

CHAPTER XII.

The following facts were obtained in 1837, from *Henry Hynds*, a son of *William Hynds*, who was one of the few whigs living in New Dorlach, in the Revolution. On the evening of July 4th, 1780, a party of the enemy, consisting of *seven Indians*, a *squaw*, and *one white man*, Capt. Adam Crysler, arrived in the settlement and put up, as was afterwards learned, at the house of Michael Merckley. The ostensible object of their visit was, to capture Bastian France, as a son of the latter informed the author; but as he chanced to be from home, at the suggestion of the Merckley family, they concluded to seize upon some other whigs in the vicinity. As there was but little intercourse among distant neighbors in that busy season of the year, and William Hynds was living in quite a retired place, it was suggested to Crysler, that if this family was carried into captivity, and the house *not burned*, they might be gone a week, and no one else know of their absence. The suggestion was received with favor, and the next day, as the family of Hynds were at dinner, they were surprised, and taken prisoners. As the captors approached the dwelling, they fired a gun in at an open door, to intimidate the family; and entering secured Mr. Hynds, his wife, daughters Catharine, and Mary, who were older than my informant, and four children, younger, Elizabeth, William, Lana, and an infant. The Indians then plundered the house of whatever they desired to take along. Henry was compelled to catch four horses belonging to his father, obedience to which command several of the party stood with ready rifles to enforce, and prevent his escape. Upon the backs of three horses was placed the plunder made in the dwelling; and upon the fourth, on a man's saddle, Mrs. Hynds, with several of her youngest children, was permitted to ride. The party moved for-

ward about 2 o'clock, and traveled that afternoon to Lake Utsay-antho, and encamped near the Champion place, seven miles distant from the dwelling of Hynds. The second night they encamped in an orchard near Collier's. Among the plunder taken from the dwelling of Hynds, was a quantity of ham and pork, which the Indians ate; giving the prisoners flour, which they made into pudding.

Mr. Hynds was bound nights, and a rope laid across his body, each end of which was tied to an Indian. The party were three weeks going to Niagara; and killed on the route one deer, several muskrats, otters, &c., which served for food. In lieu of salt, they used ashes, and the family continued well until they reached Niagara. The large children went barefooted nearly all the way to Canada. Soon after they started, the squaw took from Henry, his shoes, which, as she could not wear them, she threw away. While journeying, they built fires nights, around which they slept upon the ground. Soup was their usual supper. On passing Indian villages, the prisoners were much abused by squaws and children; and on one occasion, Mr. Hynds was knocked down by a blow upon the head with an empty bottle.

Soon after their arrival at Niagara, Mr. Hynds and all his family, except Henry, took the fever and ague, of which William, a promising lad, died. The prisoners were at Niagara when the troops under Sir John Johnson, destined to ravish the Schoharie and Mohawk valleys, set out on their journey. The Tories from Schoharie and New Dorlach, who accompanied the army, often boasted to the prisoners, that Albany would soon be taken by the British, when themselves were to possess certain choice sections of the Schoharie flats. Mary, then fourteen or fifteen years of age, was separated from the rest of the family at Niagara, and taken to supply a vacancy in an Indian family, occasioned by the death of one of its members. Some time in the fall, the prisoners were removed to Buck's Island, where Elizabeth, the child next older than William, also died. From the Island, they were removed to Montreal, where Lana, the youngest child but one, died. Mrs. Hynds, whose constitution was undermined by the accumulating

load of her mental and bodily sufferings, with her infant child, soon after followed her other three children to the grave; reducing the family from nine to four. In the winter following his capture, Henry had a severe attack of fever and ague, and was removed from the guard-house to the hospital; where he was properly treated and soon recovered.

About two years and a half after their capture, Mr. Hynds, his son Henry, and daughter Catharine, with nearly three hundred other prisoners, returned home by the usual route down the Hudson river. Mary was detained nearly *three years longer* in Canada, but finally returned home. As was surmised, the whigs of New Dorlach knew nothing of the capture of Mr. Hynds and his family until they had been gone three or four days.

The greater part of the month of July, 1780, Seth's Henry, and a few other Indians, were secreted about the Schoharie settlements, in the hope of killing or surprising some of the principal settlers, as he stated after the war.

One dark night, this Indian, says *Josias E. Vrooman*, visited the upper fort, in the hope of surprising a sentinel. He commenced climbing up at one of the sentry-boxes, with a spear in his hand, but before he was within reach of the sentinel, who chanced on that night to be Frederick Quant, the latter heard his approach, and gave the usual challenge. The Indian then dropped down upon the ground, and threw himself under one of the farm waggons which usually clustered around the outside of the pickets. A ball from the rifle of Quant, fired in the direction he ran, entered a waggon near his head, but the Indian made his escape.

For the following particulars the author is indebted to the manuscript of *Judge Hager*, to *Col. J. W. Bouck*, and the memory of *Dick*, a former slave belonging to the Bouck family.

About the 25th of July, William Bouck, an elderly man, the one mentioned as the first white male child born in Schoharie, went from the upper fort to his dwelling, situated where Wilhelmus Bouck now resides, (nearly two miles distant from said fort,) to secure his crops, taking with him a girl named Nancy Lattimore, a female slave, and her three children, two sons and a daugh-

ter. As the family were making preparations in the evening to retire to rest, Seth's Henry and three other Indians entered the house and captured them, securing the little plunder it chanced to contain. The leader was disappointed in not finding either of Mr. Bouck's three sons at home.

Dick Bouck, the youngest of the slaves, as the enemy entered the house, sprang behind a door which stood open, and escaped their notice. The other prisoners were taken out, and as they were about to start on their journey, Master Dick, *afraid of being left alone in the dark*, made some noise on purpose to attract their attention, and one of the Indians re-entered the house and "hustled him out." Speaking of his capture, Dick said, "*I made a noise, like a tam fool, and de Ingens took me dar prisoner.*" The party then set forward, and the captor of Dick (then eight years old) took him upon his back, and carried him as far as the residence of the late Gen. Patchin, a distance of seven or eight miles, where they encamped. The enemy expected to be pursued the following day, when it would undoubtedly become known that Mr. Bouck had been captured, and before daylight the march was resumed. After sunrise, Dick had to travel on foot with the other prisoners; and on the following night encamped at Harpersfield. At this place lived a Scotch tory, named Hugh Rose, who made jonny-cake for the Indians, which the latter shared with their prisoners. "*Dis*, said Dick, "*was de fus food de gabe us fore we lasf home.*" While on their way from the Patchin place to Harpersfield, the party, for obvious reasons, avoided the beaten road, but Dick, who said "*de bushes hurt him pare feet*," embraced repeated opportunities to steal into it, and sometimes traveled several rods in it, before his violation of their commands was observed. He often was cunning enough to leave the road just in time to avoid detection, but repeatedly he was caught in "the forbidden path," when he was put upon a new trail, with a threat or a slap. Rose furnished provisions for the enemy to subsist on a part of the way to Canada, and they left his house about 8 o'clock the next morning.

William Bouck, Jr. was out on a scout from the upper fort at the time his father's family was captured. The scout consisted of Bouck, John Haggidorn, Bartholomew C. Vrooman, (the first husband of Mrs. Van Slyck before mentioned,) and Bartholomew Haggidorn. They were sent on the errand which had led so many scouts in that direction—to anticipate, if possible, any hostile movement of the enemy. The Indians, with their prisoners, had been gone but a very short time from the house of Rose, before the scout named entered it. They enquired of Rose if there were any Indians in that vicinity. "Yes," he replied, "the woods are full of them." They desired to know in what direction they were from his house, when, instead of sending them from, he directed them towards the enemy. The footsteps of the scout arrested the attention of the Indians, who halted, leveled their rifles, and waited the approach of the former. The Indians were on a rise of ground, and as Bouck looked up he saw Nancy, waving her bonnet, with fear depicted in her countenance, which signal he rightly conjectured was intended to warn him of danger, and direct his flight in another course. He instantly divined the reason of her being there, and apprising his comrades of their peril, he turned and fled in an opposite direction. At that instant the Indians fired, and John Haggidorn was wounded in the hip, and a ball passed through the cravat of Bouck, which was tied around his neck. Haggidorn fell, but instantly sprang up and followed his companions. Had they known that there were but four of the enemy, they would no doubt have turned upon them and rescued the prisoners. The scout returned to the house of Rose, and as Haggidorn was too severely wounded to proceed, he was left by his friends, who assured the tory that if harm befel their wounded friend, or he was not well taken care of, his own life should be the forfeit.

As was anticipated, Bouck was missing in the morning, and as soon as information of the fact reached the fort, Capt. Hager despatched about twenty men, under the command of Lieutenants Ephraim Vrooman and Joseph Harper, in pursuit of the captors. They rightly conjectured the enemy would take the usual route to-

wards Harpersfield, and after proceeding in uncertainty until they discovered the track of Dick in the path, which they at once supposed left the impression of his *heel*, they pushed forward rapidly. The scout had gone but a few miles towards the fort, when they fortunately fell in with the pursuing party, and instantly joined it. After arriving at the place where Haggidorn had been wounded, they soon struck upon the trail of the enemy, which ascended the high grounds near. The Indians had gone but a mile or two beyond where the scout saw them, and halted to rest upon a narrow plain near the top of the mountain, where three of them remained with the prisoners, while Seth's Henry ascended to the summit, which afforded a most extended prospect, to reconnoitre. The Indians left with the prisoners, feeling themselves secure, had laid down their packs, and were in the act of mending their mocasons, as the Americans were cautiously winding their way up the acclivity.

Seth's Henry, from his elevated position, completely overlooked his approaching foes, and feeling satisfied that they were now safe, he had just returned to his companions and told them they were out of danger from pursuit, as the Americans gained a view of them within rifle-shot distance. The lives of the prisoners being endangered, several of whom were nearest the Americans, prevented the instant discharge of a volley of balls, but as Leek had a fair aim upon an Indian, he snapped and his rifle unfortunately missed fire. Hearing the click of this lock, the Indians instantly sprang to their feet, seized their weapons, and leaving their prisoners and packs, giving a whoop and exclaiming *Yaskees*, fled barefooted down the mountain in an opposite direction. The prisoners were then unbound, grateful for so unexpected a deliverance, and the party descended the hill, and proceeded to the dwelling of Rose. A kind of litter was there prepared, on which Haggidorn was carried by his friends to the fort, where, under proper treatment, he recovered.

If Seth's Henry, was foiled in taking Mr. Bowck and his family to Canada, it did not discourage him from making other attempts to surprise some of the Schenarie citizens. Familiar as he was

with every hill, dale, ravine, and cluster of shrubbery along the river, he was enabled often to approach the very dwellings of the settlers, without being observed.

He told *Mrs. Van Slyck*, after the war, that on Tuesday, one week before the destruction of Vrooman's Land, and about a week after his capture of William Bouck, himself and two other Indians, one of whom was called William, his sister's son, lay concealed near a spring, in an angle of a fence, by the thick shade of a sassafras tree, not far from her father's dwelling, when she with a pail went to the spring for water—that William wanted to shoot her, but he would not let him.

Mrs. Van Slyck stated, that on the day referred to, her father, Samuel Vrooman, was at work, with several others, in a field of grain not far from his house, where a small party of riflemen from the fort were in attendance to guard them; and that she was at home alone to prepare their dinner. When she had it about ready, she went with a pail to the spring mentioned for water. As she approached it she saw the mocasoned track of an Indian, which she at once recognized as such, but recently made in the soft earth near it. In an instant she was seized with the most lively apprehension; and the first thought—as she felt her hair move on her head—was, that she would turn and run; but this would betray to the enemy her knowledge of their supposed proximity; whereas, if she did not pretend to notice the track, if her scalp was not what the foe sought, she would doubtless escape. She therefore walked boldly up to the spring, dipped her pail, with little caution about roiling the water, and walked back to the house. She expected, at every step, to hear the crack of a rifle discharged at herself, and passing several stumps on the way, this, and this, thought she, will shield me for the moment. On arriving at the house, she set down her pail, and ran to the field (leaving several gates open) to tell her friends what she had seen at the spring. The soldiers visited it and saw the Indian foot-marks, but the makers, observing their approach, had fled.

Seth's Henry pretended, after the war, that nothing but his friendship for her saved informant's life at the spring, but the fear

of pursuit from the riflemen near, was, perhaps, the real cause of her escape. William, who leveled his rifle at her, and was prevented firing by the caution of his leader, had, for many years, held a grudge against her. Being often at her father's house before the war, she one day accused him of stealing geese eggs, which he resented, although perhaps guilty, drew his knife and struck a blow at her, the blade of which entered the right thigh, leaving an indelible evidence of his resentment.

On the same day that those Indians were concealed at Vrooman's spring, they were discovered elsewhere by some person in the settlement. Seth's Henry told Mrs. Van Slyck, that the night preceding his visit to the spring, he, with his companions, had entered the kitchen of Ephraim Vrooman's dwelling, and finding a kettle of suppawn, made use of it for their suppers. Two Germans lodged in the house that night; a fact unknown to the Indians, as was to the former the nocturnal visit of the latter. After procuring food at this house, they went to the barn of Samuel Vrooman, where they tarried over night. Thus were an armed and savage foe often prowling about the very dwellings of the frontier settlers of New York, without their knowledge.

Seth's Henry, at his interview, also stated to Mrs. Van Slyck, that some time in the summer of 1780, *seven* Indians (of which number, was the Schoharie Indian, William,) went into the vicinity of Catskill to capture prisoners. That they visited a small settlement where the whites were from home, and soon succeeded in capturing *seven* lusty negroes. The latter generally went so willingly into captivity that they were seldom bound in the daytime. After traveling some distance, the party halted upon the bank of a spring to rest: when the Indians, leaving their guns behind them, descended to drink. The favorable moment was seized by the prisoners to liberate themselves, and snatching up the guns, they fired upon their captors, four of whom were killed: the other three fled, and William was the only one who recovered his trusty rifle. The negroes, with the six guns, returned home in due time, without further molestation.

Capt. Richtmyer, who resided near the Middle fort, was told

by Joseph Ecker, (a tory who returned to Schoharie after the war,) that on a certain day, four tories, a Shafer, a Winne, a Miller, and another person he would not name, (supposed by Captain R. to have been Ecker himself,) were secreted all day near his meadow, not far from the present site of the county poor house, in the hope of making him their prisoner. The grass was cut, and they expected the captain would be there to cure it, but fortunately Col. Zielie ordered him to superintend the making of cartridges at the fort, and next day several soldiers were sent from the fort to guard the workmen. Thus was the design of the enemy frustrated. Four places of concealment were made and occupied by the tories near the field, by setting up green twigs, which were afterwards noticed by the citizens.—*George, a son of Capt. Richtmyer.*

On the second and third days of August, 1780, the settlements in and around Canajoharie were laid waste by a body of Indians under Brant. Sixteen of the inhabitants were killed, between fifty and sixty made prisoners; over one hundred buildings burnt, and a large amount of property destroyed. This happened at a time when the Tryon county militia were mostly drawn off to Fort Schuyler. See letter of Col. Clyde to Gov. George Clinton, dated, "Canajoharie, August 6th, 1780;" first published in the *Annals of Tryon County.*

At this time a party of the enemy appeared in the vicinity of Fort Dayton. Two Indians had the temerity to approach a barn, in which two men were threshing, on whom they fired. The flailstick in the hands of one was nearly severed by a bullet, but the young farmers escaped to the fort. It was well garrisoned, and a party of Americans being then mounted, pursued and killed both the Indians. The enemy succeeded, however, in capturing the wife of Jacob Shoemaker, and her son, a lad some ten years old, who were in a field picking green peas. On their arrival in Canada, Sir John Johnson, paid seven dollars to ransom the mother, who, leaving her son in captivity, arrived at Albany some time after, from whence she was carried to Schenectada in a wagon, by Isaac Covenhoven, and from thence she accompanied

one Walradt, a former neighbor to Herkimer.—*Isaac Covenhoven*, who was at Fort Dayton during the invasion.

It is probable the Schoharie settlers had been notified of the misfortunes of their friends in the Mohawk Valley, and were anxious to guard against surprise. The Schoharie forts were feebly garrisoned at the time, but small parties of soldiers were constantly engaged during the day, to guard the more exposed inhabitants while harvesting an unusual growth of wheat.

Early on the morning of the 9th of the same month, a scout, consisting of Coonradt Winne, Leek, and Hoever, was sent by Capt. Hager, from the Upper fort to reconnoitre in the western part of the present town of Fulton. The scout was instructed to return immediately to the fort *without firing*, if they saw any of the enemy, and were not themselves discovered. In that part of Fulton, now called Byrnville, or Sap Bush Hollow, some five or six miles distant from the Upper fort; the scout seated themselves upon a fallen tree, near the present residence of Edwin M. Dexter, to eat their breakfast; and while eating, a white man, painted as an Indian, made his appearance within some fifty yards of them. Stooping down as nature prompted, he became so good a mark, that Leek, who was a dead shot, not seeing any one else, could not resist the temptation to fire, and levelling his rifle, the tory was instantly weltering in his gore. As surgical instruments were afterwards found upon his person, he was supposed to have been a surgeon, in the employ of Brant. A small stream of water near, which took its name from the killing of this man, whose carcase rotted by it, has been called Dead Man's creek, ever since.

Leek had not had time to reload his piece, before the enemy appeared in sight. The scout fled, hotly pursued by a party of Indians, who passed their dying comrade without halting. Hoever had to drop his knapsack, containing some valuable articles, to outrun his pursuers, which he afterwards recovered, the enemy supposing it contained nothing more than a soldier's luncheon. They were so closely followed that they were separated, Leek flying towards the fort, while Hoever and Winne were driven into the woods, in an opposite direction. The two latter afterwards

saw, from a place of concealment near the Schoharie, in the present town of Blenheim, their foes pass up the river with their prisoners and plunder. Leek reached the fort in safety, after a race of nine or ten miles, but not enough in advance of his pursuers, to have a seasonable alarm given to warn the citizens of impending danger. The single discharge of a cannon was the usual signal; if the discharge was repeated, it was considered hazardous to approach the fort, while a third successive discharge served to assure the citizen that he could not possibly reach the fort, without encountering the enemy.

The invaders, consisting of *seventy-three* Indians, almost naked, and *five* Tories—Benjamin Beecraft, Frederick Sager, Walter Allet, one Thompson, and a mulatto, commanded by Capt. Brant, approached Vrooman's Land in the vicinity of the Upper fort, about ten o'clock in the morning. They entered the valley on the west side of the river, above the Onistagrawa in three places; one party coming down from the mountain near the present residence of Charles Watson: another near that of Jacob Haines, then the residence of Capt. Tunis Vrooman; and the third near the dwelling of Harmanus Vrooman, at that time the residence of Col. Peter Vrooman, who chanced to be with his family, in the Middle fort.

Capt. Hager, had gone on the morning of that day, to his farm, attended by a small guard, to draw in some hay nearly seven miles distant from the Upper fort, the command of which then devolved on Tunis Vrooman, captain of the *associate exempts*. Although the citizens of Schoharie had huts at the several forts where they usually lodged nights, and where their clothing and most valuable effects were kept during the summer, the female part of many families were in the daily habit of visiting their dwellings to do certain kinds of work, while their husbands were engaged in securing their crops. On the morning of the day in question, Capt. Vrooman also returned home to secure wheat, accompanied by his family, his wife to do her week's washing. The command of the garrison next belonged to Ephraim Vrooman, a lieutenant under Capt. Hager, but as he went to his farm

soon after Capt. Vrooman left, it finally devolved on Lieut. William Harper, who had not a dozen men with him in the fort. The wife of Lieut. Vrooman also returned home to do her washing.*

Capt. Vrooman, who had drawn one load of wheat to a barrack before breakfast, arose on that morning with a presentiment that some disastrous event was about to happen, which he could not drive from his mind; and he expressed his forebodings at the breakfast-table. Four rifle-men called at his house in the morning and took breakfast with him, but returned to the fort soon after, to attend the roll-call. Capt. Vrooman's family consisted of himself, wife, four sons, John, Barney, Tunis and Peter, and two slaves, a male and female. After breakfast, Capt. Vrooman and his sons drew another load of wheat to the barrack: and while it was unloading, he stopped repeatedly to look out towards the surrounding hills. The grain had not all been pitched from the wagon, before his worst fears were realized, and he beheld descending upon the flats near, a party of hostile savages. He descended from the barrack, not far from which he was tomahawked, scalped, and had his throat cut by a Schoharie Indian named John: who stood upon his shoulders while tearing off his scalp.

Many of the old Dutch dwellings in Schoharie (the outside doors of which were usually made in two parts, so that the lower half of the passage could be closed while the upper remained open,) had a kitchen detached from them: and such was that of Capt. Vrooman. His wife was washing in a narrow passage between the buildings, where she was surprised and stricken down. After the first blow from a tomahawk, she remained standing, but a second blow laid her dead at the feet of an Indian, who also scalped her. The house was then plundered and set on fire, as was the barn, barracks of grain, hay, &c.; and the three oldest boys, with the blacks, made captives. Peter, who fled on the first alarm and concealed himself in some bushes, would probably have escaped the notice of the enemy, had not one of the blacks

* Mrs. Vrooman said to her friends as she left the fort, "This is the last morning I intend to go to my house to work." Her words were truly prophetic.—*Andrew Leuchs.*

made known his place of concealment: he was then captured and taken along a short distance, but crying to return, he ran to a fence, to which he was pursued by the tory Beacraft, who caught him, and placing his legs between his own, bent him back and cut his throat; after which, he scalped and hung him across the fence.* Vrooman's horses were unharnessed and given to the boys to hold, as were several more, while the Indians were plundering, killing cattle and other animals, and burning buildings. While the Indians were shooting hogs in the pen, a ball went through it and lodged in the calf of John's leg; which instantly brought him to the ground: the horses then ran towards the river, and two of them were not recaptured.

The party which entered the valley at the dwelling of Colonel Vrooman, were led by Brant in person, who hoped to surprise a rebel colonel; but the services of that brave man were to be spared to his country. His family were also at the Middle fort.† From the dwelling of Col. Vrooman, which was a good brick tenement, and to which was applied the torch of destruction, Seth's Henry (with whom the reader has some acquaintance,) led several of the enemy to the dwelling of Lieut. Vrooman; which stood where Peter Kneiskern now lives. His family consisted of himself, wife Christina, sons Bartholomew and Josias E., and

* Of the murder of this Vrooman boy, Beacraft took occasion repeatedly to boast, in the presence of the prisoners, while on his way to Canada; as also he did on several subsequent occasions: and yet he had the impudence to return, after the war closed, to Schoharie. His visit becoming known, a party of about a dozen whigs one evening surrounded the house he was in, near where the bridge in Blenheim now stands, and leading him from it into a grove near, they stripped and bound him to a sapling; and then inflicted *fifty lashes*, with hickory gads, upon his bare back, telling him, at intervals of every *ten*, for what particular offence they were given. He was then unbound, and given his life on condition that he would instantly leave that valley, and never more pollute its soil with his presence. He expressed his gratitude that his life was spared, left the settlement and was never afterwards heard from by the citizens of Schoharie.—*Captivity of Patchin, corroborated.*

† From what has appeared in several publications, a belief has gone abroad that Col. Vrooman was a cowardly, weak man. The impression is very erroneous, he was far otherwise, as the author has had *indubitable and repeated evidence.*

daughters Janett (four years old,) and Christina, (an infant,) two Germans, Creshiboom and Hoffman, (captured at Burgoyne's surrender,) and several slaves: the latter, however, were at work near the river and escaped. On hearing the alarm, Vrooman ran to his house, caught up his infant child and fled into the corn-field, between his dwelling and the Onistagrawa, followed by his wife leading her little daughter; said to have had long and beautiful hair for a child. He seated himself against the trunk of a large apple tree, and his wife was concealed a few rods from him in the thrifty corn. The road is now laid between the orchard and mountain, but at the period of which I speak, it passed over the flats east of the dwelling. His family would, no doubt, have remained undiscovered, had Mrs. Vrooman continued silent; but not knowing where her husband was, and becoming alarmed, she rose up and called to him in Low Dutch—"Ephraim, Ephraim, where are you: have you got the child?" The words were scarcely uttered, when a bullet from the rifle of Seth's Henry pierced her body. When struggling upon the ground, he addressed her in the Dutch tongue, as follows: "Now say—*what these Indian dogs do here?*"* He then tomahawked and scalped her.

While Seth's Henry was killing and scalping Mrs. Vrooman, the tory Beacraft killed her little daughter with a stone, and drew off her scalp: in the mean time a powerful Indian directed by her call to her husband's place of concealment, approached him and thrust a spear at his body, which he parried, and the infant in his arms smiled. Another pass was made, was parried, and the child again smiled. At the third blow of the spear, which was also warded off, the little innocent, then only five months old, laughed aloud at the supposed sport; which awakened the sympathy of

* This Indian had held a grudge against Mrs. Vrooman for many years. She was a Swart before marriage; at which time, and just after the ceremony was performed, she entered the kitchen of her father's dwelling, and seeing several young Indians there, she imprudently asked a by-stander, in Dutch, *what do these Indian dogs do here?* He remembered the expression, and his resentment led him directly to her residence, to revenge the insult.—*Mrs. Van Slyck.*

the savage, and he made Vrooman a prisoner. His sons and the Germans named, were also captured.



THE ONISTAGRAWA AND SCENE BENEATH IT.

Upon the top of this mountain (called by some Vrooman's Nose) which afforded a fine prospect of the valley, the enemy were often secreted to watch for exposed citizens.

John Vrooman, who dwelt where Bartholomew Vrooman now lives, was captured, as were his wife and children. His house was set on fire but put out. Adam A. Vrooman, who lived where Josias Vrooman now does, fled to the upper fort, three-fourths of a mile distant, after being twice fired upon by the enemy. He had a pistol, and when the Indians gained upon him he presented it and they would fall back, but renewed the chase when he set forward. He was pursued until protected by the fort. On his arrival he was asked how he had escaped: his answer was, "*I pulled foot.*" From that day to his death he was called *Pull Foot Vrooman*. His wife was made a prisoner.

Simon Vrooman, who resided where Adam P. Vrooman now does, was taken prisoner, as were his wife and son Jacob, a boy three years old. John Daly, aged over sixty, Thomas Meriness, and James Turner, young men, Abbey Eliza Stowits, a girl of seventeen summers, the wife of Philip Hoever, the widow of Cornelius Vrooman, and several slaves not mentioned, were also captured in Vrooman's Land, making the number of prisoners, in all, about *thirty*. The *five* persons mentioned, were all that were killed at this time. Brant might easily have taken the Upper fort, had he known how feebly it was garrisoned.

Abraham Vrooman, who happened to be in Vrooman's Land with his wagon, on which was a hay-rack, when the alarm was given, drove down through the valley and picked up several of the citizens. On arriving at the residence of Judge Swart, who lived in the lower end of the settlement, he reined up and called to Swart's wife, then at an oven a little distance from the house—“Cornelia, jump into my wagon, *the Indians are upon us!*” She ran into the house, snatched up her infant child* from the cradle, returned, and with her husband bounded into the wagon, which started forward just before the enemy, tomahawk in hand, reached their dwelling. Vrooman had a powerful team, and did not stop to open the gates which they obstructed the highway, but drove directly against them, forcing them open. Passing under an apple tree, the rack on his wagon struck a limb, which sent it back against his head, causing the blood to flow freely. He drove to the Middle fort, which was also feebly garrisoned.

The destructives burnt at this place *nine dwellings* and the furniture they contained, with their barns and barracks, which were mostly filled with an abundant harvest. *Ninety good horses* were also driven, with their owners, into captivity. Large slices of meat were cut from the carcasses of the cattle and hogs, strewed along the valley, and hung across the backs of some of the horses, to serve as provisions for the party on their way to Canada. Among

* The child thus seasonably rescued, is now the wife of David Swart, of Shelby, Orleans county, New York.

the plunder was a noble stud-horse, belonging to Judge Swart, and as the Indians were afraid of him, he was given young Tunis Vrooman to ride, who rode him all the way to Canada. His having the care of this horse caused the enemy to treat him kindly : and he was not compelled to run the gantlet.

Before Seth's Henry left the settlement, he placed his *war club*, which he believed was known to some of the citizens, in a conspicuous place and purposely left it. Notched upon it were the evidences, as traced by the Indians on similar weapons, of *thirty-five scalps* and *forty prisoners*. No very pleasing record, as we may suppose, for the people of Schoharie, who knew that several of their own valuable citizens helped to swell the startling, though no doubt authentic record of the deeds of this crafty warrior.

On the arrival of Leek at the upper fort, after being so hotly pursued, John Hager, then at work on his father's place, hearing the alarm gun of the fort, mounted a horse, and rode up and informed Capt. Hager that the buildings were on fire in the valley below. The hay on his wagon, which was unloading in the barn, was quickly thrown off, and the few inhabitants of that vicinity were taken into it, driven into the woods, and concealed near Keyser's kill. Henry Hager started with the wagon, when a favorite dog, that began to bark, was caught by him, and fearing it would betray the fugitives, he cut its throat with his pocket knife. After proceeding some distance from his house, having forgotten some article he intended to have taken with him, he returned and found it already occupied by the enemy, who made him their prisoner. He was nearly eighty years old ; and as he was known to the enemy to be a firm whig—his sons (one a captain) and several of his grandsons all being in the rebel army—he was treated with marked severity.

The enemy, on leaving Vrooman's Land, proceeded with their booty and prisoners directly up the river. A grist-mill, owned by Adam Crysler, a tory captain, and standing on the Lower Brakabeen creek, as called in old conveyances, which runs into the Schoharie near the residence of Benjamin Best, was sacked of the little flour it chanced to contain, and then set on fire—the tories,

with the enemy, declaring that the whigs of Vrooman's Land should not be longer benefited by said mill. Several fragments of the mill-stone used in this mill, which was an *Esopus conglomerate*, have been recovered from the creek since 1841, and deposited in the cabinets of geologists. The Indians, on their arrival in that part of Brakabeen, burned all of Captain Hager's buildings, and Henry Hager's barn. Henry Mattice and Adam Brown, Tories, accompanied the enemy from Brakabeen of their own accord.

I have said that the families of Capt. Hager and his father were concealed at Keyser's kill. The waggon which carried them from their homes was left in one place, the horses in another, and the women and children were sheltered beneath a rock in a ravine of the mountain stream before named. After the women and children were disposed of, Capt. Hager, taking with him his brother, Lawrence Bouck, Jacob Thomas, and several others who composed the guard mentioned, proceeded from Keyser's kill with due caution, to ascertain if the Upper fort had been captured. It was nearly noon when Brant left the vicinity of that fort, and nearly night when its commandant and his men reached it. On the following day the party concealed near Keyser's kill, were conveyed to the fort.

The 10th day of August, 1780, was one of sadness and mourning for the citizens of Vrooman's Land, some of whom had lost near relatives among the slain, and all, among the captives, either relatives or valued friends; while the destruction of property to individuals was a loss, especially at that season of the year, when too late to grow sustenance for their families, to be most keenly felt and deplored. The burial of the dead took place the day after their massacre, on the farm of John Feeck, near the fort. The bodies of Capt. Vrooman, his wife and son, were deposited in one grave, and that of Mrs. Ephraim Vrooman and her daughter, in another. The remains of the former body presented a most horrid appearance. Left by her murderers between the burning buildings, her flesh was partly consumed, exposing her entrails.

When the dead body of Mrs. Ephraim Vrooman was first discovered in the corn-field, it was evident that she had partially re-

covered, and had vainly endeavored to staunch the flowing blood from the wound in her breast, first with her cap or some portion of her dress, and afterwards with earth, having dug quite a hole in the ground. This woman, as one of her sons assured the writer, had had a presentiment for nearly three years that she was to be shot. She fancied she felt a cold substance like lead passing through her body, from the back to the breast, and often the same sensation returned. She frequently expressed her fears in the family that she was to be shot, and singular as the coincidence may appear, when she was shot, the ball passed through her body where she had so long imagined it would. Nearly three years before her death, in the month of November, several of their apple trees were observed to be in blossom, which freak of nature the *superstitious* also considered an unfavorable omen. After her death those circumstances were often discussed by her relatives.

The destroyers of Vrooman's Land proceeded on the afternoon of the same day about fifteen miles, and encamped for the night. The scalps of the slain were stretched upon hoops, and dried in the presence of the relative prisoners, the oldest of whom were all bound nights. As the party were proceeding along the east shore of the Schoharie, in the afternoon of the first day, after journeying some six miles, Brant permitted the wife of John Vrooman, with her own infant, and that taken with Ephraim Vrooman, to return back to the settlement. The reader may desire to know the fate of this child, whose infant smiles had saved its father's life. Its mother being already dead, it was necessarily weaned, but at too tender an age, and three months after, it sickened and died. On the morning after the massacre, the line of march was again resumed, and when about half way from the Patchin place to Harpersfield, Brant yielded to the repeated importunities of several of his female captives, and perhaps the seasonable interference of several tory friends living near, and permitted all of them, (except Mrs. Simon Vrooman,) with several male children—nearly one half the whole number of prisoners—to return to Schoharie. Brant led the liberated captives aside nearly half a mile to a place of concealment, where he required

them to remain until night. The female prisoners, when captured, were plundered of their bonnets, neckerchiefs, beads, ear-rings, etc., which articles, of course, they did not recover. Word having been sent to Schoharie that those prisoners had been liberated, Maj. Thomas Ecker, Lieut. Harper, and Schoharie John, a friendly Indian, who lived at Middleburgh during the war, met them not far from where Mrs. Vrooman had been left the preceding afternoon, with several horses; and placing three persons on a horse, they conveyed them to the Upper fort, where they arrived just at dusk.

On the evening of the second day, the journeying party reached the Susquehanna. The prisoners were obliged to travel on foot, with the exception of Mrs. Vrooman, and the lad, Tunis Vrooman. The provisions on the journey were fresh meat after the first day, as they obtained but little flour, which was boiled into a pudding the first night. The meat taken from Schoharie was soon fly-blown, but when roasted in the coals it was feasted upon by the hungry prisoners. They progressed slowly, because they were obliged to hunt deer, and catch fish for food on their way, generally having enough to eat, such as it was. Fish they usually roasted whole in the coals, ate the flesh, and then threw the offal away. The parties that had been led by Brant and Quakock, a chief second in command, into Tryon county and the Schoharie settlements, assembled at Oquago, when several hundred of the enemy, with their prisoners, came together.

The prisoners again separated at Oquago, and proceeded by different routes to Canada. *Josias E. Vrooman*, who was among the prisoners, claimed by Seneca warriors, went with a party up the Chemung. In the Genesee valley he saw a stake planted in the ground, some five or six feet high, which was painted red and sharpened at the top, on which was resting a fleshless skull. The Indians told the prisoners it was the skull of Lieut. Boyd, who was killed in that vicinity the year before, and each of them was compelled to hold it. Whether the skull shown the Vrooman's Land prisoners was that of Lieut. Boyd, or some other prisoner who had shared a similar fate, cannot now be known; but as se-

veral teeth were found with Boyd's and Parker's bones, when removed, there can remain no doubt but that the head of Parker, which was identified by an old scar, was buried by his comrades.—*C. Metcalf, Esq.*

While on their journey, Lieut. Vrooman was once led out between two Indians—one armed with a tomahawk and the other a knife—to be murdered. Standing on a log which lay across a marsh or mire between the Indians, he addressed them in their own dialect, and finally made his peace with them for some trifling offence, and his life was spared. The old patriot Hager was cruelly treated all the way, and was several times struck upon the head with the flat side of a tomahawk.

I have said that John, a son of Capt. Vrooman, was wounded by the enemy while holding his father's horses. He was compelled to travel on foot, and as no attention had been paid to the wound, it was soon filled with maggots, becoming exceedingly painful. The Indians began to talk of killing him, if he failed to keep up with them. His namesake, who was his uncle, then assumed the care of him, and dressed his wound with tobacco leaves; when it gained a healthy appearance, and he was greatly relieved. While going through the Tonawanda swamp, the ball worked out and the wound soon after healed.

On arriving in the Genesee valley, Mrs. Vrooman, then quite ill, was left there. Adam Vrooman, a brother of her's, from below the Helleberg, on hearing of her captivity, paid her ransom. Some of the prisoners were twenty-two days on their journey. On arriving at the Indian settlements, they were compelled to run the gantlet; when some of them were seriously injured. A girl twelve or fourteen years old, who was among the prisoners made in the Mohawk valley, was nearly killed; and Simon Vrooman and John Daly were so badly hurt, that they both died soon after arriving at their journey's end. Vrooman's widow afterwards married a man named Markell, in Canada, and remained there. Meriness was taken to Quebec, and while there, attempted, with several other prisoners to blow up the *magazine*. The design was discovered, and the conspirators were nearly whipped to

death—two of them did die ; but Meriness finally recovered. Negro captives were seldom bound while on their way to Canada, nor were they compelled to run the gantlet. They hardly ever returned to the States to remain, generally adopting the Indian's life. A negro belonging to Isaac Vrooman, usually called Tom Vrooman, who was taken to Canada at this time, became a waiter to Sir John Johnson, and in that capacity, passed through the Schoharie and Mohawk valleys in the following October. He was, however, captured by Joseph Naylor, an American soldier, near Fort Plain, and with him an elegant horse belonging to his new master, with saddle, holsters and valise.

The greater part of the Schoharie prisoners were taken to Niagara, where they remained until November : when they proceeded in a vessel down Lake Ontario. A new ship, called the Seneca, left Niagara at the same time with the commandant of that garrison, and *three hundred and sixty* soldiers on board. Not long after they sailed, a terrible storm arose, and in the following night, the Seneca foundered and all on board were lost. The vessel contained a large quantity of provisions destined for Montreal, which were also lost. The prisoners were conveyed down the St. Lawrence in bateaus ; and some of them suffered much for the want of suitable clothing, being barefooted, although the ground was covered with snow where they encamped on shore over night. They arrived at Montreal about the first of December ; from which place, after a few weeks stay, they were removed nine miles farther, to an old French post, called South Rakela, where they were confined until the summer following, and then exchanged for other prisoners. While confined at the latter place, their provisions consisted, for the most part, of salt-beef—not always of the best kind—and oat-meal ; the latter being boiled into puddings and eaten with molasses. When an exchange was effected, most of the Schoharie prisoners, with others, were sent on board a vessel to the head of Lake Champlain, where they were landed, and from which place they returned home on foot, via. Saratoga. They arrived at Schoharie on the

30th day of August, after an absence of little more than a year. Mr. Hager was gone about eighteen months.*

* The particulars relating to the destruction of Vrooman's Land, and the captivity of the citizens, so minutely detailed, were obtained from *Tunis*, a son of *Capt. Tunis Vrooman*; *Josias E. and Bartholomew E.*, sons of *Lieut. Ephraim Vrooman*; *Maria*, daughter of *John Vrooman*, and afterwards the wife of *Frederick Mattice*, who were captives at the time; the manuscript of *Henry Hager*; *Mrs. Susannah Van Slyck*, daughter of *Samuel Vrooman*; *Angelica*, daughter of *Col. Peter Vrooman*, afterwards the wife of *Major Peter Vrooman*; *Lawrence Bouck* and *Lawrence Mattice*.