. George Mann, I express

an opinion without fear of contradiction, that they are as patriotic citizens and as firm and consistent supporters of the federal constitution, as an equal number of men found in any other part of the American union.

The command of Capt. Mann's company, after his disappearance, was given to his lieutenant, Christian Sturbrach.

Some individuals in the Schoharie settlements who had been persuaded to accept of kingly protection under McDonald, when the prospects of the colonies looked to them most gloomy, soon after his defeat and hasty flight, found means, in the confusion that ensued, to return home and become the supporters of the federal compact, while others followed his fortunes to Canada to await the speedy triumph of the British arms, when they expected to return and enjoy not only their own, but the confiscated property of their whig neighbors.

Letters from Colonels Harper and Vrooman, dated August 20th, 1777, were received by the council of safety, as appears by the journal of that body, and transmitted on the 29th to his excellency the governor, recommending him to provide five hundred troops—one hundred of whom to be riflemen—to protect the frontiers of Albany and Tryon counties: and under the date of August 30th, I find entered upon the council's journal, the following letter:

"Schoharie, August 29th, 1777."

"Gentlemen—Since we put Capt. McDonald and his army to flight, I proceeded with some volunteers to Harpersfield, where we met many that had been forced by McDonald, and some of them much abused. Many others were in the woods, who were volunteers; and as we could not get hands on those that were active in the matter, I gave orders to all to make their appearance, when called on, at Schoharie, in order to give satisfaction to the authority for what they have done; and if they do not, that they are to be proclaimed traitors to the United States of America; which they readily agreed to, and further declare that they will use their best endeavors to bring in those that have been the cause of the present disturbance. I would, therefore, beg the honorable council of safety, that they would appoint proper persons to try those people, as there will be many that can witness to the proceedings of our enemy, and are not in ability to go abroad.

"From your most obedient, humble servant,

"JOHN HARPER, Colo.

"P. S. The people here are so confused that they do not know

how to proceed. I therefore would beg the favor of your honorable body to appoint such men as are strangers in these parts. "To the honorable, the council of safety, at Kingston."

The above letter was referred to a committee who reported on the same, September 1st, and the council ordered the following letter written to Col. Harper in reply, under that date—

"SIR—Your favor of the 28th of August last, was received and communicated to the council. They congratulate you on the success of our arms in that quarter, which must be doubly grateful to the brave inhabitants of Tryon county, whose virtuous exertions have so greatly contributed to it.

"The trial and punishment of those inhuman wretches who have combined with a savage foe to imbrue their hands in the blood of the innocent, demands a speedy attention. But while the council agree with you in the impropriety of removing them to any distance from the witnesses of their guilt, they can not consent, nor indeed are they empowered to institute any new court for the trial of such offences. These wicked parricides, however detestable, are nevertheless, by our free constitution, entitled to the inestimable privilege of a trial by their peers. A court of oyer and terminer will be held in your county [Albany county meant—Col. Harper was then a resident of Tryon county:] as soon as the present storm hath a little subsided. In the mean time the public officers of the county will exert themselves to detect, apprehend and secure the rebels.

"You will be pleased to communicate this letter to the committee of Schoharie, and to such other persons as may be concerned in it."

The following letter directed to "*The Commissioners for Sequestering for Tryon County*," and found among the papers of Col. Fisher, one of those commissioners, was from a member of the New York council of safety.

"Kingston, 31st August, 1777.

"Gent.—The enclosed resolution was thought necessary, that you may have it in your power to remove the women and children to such place (if even it should be to the enemy,) as you with Gen. Gates may think proper. Should you want any thing farther, you will please to let the House know. I wish you health and spirits in these trying times—which we will all get over; and that it may be soon, is the prayer of Gent, your most hum'e serv't.

"ABM. YATES, Jun."

[The resolution above alluded to]—"Resolved, That the commissioners for sequestering the effects of persons gone over to, or

who are with the enemy, be directed immediately to seize the effects of all such of the inhabitants of the counties of Albany and Tryon, as are gone over unto and joined the enemy, and to dispose thereof, agreeably to the resolutions in that case made and provided. That the said commissioners be empowered to remove the wives and children of such disaffected persons aforesaid from their habitations, to such place or places as they shall conceive best for the security of the state. That the said commissioners (if Gen. Gates shall think it advisable) be empowered to send all or any part of the said women and children to their said husbands."

On the council's journal under date of September 5th, I find the following entry—

The committee to whom was referred the petition of William Cameron and the other six prisoners brought by Maj. Wynkoop's party from Schoharie, delivered in their report, which was read, amended and agreed to, and is in the words following, to wit: 'That it appears from the said petition of William Cameron and the six prisoners brought with him as aforesaid, that they have, contrary to the resolutions of this state, aided and assisted the enemies thereof, by taking up arms against it, and therefore that they be confined in irons in one of the jail rooms at Kingston.' "

The above no doubt refers to the prisoners captured by the cavalry which accompanied Col. Harper to Schoharie. In alluding to this transaction, the Rev. Daniel Gros, in a work on Moral Philosophy, published about the year 1806, thus observes—

"Neither must it be forgotten that Lieut. Wallace, Wm. Wills and John Harper, who at that time of general distress on our western frontiers, when two hundred royalists and Indians had advanced into the heart of Schoharie, where treachery, assisted by the panic with which the inhabitants had been struck, had almost accomplished a total defection among them, with forty men, collected in a strong brick house, [stone house,] braved the enemy, hindered the defection from taking the intended effect; and afforded time for succor, by which the whole design of the enemy was defeated, and a valuable part of the frontier preserved."

On the 13th of August, the same day on which Col. Harper so opportunely led troops to Schoharie, Lt. Col. Schermerhorn proceeded to Norman's kill with a body of Schenectada militia, and forty Rhode Island troops,—in all about one hundred men,—to root up a tory gathering at that place. The expedition was very successful; David Springer, a noted royalist, was killed, thirteen

of his comrades captured, the remainder dispersed, and confidence again restored, where all was doubt and disaffection, without the loss of a single man on the part of the Americans.—*John J. Schemerhorn, son of Col. S. named in the context.*

In the fall of this year the following resolution was made public:

"ADVERTISEMENT.—This is to give notice to all persons, that the Committed of Schoharie have Resolved that nobody shall sell any thing to disaffected persons, and especially to such persons as buy and send it to the Scotch settlements [on the Charlotte and Susquehanna rivers;] and if any person does it, we shall seize it.

"By order of the committee,
"Schoharie, Nov. 24th, 1777. JOHANNES BALL, Ch'n."

The citizens of Schoharie were engaged in the fall in transporting provisions to the army under Gen. Gates, as the following will show.

"Half Moon, 18th Oct., 1777: Received of Jacob Cuyler, Esq., D. C. G. of P., [deputy commissary general of provisions] sixty-six barrels and two tierces of flour, containing 131c. 3qr. 8lb.—tare 1471, in seventeen wagons, which I promise to deliver to Dirck Swart, D. C. of P. at Stillwater, having signed two receipts of the same tenor and date.

JOHANNES BALL."

About twenty of Mr. Ball's neighbors were engaged with their teams in conveying the flour mentioned, as appears by another certificate in possession of the writer.

The following anecdote will serve to show the patriotism of the late *patroon*, Stephen Van Rensselaer. When the troops under Gen. Gates were opposing Burgoyne near Saratoga, Gen. Ten Broeck, who was the guardian of the patroon, then in his minority, visited some of his nephew's tenants near the Helleberg, and requested them to take all the provisions and grain they could spare (reserving a bare competency for their families,) to the American army. Several emptied their granaries, pork-barrels, cattle-stalls and pig-styes, and delivered their effects to the commissary department at Saratoga; not expecting any usual reward for so doing. Some time after, to their surprise, the young patroon invited those tenants to Albany and presented them with valid titles to their lands. Such was one of the many acts of that good

man, distinguished through life for his generosity and benevolence.*

When news first reached Schoharie that the British had been defeated at Bennington, the tories believed it a falsehood, told to excite their fear.

In the Revolution, that part of Sharon contained in the town of Seward, was called New Dorlach. It was a settlement of twenty-five or thirty families, only four of which, those of Jacob Hynds, William Hynds, Bastian France, and William Spurnheyer were active whigs. An old man named Hoffman, who took no part on either side, was, with his whig neighbors, made an object of savage cupidity. When St. Leger was besieging Fort Schuyler, about thirty individuals went from this settlement and united with his forces. When the seige was raised, they would gladly have returned to their homes, but were compelled to go to Canada; only two came back at that time, and they deserted in the night.—*Henry France, son of Bastian France.*

In the summer of 1777, when the several British commanders were proceeding towards Albany, some of its citizens, fearing the enemy would reach that city, secreted their money. A man named Ten Eyck buried a tin cup full of gold and silver in his cellar. After Burgoyne's surrender, search was made in vain for this treasure; one Jacob Radley dug the ground floor of the cellar all over without finding it, and the superstitious notion obtained in the family, that it had disappeared through supernatural agency. Here is a *spook story* for the credulous. The cup had been removed by *animam viventum*—a living soul.—*Judge Brown.*

The surrender of Burgoyne to Gen. Gates, which took place after the other British enterprises in New York had proved abortive, diffused joy and gladness throughout the union. In Albany, the event was celebrated with much display. An ox was roasted whole for the occasion. A pole passing through it and resting on crotches served as a spit, while a pair of cart wheels

* *Frederick Vogel*, to whom the facts were communicated after the war, by *Frederick Crounse*, one of the tenants alluded to in the context.

at the ends of the pole were used to turn it. A hole was dug in the ground, in which, beneath the ox a fire was made. While cooking, several pails of salt water were at hand, to be applied with swabs to keep the meat from burning. When roasted it was drawn through the principal streets, and the patriotic secured a good slice. A constant roar of artillery was kept up during the day.

The aged met with joy of heart,
The youthful met with glee;
While little children played their part,
The happiest of the three.

In the evening almost every dwelling in the city was illuminated. A pyramid of pine fagots which had been collected for the occasion, in the centre of which stood a liberty pole supporting on its top a barrel of tar, was set on fire on the hill near the city early in the evening. When the fire reached the tar, it not only illuminated every part of the city, but sent its ominous light for many miles around, presenting a most imposing effect.*

To show the enthusiasm that prevailed during the celebration above related, I insert the following incident. *Evert Yates*, of Montgomery county, who then lived in Albany, assured the writer that he, with several young friends, was without the city firing muskets in honor of the happy event. After firing a good many loud guns they returned home—when he found to his great surprise, his gun was half full! The party, as often as they had loaded, fired together; and he continued to load, not doubting

* The author is indebted to *Mrs. Henry France* of Seward, who was a resident of Albany at the time, for the manner in which this event was celebrated; and also for the following narrative: Her father, John Horne, was a butcher in Albany previous to the French war. In the early part of that war, he with six other Albanians, went up the Hudson in a batteau with merchandize to trade with the Indians for furs. Landing at some place and leaving their boat in which were their weapons of defence, they were proceeding a little distance from it, when, as they were crossing a small bridge a party of seven armed Indians, who had been sometime watching their motions, sprang out from under the bridge and made them captives. As they all had prisoners, each Indian at night took care of his own, and Horne, watching his opportunity after traveling several days with his new master,

but his old fusee went off—too much excited to discover the increasing length of his ramrod.

The following anecdote was told the author by *Jacob Van Alstyne*, who was at the taking of Burgoyne. He was then adjutant of a regiment of Rensselaer county militia, under Col. Stephen J. Schuyler, Lieut. Col. Henry K. Van Rensselaer, and acted in the two-fold capacity of adjutant and quarter-master. Col. Schuyler was a brother of Gen. Philip Schuyler, and having the oldest commission among the colonels on that station, he acted as brigadier general in the latter part of the campaign. A German, named John Tillman, a portly gentleman who resided at Albany after the war, acted as German interpreter for Gen. Gates, and was requested by the latter to select a proper person to go into the British camp as a spy; the object of whose mission was, *to circulate letters among the Hessian soldiers*, to induce them to desert, and to bring on an engagement in such a manner as Gates desired. Tillman selected Christopher Fisher,* a private in Col. Schuyler's regiment—a shrewd fellow and always ready with an answer to any question that might be asked him. Fisher, being well acquainted with my informant, visited him to ask his advice in the hazardous undertaking, naming the reward offered. The latter told him what the consequence would be if he was detected, but declined giving counsel. "Well," said Fisher, "if you will not advise me how to proceed, then I must act on my own

effected his escape when the party were all asleep. He went a short distance and secreted himself in a hollow log. As soon as his absence was discovered, several of the enemy pursued him; and he in his concealment heard them pass and repass, hallooing to each other. After their return he directed his course to the Mohawk, and at the end of eight or nine days journey through the forest, in which time he suffered much from hunger and exposure, he reached the bank of West Canada creek, and discovered an Indian and squaw upon its opposite shore. He called to them to come to him, but they did not move until he held up a piece of money. The Indian then sent the squaw in a canoe after him. He obtained food from them, who proved to be of a friendly tribe, and in a few days more reached home in safety; but it was a long time before his comrades in the perilous enterprize all returned.

* Fisher was a native of Schoharie county, of German origin, and had removed to Rensselaer county just before the war.

judgment;" so saying, he took his leave of Van Alstyne, who thought but little more of the matter until after the battle, which occurred October 7th. While in his tent after that engagement, Fisher entered and showed him *a purse of gold and his discharge from the service.* Van Alstyne then desired to know how he had proceeded. Fisher stated that on the day appointed, he approached the enemy's picket with a sheep upon his back, which had been killed for the occasion. He was hailed by the guard, who demanded of him his residence and the object of his visit. Fisher replied, that he lived a few miles back in the country—"that the *d—d Yankees* had destroyed all his property but *one sheep*, which he had killed, and was then taking to *his friends*." On hearing this reply, the sentinel treated him kindly, and delivered him over to an officer with a favorable report. In the British camp, he was asked by a superior officer, what proof he could give that he was not deceiving. Said Fisher, "the *rebels* are preparing to give you battle, and if you will go with me, I will convince you of its truth." The officer followed Fisher to a certain place, from which was visible a wood. Here had been stationed, agreeable to the order of Gates, a body of Morgan's rifle corps, who were to exhibit themselves in a stealthy manner. The rifle-men wore frocks and were easily distinguished. "There—there"—says Fisher, "don't you see them devils of Morgan's dodging about among the trees?" And sure enough, as fast as the spy directed his vision, the British officer could see the moving frocks of the American rifle-men. When urged to enlist into the British service, Fisher pretended an aversion to war, pleading also the necessity of returning home to protect his family against the *rebels*. He was allowed to leave the camp when he chose, and embraced the opportunity while the armies were engaged. He was, however, admitted into communion as a genuine royalist, and being allowed to mingle for several hours with those who spoke German, he discharged the duties of his perilous mission to the satisfaction of Gen. Gates. A party of British troops were sent to dislodge the rifle-men pointed out by Fisher—a general engagement followed, and the result is known to every American

reader. Burgoyne capitulated soon after. The *spy* executed faithfully the principal object of his hazardous enterprise, and many of those Hessian soldiers deserted the British service in that campaign, and either entered the American service, or became good citizens of New York. Mr. Van Alstyne died in May, 1844, aged nearly 95 years.

Gen. Fraser, a distinguished officer in the British army, was looked upon by some of the Americans as a more dangerous leader to oppose than Burgoyne himself. Several published accounts state that such was the opinion of Col. Morgan. During the engagement of October 7th, it fell to the fortune of Morgan's rifle corps to meet in battle the troops under Fraser. Morgan selected a few of his best marksmen, who were placed in a favorable position, and instructed to make Fraser their especial mark. Timothy Murphy, who afterwards went to Schoharie, was one of the riflemen selected to execute this unholy design. The party thus stationed had each a chance to fire, and some of them more than once, before a favorable opportunity presented for Murphy; but when it did, the effect was soon manifest. The gallant general was riding upon a gallop when he received the fatal ball, and after a few bounds of his charger, fell, mortally wounded. The fact that Murphy shot Gen. Fraser, was communicated to the writer by a son of the former.

A letter dated Amherst, Mass., Oct. 7, 1835, and first published in the *Saratoga Sentinel*, introduces a new competitor for the honor, if such it was considered, of having slain Gen. Fraser. The letter is from the pen of E. Mattoon, Esq., being a reply to an interrogatory letter of a preceding date, from Philip Schuyler, Esq., a son of the late Gen. Schuyler. Mr. Mattoon expresses his belief, in the letter, that Gen. Fraser was killed by an old man with a long hunting gun, and not by one of Morgan's men. There can be no doubt but that the old gentleman to whom he alludes, shot an officer, but that he killed Gen. Fraser I cannot believe, since not only Murphy was positive he fell before his rifle, but several authors have stated that Fraser told his friends after he fell, *that he saw the man who shot him, and that he was*

a rifleman posted in a tree. The remains of Gen. Fraser were taken to England after the war.

After Gen. Burgoyne had resolved on retreating from Saratoga to Canada, Gen. Nixon, of the First Massachusetts brigade, succeeded in gaining Fort Edward in his rear; and the first intimation the retreating hero, who was to march through the colonies with three British regiments, had that his retreat was cut off, was from hearing the evening gun fired at that fortress. As its thunder came booming along the valley of the Hudson, borne upon the evening breeze, it sounded in his unwilling ears the knell of his military glory.—*Capt. Eben Williams.*

David Elerson, who was a private in Capt. Long's company of Morgan's rifle corps, and compatriot of Timothy Murphy in many hazardous enterprises, related the following anecdote to the author in 1837. Morgan's riflemen had acquired much celebrity as marksmen while under Gen. Gates. When in the vicinity of Albany, on their return from the northern army, a gentleman near whose residence they halted, expressed a wish to witness their skill. The captain signified his willingness to gratify his curiosity, and a piece of paper was fastened upon a small poplar tree. Elerson handed his rifle, one of the best in the company, to John Garsaway, who, informant said, *took a surer aim than himself.* The rifle was leveled 100 yards distant from the mark and fired. The leaden messenger passed through the paper and the tree—splitting the latter several inches, and *ruining it.* Said the gentleman, looking at his crippled tree, which had almost been converted into a weeping willow (it will be remembered that fashion then made the *poplar* a very desirable shade tree) “I do not wonder the Indians are afraid of Morgan's riflemen, if that is the way they shoot.” He then treated the company to liquor, as was the custom of the times—expressed his satisfaction at their skill, as he again cast his eye upon his blasted poplar, and the troops resumed their march.

Maj. Stephen Watts, the brother-in-law of Sir John Johnson, was left mortally wounded on the Oriskany battle-ground; and as an American soldier named Martin G. Van Alstyne was passing

him, he was addressed by the dying royalist, who begged of him to be borne to a stream of water at a little distance off; saying that he could not survive his wounds, but that the crystal element would afford him a little comfort in his dying moments. He was carried to the place indicated, and presented Van Alstyne with his watch as a reward for his services. Watts survived his wounds but a few hours. The watch Van Alstyne would never part with in his lifetime, although offered several times more than its real value by a friend of the Watts family, who were very desirous of obtaining a keepsake of their deceased kinsman.—*Joshua Reed.*

Col. Hendrick Frey, (a colonel of colonial troops under Sir William Johnson in the French war,) a wealthy royalist who resided during the revolution in a large stone house* one mile above the present village of Canajoharie, was at home, as he feigned neutrality, and on the day after the Oriskany battle a party of hostile Indians levied a tax on his hospitality. As they assembled around a table to eat, a sister of Frey who was waiting upon them, discovered on the person of one, the shirt of Maj. John Frey, their patriotic brother—one sleeve of which had been perforated by a bullet and left very bloody. Her worst fears were aroused, and nearly letting fall something she held, she ran to her brother Hendrick, placed her hands on his shoulders and exclaimed in a tone of real sorrow “Brother John is dead!” assigning as her reason for such belief the sight of the bloody trophy before them. The colonel who could speak the Indian dialect well, desired his sister not to show any emotion before the Indians; and endeavored to quiet her fears by remarking *that probably the shirt had belonged to some one else.* The agitated maiden could not be persuaded into such a consoling belief, as the garment had been the workmanship of her own hands; and her mental agony seemed almost insufferable.

In a short time the Indians left the house, and proceeded down the river, followed at a little distance by Col. Frey, who was de-

* This house took fire in the night, from a deposit of ashes, and burned down about the year 1832.

sious of knowing the fate of his brother. Near the mouth of the Canajoharie creek he overtook them, and inquired of the possessor where he got the shirt which covered his brawny frame. He replied that he had wounded an officer the day before in the Oriskany contest, in an arm which he had exposed from behind a tree, had made him his prisoner, and after taking from him such portion of his clothing as he desired, had sold him to a British officer who would probably take him to Canada. Frey hastened home and communicated to his sister what he had learned, which tended somewhat to calm her agitated mind, for to know that he still lived, although a wounded prisoner, was some consolation. Maj. Frey was taken to Canada, suffering much on the way, and while there confined; a durance which lasted nearly two years.—*J. Reed.*

The timely sortie of the brave Willet on the camp of the besiegers at Fort Schuyler, caused their comrades engaged in the crimsoned fields of Oriskany, to withdraw and leave the militia of the Mohawk valley victors of the field. The Indians, who were among the last to leave, had mostly disappeared, and the firing had nearly ceased, when Capt. John James Davis remarked to Isaac Covenhoven, a soldier who stood behind a tree near to the one which concealed himself—"I believe the red devils have pretty much all left us!" "I don't know," said C. "there may be some of them lurking about yet." The words were scarcely uttered when Capt. D., who was a brave and meritorious officer, fell mortally wounded; a bullet from the rifle of an Indian having passed through his lungs.—*Isaac Covenhoven.*

Capt. Jacob Gardiner, of the Tryon county militia, was distinguished for his daring bravery and personal acts in this terrible conflict. Some account of this officer's exploits in that battle are very properly related in the *Life of Brant*. The Rev. Daniel Gros, in his work on "Moral Philosophy," to which I have alluded, in some of his remarks on civil liberty, while speaking of the moral obligations of free citizens to act in defence of their country, referring to that battle, thus observes: "Let it stand recorded among other patriotic deeds of that little army of militia, that a

Jacob Gardinier, with a few of his men, vanquished a whole platoon, killing the captain thereof, after he had held him for a long time by his collar as a shield against the balls and bayonets of the whole platoon. This brave militia captain is still alive, and was cured of *thirteen* wounds." After being literally riddled by bullets and bayonets, Capt. Gardinier crept into a cavity at the roots of a fallen tree, and continued the fight. He had with him a German lad, as a waiter, who then became very useful, bringing to his master, guns of the fallen, loading such as were not loaded, &c. He was so wounded that he could neither stand or load his own gun, and yet from his place of temporary safety, he did no little execution. Observing an Indian stealthily dodging from tree to tree to get a shot at an American officer, upon whom he had brought his rifle several times with partial aim, Capt. G. shot him, and sent his *High Dutch boy*, as he called him, to get his gun. The lad returned with a report that the Indian *was not dead, but was kicking*. He had fallen across a log with his feet up, and was probably in the death struggle. After a few minutes, the boy was again sent, and soon returned with all the Indian possessed save his dead carcase.

Capt. Gardinier, who was a blacksmith before the war, and resided near the river opposite Caughnawaga, had in his employ a man named Henry Thompson, a native of New Jersey. He was a tall, lank looking fellow, as odd as he was ungainly. He was in the Oriskany battle as a private under his employer, and after the conflict had lasted some time, and groans and death were rendered familiar, he approached the captain and told him he was *hungry*. "*Fight away!*" said the intrepid officer. "*I cant without eating,*" said Thompson. "*Then go and get you a piece,*" was the reply. He did so—sat down in the midst of the battle, on the body of a dead soldier, and ate heartily, while the bullets were cutting the air around his head like hail-stones. Having finished his repast, he arose and fought with renewed energy, appearing in the thickest of the fight. Such an evidence of cool bravery, to gratify hunger, I believe was never excelled, if before equalled.

Samuel Gardinier, a brother of Jacob, was also in the post of danger at Oriskany. He had two balls shot into his body just above the groin. They were fired from opposite directions almost at the same instant; and so near did they lodge that when an incision was made to one, the other was visible, and both were taken out together. He recovered and lived several years after the war was over. The bullets were evidently fired from fowling guns, and are treasured as sacred relics by his descendants.—*Anecdotes from Rynier, a son of Samuel Gardinier.*

Valentine Fralick, of Stone Arabia, was a militiaman at Oriskany. In the heat of battle, a little aside from the main army, William Merckley, a neighbor of Fralick, fell near the latter, by the shot of an Indian, mortally wounded. The former kindly offered to assist his wounded friend, but the assistance was declined. “*Take care of yourself, and leave me to my fate,*” was the wounded man’s reply. Fralick, seeing several Indians approaching, instantly sought shelter under a fallen tree, and while thus concealed, they passed and repassed over the tree, in search of, but without finding him. When the immediate danger was over, he returned to the body of his comrade, who had been tomahawked and scalped, and giving it a temporary burial, he sought the American camp.—*John, a son of Valentine Fralick.*

During one of the earliest invasions of the Saratoga county settlements by the enemy, (probably in 1777,) the following singular incident occurred. A party of Canadian Indians arrived just at night at the house of Angus McDermott, a Scotchman, who had but recently arrived in the country. The soldiers were helping themselves to whatever the house afforded to eat and drink, when all at once the floor gave way, and they were precipitated into the cellar. No one was seriously injured, and the jollification was continued there. The Indians kept the family within doors, so that their arrival should be unknown in the neighborhood, and scattering about the settlement early in the morning, they commenced their diabolical deeds of destruction and death.—*Angus McKinlay.*

It has been said of the brave Gen. Herkimer—who was hurried into the Oriskany conflict through the rashness of his young officers, several of whom called him a tory for his prudence, and soon after lost their own lives—that after he was wounded, and no longer able to remain upon his horse, his saddle was placed against a tree, upon which he sat down, and from whence he continued to issue his orders. While thus seated, he took from his pocket a tinder-box, and with his pocket-knife and a flint arrow-head, which he carried for the purpose, he lit his pipe and smoked it with as much apparent satisfaction as he would have done in his own house. Gen. Herkimer was taken to his residence—a large gambrel-roofed brick building, still standing a little distance from the canal, two miles east of Little Falls, where he lived several days.



GEN. HERKIMER'S HOUSE, DANUBE.

After the battle of Oriskany, a song, commemorative of the event was composed, and for a long time sung in the Mohawk valley, of which the following is a stanza :

" Brave Herkimer, our General, 's dead,
And Col. Cox is slain;
And many more, and valiant men,
We ne'er shall see again."

In June, 1777, Congress resolved to establish a corps of invalids, consisting of 8 companies, each to have 1 captain, 2 lieuten-

ants, 2 ensigns, 5 sergeants, 6 corporals, 2 drums, 2 fifes, and 100 men, to be employed in garrison duty. A company of this kind was formed in Schoharie in the fall of 1777, or early in 1778, of which Tunis Vrooman, who had served in the French war, was appointed captain, Peter Snyder and Martinus Vrooman lieutenants, and John L. Lawyer its ensign. This company, which was mostly in the vicinity of the Upper Fort, was called in Schoharie, the "*Associate Exempts.*"

* In the fall of 1777, Congress adopted thirteen articles of confederation; Maryland was the last state to adopt them. In November, Forts Mifflin and Mercer, which prevented the passage of British shipping to Philadelphia, were taken by the enemy, after a severe loss on their part, and a most gallant defence of them by Colonels Greene, Smith, and Simms, and Maj. Thayer, and the enemy entered that city in triumph, where they wintered. About the same time Washington went into winter quarters at Valley Forge, Pa., fifteen miles northwest of Philadelphia, where his army erected temporary huts, but their sufferings were most acute from a want of nearly all the munitions of war. The winter was a very severe one, and the American soldier might daily be traced by his own blood! Nothing but an unconquerable love of Liberty, deep-rooted and steadfast, could have induced men to continue in the American service.—*Allan, and Tallmadge's Journal.*

The following anecdote will not only show the true piety of Gen. Washington, but the power on which he relied for the final success of his suffering country. While the American army was in camp at Valley Forge Isaac Potts, a respectable Quaker, who had often seen Washington going to, or returning from a grove at a little distance from his own dwelling early in the morning, had the curiosity to learn the object of those visits. Entering the thicket one morning very early, he secreted himself; soon after which the American commander advanced to a retired spot near him, and upon his knees offered a fervent prayer to the God of battles for the triumph of patriotic principles. Soon after, Potts returned home: his wife observing his thoughtful countenance, thus said to him—"Isaac, something moves thee I per-

ceive." "Yea, Sarah!" he replied, "I never believed until this morning that a *soldier* could be a *Christian*." He then related what he had witnessed and remarked, "that such prayers as George, the Virginian offered, must prevail; and that England never could subdue her colonies."—*Capt. Eben Williams.*

In the course of this year, (1777) Gov. Tryon became almost a savage—sending out parties to burn buildings and wantonly destroy the property of many inoffensive colonists. When remonstrated with by Gen. Parsons, he declared that had he more authority, he would burn every committee-man's house within his reach, and expressed a willingness to give *twenty silver dollars* for every acting committee-man who should be delivered to the King's troops.—*Allan.*

The preceding paragraph will show the reader the reason why the county called Tryon, was afterwards given the name of the *immortal Montgomery*, in whose veins coursed the *very best of Americanised Irish blood.*

The year 1777 was one of alternate hopes and fears to the American people. They had witnessed with gratitude the success of their arms in northern New York—while several forts along the Hudson had been captured by the enemy, and the battles of Brandywine and Germantown had been followed by disaster. In April of this year, it should not be forgotten, a new impulse was given the cause, by the opportune arrival, with several of his countrymen, of the *brave, noble hearted, generous Lafayette*: who not only bared his own breast to the storm in its fury, but who, with a magnanimity that put sinister nature to the blush, *threw into the exhausted treasury of the nation, his ample fortune—burying beneath it the scabbard of his sword.* Let that patriot who glories in being an American, love and venerate the virtues of Lafayette as did Washington; and let him remember, too, that this country should ever be a home for the oppressed of every land, for good men of other lands aided in establishing its freedom. With many other gallant foreigners, a *DeKalb* and *Pulaski* mingled their life-blood with that of a *Warren*, a *Woodhull*, a *Montgomery*, a *Herkimer* and *Mercer*, to water the shriveled roots

of the tree of liberty—while a *Lafayette*, a *Kosciusko* and a *Steuben*, prompted to deeds of noble daring, aided more fortunately in sustaining the American flag.

It was during the year 1777, that an attempt was made by foul *intrigue*, to supplant Gen. Washington and promote Gen. Gates to the chief command. Several officers of rank favored the Gates' party, among whom were Generals Mifflin and Conway—the latter an Irishman—and several members of Congress. Anonymous letters, reflecting on the character and military skill of Washington, were put in circulation. Mr. Laurens, president of Congress, and Patrick Henry, one of its master spirits, communicated to Washington the character of his foes and the nature of their design. Happily for the country, the machinations of this unholy ambition recoiled upon the heads of its instigators. Conway found it necessary to resign his commission. This subject matter afterwards originated a duel between Conway and Gen. Cadwallader. After the duel, the former, thinking himself mortally wounded, expressed to Gen. Washington by letter, his deep regret for the part he had acted in the Gates transaction, adding his own testimony to the many virtues of the Commander-in-chief.—*Bancroft's Washington and Wirt's Henry*.

The following romantic incident is copied from the journal of Col. Tallmadge. In December, 1777, when the British army was at Philadelphia and the Americans under Washington were at Valley Forge, Major Tallmadge was stationed between the armies with a detachment of cavalry, for the purpose of observation, and to circumscribe the range of British foraging parties. The duty was an arduous one, the horses being seldom unsaddled, or the squad remaining all night in the same position, from fear of a visit from the enemy, which on one occasion they received with the loss of several men. While on this duty, says the journal:

"Being advised that a *country girl* had gone into Philadelphia with *eggs*, instructed to obtain some information respecting the enemy, I moved my detachment to Germantown, where they halted, while with a small party I advanced several miles towards the British lines, and dismounted at a small tavern called the *Rising Sun*, in full view of their out posts. Very soon I saw a young fe-

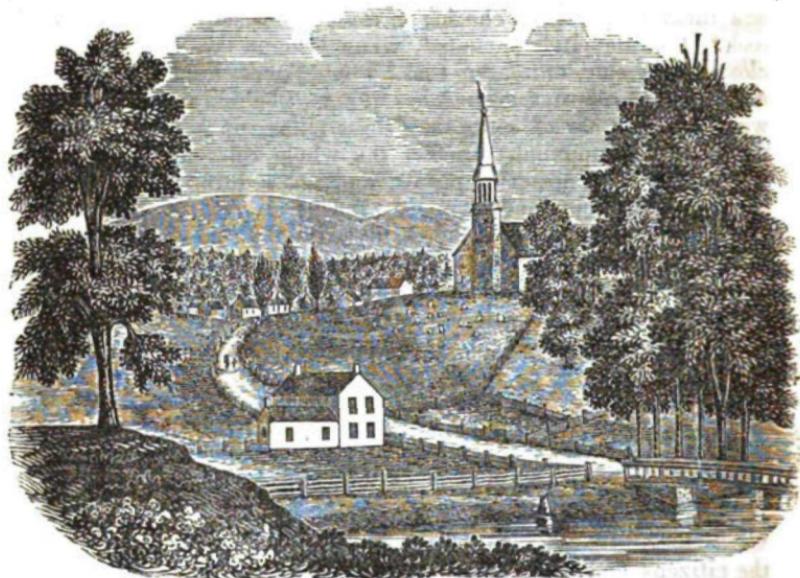
male coming out from the city, who also came to the same inn. After we had made ourselves known to each other, and while she was communicating some intelligence to me, I was informed that the British light horse were advancing. Stepping to the door, I saw them at full speed chasing in my patroles, one of whom they took. I immediately mounted, when I found the young damsel close by my side, entreating that I would protect her. Having not a moment to reflect, I desired her to mount behind me, and in this way I brought her off more than three miles, up to Germantown, where she dismounted. During the whole ride, although there was considerable firing of pistols, and not a little wheeling and charging, she remained unmoved, and never once complained of fear after she mounted my horse. I was delighted with the transaction, and received many compliments from those who became acquainted with the adventure." [The journal does not say at whose instigation this heroine had visited Philadelphia, but Gen. Washington was doubtless her employer.]

Three forts were erected in the Schoharie valley, the central being the first one built. It was known during the Revolution as the *Middle Fort*, and stood on the farm now owned by Ralph Manning, about half a mile east of north from the Middleburgh bridge. It was constructed in the fall of 1777, by the citizens and soldiers—the former drawing together suitable timber, and the latter, with their aid, giving it a proper place. The two story stone dwelling, owned and occupied by John Becker—the kitchen part of which is still standing—was inclosed within the pickets of the fort.

The *Upper Fort*, situated five miles west of south from the middle fort, was commenced in the fall of 1777 and completed the summer following. The one story frame dwelling of John Feeck was there inclosed within the pickets. This fort stood not far distant from the present site of Murphy's mill, in the upper end of Vrooman's land.

The *Lower Fort*, situated six miles north of the middle fort, was begun and completed about the same time as was the upper fort. The *stone church*, still standing one mile north of the Court House, was there inclosed within the pickets. The two latter forts were built as was the former, by the joint labor of citizens and soldiers. The middle fort was known as *head quarters* during the war, where usually resided the principal commandant of all three, and

at which place, the business involving the welfare of the settlement, was generally transacted.



ANCIENT DUTCH CHURCH, SCHOHARIE, AS SEEN IN 1817.

The *Lower Fort* consisted of an inclosure by strong pickets of about half an acre of ground, embracing the stone church, (a view of which is here given,) with block-houses in the south-west and north-east corners mounting small cannon. Along the west side of the inclosure, small huts were erected of rough boards for the summer residence of the inhabitants in that part of the valley; with a board roof sloping from near the top of the pickets toward the centre of the yard. Each family which claimed the protection of the small garrison at this place, had such a rude dwelling, in which were deposited their most valuable effects. Near the north-east corner, or in that part of the inclosure toward the burying-ground, was a temporary tavern kept by Snyder, a former inn-keeper of that vicinity. The *Middle Fort* was an inclosure of an area of ground rather larger than that picketed in at the lower fort, with block-houses in the north-east and south

west corners, where cannon were mounted. The principal entrance was on the south side, and on each side of the gate were arranged the soldiers' barracks. The pickets, as at the fort below, were about a foot through, and rose some ten feet from the ground; with loop holes, from which to fire on invaders. A brass nine pound cannon was mounted on the south-west block-house, and an iron one at the diagonal corner, each of which, as the block-houses projected, commanded two sides of the inclosure; while along the eastern and western sides were arranged huts for citizens, similar to those at the lower fort. The *Upper Fort* stood on the west side of the river, and as at those on its opposite side, a fair plot of ground was inclosed. One side of this inclosure was picketed in, while on its other sides a breast-work was thrown up of timbers and earth, some eight or ten feet high, and sufficiently thick to admit of drawing a wagon upon its top, with short pickets set in the outside timbers of the breast-work. A ditch surrounded the part thus constructed. Military barracks and small log huts were erected within the inclosure, to accommodate the soldiers and citizens. Block-houses and sentry-boxes were built in the north-west and south-east corners, each mounting a small cannon to guard its sides. From its construction, this fortress, probably, better merited the name of *fort* than either of the others; although some have stated that a moat partially surrounded the middle fort.