

## CHAPTER IX.

Much that transpired in the American revolution of the most thrilling interest, not only in Schoharie but in all the frontier settlements, is now lost forever, to the American reader. To adopt the language of a beautiful writer—"Many prudent counsels conceived in perplexing times—many heart-stirring words uttered when liberty was treason—many brave and heroic deeds, performed when the halter and not the laurel was the promised meed of patriotic daring, are already lost and forgotten in the graves of their authors."

The capture of Burgoyne and his army not only inspired Americans with confidence of their final triumph, but the truly philanthropic all over the civilized world hailed the event as ominous of good. *Fortune* is a fickle goddess. Let *success* attend the ambitious adventurer, and a sycophantic world is ready to rend the air with shouts of praise, and strew his path with flowery garlands; but if *misfortune* attend him, his imagined *friends* are changed to *foes*. It is probable that few leaders under similar circumstances could have done more for his royal master than had poor Burgoyne; and yet on his return to England, he was treated with contempt by the parasites of royalty.

Early in 1778, mortified at the result of her Canadian expeditions, England sought a reconciliation with the states. Lord Chatham, known at an earlier period in the House of Commons as the talented Pitt, the champion of civil liberty, attended on one occasion in the House of Lords during the session of that year. He was desirous of a compromise, but opposed to acknowledging

our independence. While laboring to show how the difficulties could be settled, his emotions overcame him and he sunk nerveless into the arms of his friends. He was carried home—survived his last effort to speak but a few weeks, and his grave oratory was hushed forever. The *love of country* rose paramount in the last effort of this truly great man. Parliament passed an act that session declaring that they would not in future again tax the colonies, and commissioners were sent to treat with the state authorities. The terms proposed by the mother country were rejected. An attempt was then made to bribe some of the influential American statesmen, but the proposition met with deserved scorn.

Early this season the French nation, which had looked with jealousy upon England after the loss of the Canadas, concluded a treaty of commerce and alliance with the American commissioners. It was signed on the 6th of February. The acknowledgment of the independence of the United States by France, had a very beneficial tendency. It was greeted every where as the passport to independence, consequently every demonstration of joy was manifested. The treaties were read by the chaplains at the head of each brigade—published in the colonial papers, and made known from the sacred desk by ministers of the gospel, from Maine to Georgia. Many who were before wavering in their course, when they saw a powerful nation becoming their *ally*, manifested a willingness to exert themselves in their country's *cause*.

The rich *flats* along the Cobelskill at the out-break of hostilities, contained some 20 families in the distance of three miles, believed to have been all *whigs*. They organized a company of militia for their own defence, of which Christian Brown (a brother of the late Judge Brown) was captain, and Jacob Borst, lieutenant: but had erected no fortifications. The first appearance of the enemy in the Schoharie settlements in 1778, was at Cobelskill. The events which transpired there, were communicated to the author by *Nicholas* and *George Warner* brothers, *Lawrence Lawyer*, and *Judge Brown*. The three former were in the battle fought in that town. In the latter part of May several straggling

Indians were seen in the vicinity of that settlement, and Capt. Brown, anticipating a hostile movement of the enemy, thought it prudent to send to the fort at Middleburgh for assistance. The lower fort was not quite completed at that time. Captain Patrick was dispatched with a small company of volunteers, and arrived at the residence of Capt. Brown on the 26th of May, where they remained until the 28th, when they moved up to the dwelling of Lawrence Lawyer. Scouts were kept out constantly, but nothing worthy of notice transpired until that day, when Lieut. Borst, his brother Joseph, and one of the Freemires were on a scout some miles up the creek. The latter was several hundred yards from his companions, seated upon a pile of drift-wood, fishing, when two Schoharie Indians, Ones-Yaap and Han-Yerry (the latter a chief) with a savage yell, intended to intimidate, sprang up the bank of the creek from a place of concealment and approached them. After a friendly salutation, they began to reprove the brothers, *for being in the woods, to shoot Indians who did them no harm.* Joseph replied to the speaker, that they intended no harm to those who were friendly. Han-Yerry approached him, seized his gun in a playful manner, threw open the pan, and gave the gun a sudden jerk to spill out the priming, exclaiming as he did so, *Yo yenery hatste!* signifying—*It is good if this be gone!* Borst, seeing the object of the Indian was to disarm him, instantly dropped his own gun and seized that of his adversary, and wrenching the flint from the lock, he replied in the Indian dialect, *Yo yenery sagat!* *It is good if this is served so!* The Indian then dropped his gun and clinched Borst, but the latter, giving a loud whoop closed manfully with his antagonist and soon brought him upon his knees. While they were struggling for mastery, the other Indian approached the lieutenant and bade him surrender himself his prisoner: but instead of doing so, he stepped back and sent a bullet through his body. Han-Yerry succeeded in freeing himself from the grasp of his adversary, and seeing his comrade upon the ground, instantly fled leaving his gun. The lieutenant ran and caught up the gun of his brother and snapped it at the fleeing Indian, but as it was not primed the

latter escaped. On the same day, George Warner and John Fester returned from Cherry-Valley, where they had been the day before to carry a letter—doubtless to apprise that settlement of the proximity of the enemy.

The day after the Borsts had the rencounter with the Indian scout, the Cobelskill battle was fought; which occurred on Saturday the first day of June.\* On the morning of that day Captain Miller, who was sent from the Schoharie fort with part of a company to reconnoitre, arrived at Lawyer's. Several of his men, one of whom was named Humphrey, volunteered to remain with Patrick, and he returned to the fort, before the enemy in force were discovered. The regulars under Capt. P. numbered between 30 and 40; and the militia volunteers under Capt. Brown were 15. After Capt. Miller left Lawyer's, the troops under Patrick marched up the creek to the residence of George Warner, who was one of the Schoharie committee, and father of the namesake before mentioned. Warner's was the southernmost house in the settlement, and stood on a knoll at Cobelskill Centre. An orchard at this time covers the site.

The troops had been at Warner's but a short time, when 15 or 20 Indians discovered themselves a little distance above the house, and the whole force was marched in pursuit of them. Brown was opposed to the pursuit, and told Patrick he feared they would be ambuscaded. The latter ridiculed the idea, and was disposed to assign another motive than that of *caution* to the militia cap-

\* Several writers who have published some notice of this battle, have given it an erroneous date. Brown, in his pamphlet history, says it transpired "on the first day of June or July, in the year 1776," but at a personal interview he said that date was wrong, and that it took place on *Saturday before Pinkster, the year after Burgoyne's capture*. Campbell, in the *Annals of Tryon County*, dates it in *May, 1779*. Stone has entered it in two places in the *Life of Brant*, supposing from Brown's account and one he found among the papers of Col. Gansevoort, as they differed in dates and material facts, that he was recording two transactions. The last notice he accredits to a letter from Col. Varick to Col. Gansevoort, dated Schenectada, June 3, 1778, which letter stated that this invasion of the enemy took place on the preceding Saturday. This last date corresponds with the one given the author by the three living witnesses named, who stated that it took place on Saturday preceding ~~Pinkster~~—*Whituesday*, which came that year on the 2d day of June.

tain who, stung by the imputation, then yielded to the wishes of Patrick, notwithstanding the misgiving of his own better judgment. The enemy, who kept up a running fight, had not been pursued a mile, before it was evident their numbers were increasing. A halt was then made by the Americans near the present residence of Lambert Lawyer, with the militia on the right towards the creek, and a sharp engagement followed. Both parties fought in the Indian style, under the cover of trees. It soon became manifest from the firing, that the number of the enemy was very great. After several of his men had fallen around him, Capt. Patrick received a shot which broke his thigh. Two of his brave soldiers, in an attempt to bear him from the field, were surrounded by a party of the enemy, and shared his unhappy fate. A lieutenant under Capt. Patrick is said to have been spared, by giving a masonic sign to Brant. When Capt. Patrick fell, Brown ordered a retreat, which was most timely, for had it been delayed but a few minutes until the enemy could have extended his flanks, so as to surround the little band of patriots, few if any would have survived that day. The families in the settlement, hearing the firing, very properly sought safety in the depths of the forest, or by a rapid flight to Schoharie, ten miles distant. On arriving at the house from which they had been so artfully drawn into an ambush designedly laid, *three* of Patrick's men and *two* of Brown's took refuge within it, which providentially favored the escape of their fugitive friends. Being fired on from the house, the Indians halted to dislodge its inmates, by which the rest of the party gained time sufficient to make good their retreat. The house was set on fire, and three of its inmates were buried in its ruins. The continental soldiers, in attempting to make their escape from the burning building, were slain. One was evidently shot, but the other was supposed to have been taken alive and tortured to death. The party who first visited the scene of blood after the battle, found this soldier not far from where the house had stood, with his body cut open and his intestines fastened round a tree several feet distant. In one hand was a roll of continental bills, placed there by the enemy in derision of our country's *almost valueless*

*"promises to pay."* It was subsequently known, that the enemy fired at least *fifty* balls into one window of this house, at its inmates.

The names of the men under Capt. Brown in this engagement were, Lieut. Jacob Borst, Nicholas Warner, George Warner, jr., George Freemire, John Shafer and Lawrence Lawyer, who escaped uninjured, 6; John Zeh, Martinus and John Fester, Jacob and John Freemire and Jacob Shafer, killed, 6; Peter and Henry Shafer and Leonard King, wounded, 3. The whole number killed in the engagement, including Capt. Patrick and his men, was about 22: five or six of his men were also wounded and two were made prisoners. More than half the Americans engaged were either killed or wounded. The enemy, as was afterwards ascertained, consisting of Indians (mostly Senecas, Schoharies and Oquagos, instead of Onondagas as stated by some writers) and tories, numbered over three hundred and fifty, and were commanded by *Joseph Brant*. Service, a noted tory, who lived near the Charlotte river, and the Schoharie chief, Seth's-Henry, acted a conspicuous part in the engagement. The loss the enemy sustained was never exactly known, but was supposed to equal, if it did not exceed that of the Americans. A mulatto, who was with the enemy at this time and returned after the war, stated that twenty-five of their number, mostly Indians, were buried in a mud-hole near David Zeh's. He also stated, that seven of the enemy who were wounded in the battle, died on their way to Canada. George Warner's was the first house burnt in the Schoharie settlements in the revolution. The enemy, after the engagement, plundered and burnt all the dwellings in Cobelskill as far down as the churches, except an old log house, formerly occupied by George Warner, which stood near the present residence of his son David. This house was left, as was afterwards supposed, with a belief that its owner might return and occupy it, after losing his framed dwelling, which would afford an opportunity to capture a committee-man. The dwellings burnt at this time were those of George Warner and his son Nicholas, George Fester, Adam Shafer, William Snyder, John Freemire, Lawrence Lawyer, John

Zeh, John Bouck and John Shell; (the latter owned by Lawrence Lawyer,) in all, *ten*, with the barns and other out-houses; making, as stated in the record of the Lutheran Church at Schoharie, "*twenty buildings burned.*"

The two militia-men who took shelter in the house of Warner, were Martinus Fester and John Freemire. The remains of Fester fell into a tub of soap in the cellar, and were known by his tobacco-box; and those of Freemire were identified by his knee-buckles and gun-barrel. Jacob Shafer was wounded in one leg early in the action, and was carried by his neighbor, George Warner, jr., to a place of temporary safety, who agreed to get a horse and take him to the fort. As the battle terminated unfavorably, he was left to his fate—was discovered next morning by the enemy and killed. The remains of John Fester were not discovered, until a piece of wheat was harvested, into which he had fallen. Jonas Belknap, one of Patrick's men, received a ball in his right hip and was borne out of the battle by *Lawrence Lawyer*, as the latter assured the author. The following additional facts respecting this soldier, who died a few years since at Gorham, Ontario county, were told the author by *Ezekiel Howe*, a nephew of said Belknap. After having been "carried one side," to use the words of Lawyer, Belknap discovered a hollow log into which he crept. The next day he backed out of his resting place cold and stiff, and while seated upon a fence, reflecting on the events of the last twenty-four hours, he discovered two Indians laden with plunder approaching him, having two dogs. Unobserved by them, he let himself fall into a bunch of briers. The Indians halted near him, and their dogs placed their paws on the fence and growled. He supposed himself discovered, but soon one of them took out a bottle, from which both drank, and he had the satisfaction of seeing them resume their march, without noticing the irritation of their canine friends. Casting his eyes along the beautiful valley and surveying the ruins of the preceding day, he discovered the old house of Warner, on the west side of the creek, still standing, to which he made his way. He found it unoccupied, but victuals were on a table, and after eating, he laid down, faint and sad, up-

on a bed which the house also afforded. In the afternoon, two men came and conveyed him to the Schoharie fort, where his wound was properly drest and he recovered.

Henry Shafer, mentioned as being wounded in this engagement, received a ball in his thigh which brought him to the ground. The bone was not fractured, but the limb was benumbed. He regained his feet but fell the instant his weight came upon the wounded limb. Disencumbering himself of his gun and powder-horn, after several unsuccessful attempts to run, action returned to the limb and he fled. He directed his steps toward Schoharie, and on the way fell in with Peter Snyder, his brother-in-law. They traveled nearly to Punchkill together, when Shafer, too weak to proceed, concealed himself and requested his comrade to inform his friends at the fort where he might be found, desiring them to come after him. His fellow-traveler went to the fort, but instead of doing the errand as desired by his wounded relative, he reported him *dead*. Shafer tarried beneath a shelving rock until Monday morning, when, by great exertion, he arrived at the house of a friend in Kneiskern's dorf. As he was much exhausted, he was very prudently fed gruel until he revived, when he was taken to the fort and cured of his wound.—*From Peter, son of Henry Shafer.\**

The night after the Cobelskill battle it rained, and a dreary one it must have been to the surviving citizens of the Cobelskill valley, many of whom were in the forest to which they had fled from their burning dwellings, exposed to the mercy of wild beasts—foes less to be dreaded than those left behind. The wife of Lawrence Lawyer, with several other persons, was in the woods *three days*, and finally came out near the mouth of the Co-

\* Mr. Shafer lived to become a very useful citizen. He was for many years a justice of the peace—frequently represented Cobelskill in the board of supervisors—for several years was a member of the state legislature—and was for a great length of time a judge of Common Pleas; which several stations, considering his early opportunities, he discharged with credit to himself and fidelity to the public. He was remarkably punctual in the performance of his official duties. He died on the 15th of April, 1839, in the eighty-second year of his age.

belskill. Scouts were sent out to reconnoitre and look after the wounded, and absent members of families, but it was several days before the dead were buried. Some day in the course of the week following the engagement, Col. Vrooman with part of the Schoharie troops, and Col. Yates with a detachment of Schenectada militia, went to perform the last sad duties to those martyrs to the cause of *liberty*. As the weather had been wet and cool, the bodies were found to have suffered but little change. A pit was dug near where George Warner's house had stood, into which several boards were laid: the charred remains of the three soldiers taken from the cellar, and the mutilated remains of those near, were then buried within it. Pits were also dug so as to require as little moving of the bodies as possible, in which Captain Patrick and the other soldiers were deposited. None can realize at a period of nearly seventy years after it transpired, the solemnities of that burial. Several of the deceased left wives and children to mourn their untimely fate; while all left friends who had centered on them hopes of future usefulness and aggrandizement. This blow was a most severe one for the little settlement of Cobelskill. Peaceful be your rest brave warrior! for

“ When ye sank on your bed of death,  
 No gentle form hung over you;  
 No fond eye caught your parting breath,  
 Or shrunk in anguish from the view!  
 But o'er you, in that hour of fate,  
 Bent the dark " *Indian's* " vengeful form;  
 And the stern glance of ruthless hate  
 Gleamed dreadful, 'mid the hurrying storm.  
 No mourning dirge did o'er you swell,  
 Nor winding sheet your limbs inclosed;  
 For you was tolled no passing bell;  
 No tomb was raised where you reposed,  
 Your bed of death—the battle ground,  
 'Twas there they heaped your funeral mound,  
 And all unhallowed was your grave,  
 Save by the ashes of the brave."—*Lines on Waterloo.*

On the knoll where stood the house of George Warner, which was burnt in the Revolution, as before stated, the patriotic citizens of Cobelskill celebrated the anniversary of our national indepen-

dence, on the 4th day of July, 1837. An appropriate oration was delivered on the occasion by *Demosthenes Lawyer, Esq.*

How proper, after so long a time, to assemble on that day, on ground consecrated by patriot's blood, and water it with the tear of gratitude.

A few days previous to the irruption of the enemy into Cobelskill, they were in the vicinity of Cherry Valley. Brant had his destructives there with the intention of laying waste that place. He secreted them on Lady hill,\* about a mile east of the fort, to await a favorable opportunity to strike the fatal blow, and slay or capture some of its influential citizens. A company of boys happened to be training, for boys then caught the martial spirit, as Brant, like the eagle from its eyry, was looking down from his hiding place upon the devoted hamlet. Mistaking these miniature soldiers for armed men, he deferred the attack for a more favorable opportunity. After killing Lieut. Wormwood, a promising young officer from Palatine, who had left the fort but a few minutes before on horseback, and taking Peter Sitz, his comrade, prisoner,† Brant directed his steps to Cobelskill.

On the 4th day of July, 1778, the beautiful valley of Wyoming in Pennsylvania, fell a prey to the savage cupidity of the British, Tory and Indian forces under Col. John Butler; and its inhabitants were either killed, carried into captivity, or escaped by a most appalling flight. The poem entitled "Gertrude of Wyoming," from the pen of the English poet *Campbell*—founded upon the tragedies of that massacre—is doubtless familiar to most of my readers. Many of the most unfeeling and inhuman acts of cruelty committed on the fleeing inhabitants and soldiers of this ill-fated place, were committed by *tories*. On this occasion, a tory found a brother secreted, who had been an American militiaman, but had fled, abandoning his gun. On recognizing his brother, the tory said to him, "So it is you, is it?" The unarmed

\* This hill was embraced in a patent owned by a rich lady in England, from which circumstance it was formerly called Lady Hill.—*Moses Nelson.*

† For the death of Lt. Wormwood and capture of Sitz, see *Annals of Tryon County.*

man approached his kinsman, fell upon his knees and besought him to spare his life; promising, if he would, to live with him and become his *servant*. "*All this is mighty fine,*" replied the human fiend, "*but you are a d—d rebel!*" At the close of this sentence, he leveled his gun and sent the death-telling ball through his body.—*Chapman's History of Wyoming.*

About the first of September of this year, the enemy destroyed several of the western settlements on the south side of the Mohawk. In a letter written at one of the frontier posts, by Col. Klock to Gov. Clinton, and sent by "Col. Fisher and Zep. Batchellor, Esq.," probably in September (it being without date,) he thus observes—

"I beg leave to represent to your Excellency the most deplorable situation of this country. The enemy have from time to time desolated and destroyed the settlements of Springfield, Andreas-Town, and the German-Flats; by which at least *one hundred and fifty families* are reduced to misery and distress. People who were in flourishing circumstances are thus, by one wanton act, brought to poverty.

"Notwithstanding I have repeatedly wrote our situation down and asked relief, we have obtained none except Alden's regiment, which is stationed at Cherry-Valley, where they remain in garrison. Woful experience teaches us that the troops in Cherry-Valley are by no means a defence for any other part of the country. [After speaking of the ungovernable spirit that influenced the conduct of some of the settlers, the desertion of a part of the militia to the enemy, and the necessity of immediate succor, he adds]—From the information we are able to collect from prisoners and otherwise, we learn that the enemy when at the German-Flats were 500 or upwards strong, commanded by Capt. Caldwell—that they intended soon to make another incursion, and that a reinforcement of 5 or 600 was on its march to join the enemy."

During the invasions above noticed, nearly 1000 horses, cattle, sheep and swine were killed or driven away. The settlers at the German-Flats, by receiving timely notice of danger, with one single exception, fled into the neighboring forts and escaped the tomahawk. The loss of so many dwellings, with most of their furniture, and barns well filled with the recompense of the husbandman's toils, must have been a most serious one to this district.

Capt. Walter Butler was a son of Col. John Butler, a justice of

the king's court for Tryon county, who resided, at the commencement of the war, about a mile from the ancient village of Caughnawaga. He went with the *royalists* who left the county in 1775, to Canada. In the summer of 1778, he returned to the Mohawk valley—was arrested, and confined in the Albany jail. Under the pretence of ill health he was removed to a private dwelling, from which, aided by treachery, he escaped. Burning with revenge for his imprisonment, on his arrival in Canada he obtained command of a part of his father's regiment of tories called *Butler's Rangers*; and with them directed his steps towards the frontier settlements of New York. On his way he met Brant returning to Canada from his Mohawk river expedition, who reluctantly joined him in his enterprise. Their united forces were 500 Indians, and 200 tories, worse than Indians. On the morning of Nov. 11th, they surprised Cherry-Valley, killing 32 of the inhabitants and 16 continental soldiers, among whom was Col. Alden, the imprudent commander of the garrison, who is said to have been a man of intemperate habits. Nearly all the dwellings and barns in the settlement—just filled with an abundant harvest, were burned, and—

House-less were those who from the wood returned,  
 The fate of relatives to mourn;  
 While other friends to living death, they learned,  
 By human fiends, were captive borne.

The enemy, making between 30 and 40 prisoners at Cherry-Valley, passed down the Susquehanna to its junction with the Tioga—up the latter to near its source, thence along the Seneca lake to the Indian castle at Kanadaseago, near the present village of Geneva; where a division of the prisoners took place. The day after the massacre, 200 militia arrived at Cherry-Valley, and buried the dead.\* The sufferings of the prisoners on their way to Canada, must have been very severe: many of them were women and children, illy fitted to endure the fatigues of a journey of three or four hundred miles, at that inclement season.

\* For a more minute account of the destruction of this place, see Campbell's *Annals of Tryon County*.

The following anecdote was related by Joseph Brant after the Revolution, to John Fonda while at his house near Caughnawaga. Brant, on being censured by Fonda for his cruelties at Cherry-Valley at the time of its desolation, said the atrocities were mostly chargeable to Walter Butler. He then stated that among the captives made by him at that place, was a man named Vrooman, with whom he had had a previous acquaintance. He concluded to give Vrooman his liberty, and after they had proceeded several miles on their journey, he sent him back *about two miles, alone*, to procure some birch bark for him; expecting of course to see no more of him. After several hours Vrooman came hurrying back with the bark, which the chieftain no more wanted than he did a pair of goggles. Brant said, he sent his prisoner back on purpose to afford him an opportunity to make his escape, but that he was so big a fool he did not know it; and that consequently he was compelled to take him along to Canada.—*Mrs. Evert Yates, a daughter of John Fonda.*

The English government on being officially informed of the treaty of alliance between France and the United States, declared war against the former; and thought it prudent to concentrate its forces. On the 18th of June, the British troops under Sir Henry Clinton evacuated Philadelphia, and set out for New York. Gen. Washington hung upon his rear, watching a favorable opportunity to give him battle. On the 28th of that month, the battle of Monmouth was fought. Both armies were flattered during the day by alternate success, and encamped in the evening on the battle ground. Washington slept in his cloak after the fatigues of that day, in the camp of his brave men. In the night, Clinton silently withdrew, thus conceding the victory of the preceding day to the *spangled banner*. The loss of the Americans in this engagement was from *two to three hundred* in killed and wounded; and that of the enemy about *one thousand*, nearly half of whom were killed. The day on which this action was fought was extremely hot, and the suffering of both armies was very great for the want of proper drink. Says the *Journal of Col. Tallmadge*, "Many died on both sides from excessive heat and

fatigue, the day being oppressively warm, and the troops drinking too freely of cold water." *James Williamson*, a soldier who assisted in burying the dead after the battle, assured the writer that he saw around a spring in a grove not far from the battlefield, *the dead bodies of twelve soldiers, supposed to have been victims of cold water.*

American historians have recorded few instances of female patriotism and bravery, which rival the following: In the battle of Monmouth a gunner was killed, and a call was made for another, when the wife of the fallen soldier, who had followed his fortune to the camp, advanced and took his station; expressing her willingness to discharge the duty of her deceased husband, and thus revenge his death. The gun was well managed and did good execution, as I have been informed by an eye witness. After the engagement, Gen. Washington was so much pleased with the gallant conduct of this heroine, that he gave her a lieutenant's commission. She was afterwards called *Captain Molly*.—*Capt. Eben Williams.*

A short time after the battle of Monmouth, Lieut. Col. Wm. Butler, with the 4th Pennsylvania regiment, and three companies of rifle men from Morgan's corps under Maj. Posey, commanded by Captains Long, <sup>PARR</sup> and Simpson, was ordered to Albany, and from thence to Schoharie. While there he commanded the Middle Fort. The command of the Schoharie forts devolved on Col. Peter Vrooman during the war, when no continental officer of equal rank was there.

Among the rifle men who went to Schoharie at this time, were some most daring spirits—men whose names should live forever on her fairy mountains and in her green valleys. We do not believe it necessary, although it is a fact too generally conceded, that glittering epaulets are indispensable in forming a *hero*. Of the brave soldiers sent to aid the Schoharie settlers in their defence, and guard from savage cruelties the unprotected mother and helpless orphan, whose names I would gladly chronicle could I collect them, were Lieut. Thomas Boyd, (whose tragic

end will be shown hereafter,) Timothy Murphy, David Elerson,\* William Leek,† William Lloyd, a sergeant, John Wilber,‡ — Tufts, Joseph Evans, Philip Hoever,§ Elijah Hendricks, John Garsaway, a very large man, and Derrick Haggidorn. Nor should we forget to name several of the native citizens who encountered many dangers in the discharge of their duty; of the latter were Jacob and Cornelius Van Dyck, Jacob Enders, Bartholomew C. Vrooman, Peter Van Slyck, Nicholas Slaughter, Yockam Folluck, Joackam Van Valkenberg,|| Jacob Becker, and Thomas Eckerson. There were no doubt others equally meritorious, whose deeds are unknown to the writer.

The following facts, relating to the attempted arrest and death of Christopher Service, a tory of no little notoriety, living on the Charlotte river, were communicated by *Judge Hager*, *Mrs. Van Slyck*, and *David Elerson*.

The people of Schoharie had long suspected Service—who remained with his family entirely exposed to the enemy—of clandestinely affording them assistance. Captain Jacob Hager, who was in command of the Upper Fort, in the summer of 1778, sent Abraham Becker, Peter Swart, (not the one already introduced,) and Frederick Shafer, on a secret scout into the neighborhood of Service, to ascertain if there were any Indians in that vicinity, and to keep an eye of espionage on the tory. They arrived in sight of his dwelling after sundown, and concealed themselves in the woods, intending to remain over night. After dark the musquitoes began to be very troublesome, but the party did not dare

\* He was married in Schoharie during the war, and became a permanent resident of the county. He was a *ranger* for several years, and, as he stated to the writer, an extra price was set on his own and Murphy's scalps by the enemy. He was 95 years old at our interview, at which time he was boarding with Dr. Origin Allen, near the Baptist church in Broome, of which the old hero was a member.

† Went west after the war, and died in Cayuga county.

‡ Was from Reddington, Pa. He was a carpenter by trade, married a Miss Mattice and settled on Charlotte river.

§ Remained in Schoharie county after the war.

|| Killed in battle near Lake Utsayuntho, in 1781.

to make a fire to keep them off. Becker told his companions he was well acquainted with Service, having lived near him for some time; said he would go and reconnoitre, and if there were none of the enemy abroad, he would inform them, in which case all agreed to go to the house and tarry over night. Becker, after a short absence, returned with the assurance that the "coast was clear," and that he had made arrangements for their accommodation; whereupon all three went to the dwelling. As they approached the door, the light was extinguished, but Becker went in, followed by his friends. They advanced to the centre of the room, at which time one of the family re-lit the candle, the light of which showed Swart and Shafer their real situation. Along the wall, upon one side of the room, were arranged a party of armed savages, who instantly sprang upon, and bound them. The two prisoners were kept there until morning, when they were hurried off to Canada. Becker, who had not been bound, was suffered, after giving the Indians his gun and ammunition, to depart for home. He returned to the fort, and reported that the scout, near Charlotte river, had fallen in with a party of Indians in ambush, from whom they attempted to escape by flight; that he was in advance of his comrades, who were both captured; that he came near being overtaken, when he threw away his gun and equipage, and thus relieved, made his escape. Shafer, who remained in a Canadian prison until the war was closed, returned to Schoharie and made known the above facts. Swart never returned to Schoharie. He was taken by distant Indians, as his friends afterwards learned, beyond Detroit, where he took a squaw and adopted the Indian life.

From the commencement of the border difficulties, Service had greatly aided the enemies of his country, by sheltering and victualing them, in numerous instances. He was comparatively wealthy, for the times, owning a well-stocked farm and a grist-mill. When the tories and Indians from Canada were on their way to destroy the settlements, they always found a home at his house, from whence, after recruiting, they sallied forth on their missions of death. Several attempts were made to take him before the Schoharie committee, previous to his joining Brant in his expedition against Cobelskill.

Soon after the return of Becker with his hypocritical narrative, Col. Butler sent Capt. Long with some twenty volunteers in the direction of Charlotte river to reconnoitre, and if possible discover some traces of the enemy. One object of the expedition was, to arrest Service and take him to the Schoharie forts, or to slay him in case of resistance. Arriving near the head waters of the Schoharie, Capt. Long unexpectedly took a prisoner. On his person he found a letter directed to Service, and on opening it, learned that Smith, its author, a tory captain who had enlisted a company of royalists on the Hudson near Catskill, was then on his way to the house of Service, who was desired in the letter to have every thing in readiness to supply the wants of his men on their arrival. Learning from their prisoner the route by which Smith would approach, the Americans at once resolved to intercept him. Some fifteen or twenty miles distant from the Upper fort, while proceeding cautiously along the east side of the river, Smith and his followers were discovered on the opposite bank. Capt. Long halted his men, and proposed to get a shot at Smith. It was thought by some of the party an act of folly to fire at so great a distance, but the captain, accompanied by Elerson, advanced and laid down behind a fallen log. Some noise was made by this movement, and the tory chief stepped into an open piece of ground a little distance from his men to learn the cause of alarm, and thus fairly exposed his person. At this moment the rifles were leveled. Capt. Long was to fire, and in case he missed his victim, Elerson was to make a shot. At the crack of the first rifle, the spirit of Smith left its clay tenement to join kindred spirits; but where—God only knows. The scout then advanced and poured in a volley of balls, wounding several, and dispersing all of the tories. Thus unexpectedly did justice overtake this company of men, whose zeal should have led them to serve their country instead of her foes.

Capt. Long and his companions then directed their steps to the dwelling of Service. On arriving near, proper caution was taken to prevent his escape, and Murphy and Elerson were deputed to arrest him. They found the tory back of his house, making a

harrow. On the approach of the two friends, Mrs. Service, suspecting the object of their visit, came out and stood near them, when they informed her husband the nature of their visit. Service called them *d—d rebels*, and retreating a few steps, he seized an axe and aimed a blow at the head of Murphy. But the man who could guard against surprise from the wily Indian, was not to fall thus ignobly. Elerson, who stood a few feet from his companion, as he assured the author, *told Murphy to shoot the d—d rascal*. The wife of Service, seeing the determined look of Murphy, caught hold of his arm and besought him not to fire. He gently pushed her aside, and patting her on the shoulder said, "*Mother, he never will sleep with you again.*" In another instant, the unerring bullet from his rifle had penetrated the tory's heart. Capt. Long and his men now advanced to the house, in which was found *forty loaves of fresh bread*, proving that some notice had already reached there, of Smith's intended visit. Many have supposed that injustice was done to Service. The author has taken considerable pains to inform himself on this point, and finds proof most satisfactory to his own mind, that from his ability and willingness to supply the wants of the enemy and his retired residence, he was a very dangerous man to the cause of liberty.

An old tory, who returned after the war, and died a few years ago in the town of Mohawk, was accustomed, when intoxicated, to "*hurrah for king George.*" At such times he often told about being in person at the house of Service, who, as he said, "*lived and died a tory, as he meant to.*" Had not Service made an attempt on the life of Murphy, he would probably have been confined until the war closed, and then liberated, as was the case with several wealthy royalists. The property of Service was confiscated in the war. Not many years ago, a son of his succeeded in recovering the confiscated property of his father, and thus came into the undivided possession of an estate amounting to eight or ten thousand dollars. The fortune thus obtained, however, was soon dissipated.

.. In the latter part of August, 1778, the Lower Fort, but recently completed, was commanded by Lieut. Col. John H. Beckman.

Early in October, Col. Butler proceeded from Schoharie with the troops under his command, to Unadilla and Oquago, Indian towns on the Susquehanna, which they effectually destroyed, with large quantities of provisions.

The troops under Col. Butler, in this excursion, among whom were several volunteers from the Schoharie militia, suffered incredible hardships. "They were obliged to carry their provisions on their backs; and, thus loaded, frequently to ford creeks and rivers. After the toils of hard marches, they were obliged to camp down during wet and chilly nights without covering, or even the means of keeping their arms dry."—*Dr. Ramsay*. After an absence of sixteen days, they were greeted with a hearty welcome at the forts in Schoharie.

A regiment of New York state troops, under Col. Duboise, went into winter quarters at Schoharie, in the fall of 1778. Adjut. Dodge, Maj. Rosencrans, Capt. Stewart, and Ensign Johnson, of Duboise's regiment, were quartered in the kitchen of Chairman Ball's dwelling.—*Peter Ball*.

On the 6th of August of this year, M. Gerard was publicly received by the United States government as minister of the king of France. On the 14th of September following, Dr. Franklin was appointed minister to France, the first American minister delegated to a foreign court.

"The alliance of France gave birth to expectations which events did not fulfil; yet the presence of her fleets on the coast deranged the plans of the enemy, and induced them to relinquish a part of their conquests."—*Hale*.

The reward paid by English agents for the scalps of the Americans, *eight dollars each*, excited the avarice of both Indians and Tories; and many innocent women and children were slain not only in this, but in the several years of the war, to gratify the cupidity of a merciless and unfeeling enemy.

Late in the fall, the army under Washington erected huts near Middlebrook, in New Jersey, and went into winter quarters. In December of this year, Mr. Laurens resigned his office as president of Congress, and John Jay was chosen in his place.