

CHAPTER XIII.

An affair of love: for Cupid was unchained even in perilous times. Timothy Murphy, who so providentially escaped from the enemy in Sullivan's campaign, returned to Schoharie in the summer of 1780. While on duty there in the fall and winter of 1778 and spring of 1779, Murphy became acquainted with—*yes, enamored with*—Miss Margaret, daughter of John Feeck, whose house was inclosed at the Upper fort. She was an only child, and at that period was considered, in prospective wealth, the richest girl in the Schoharie settlements.

Perhaps the reader would be gratified with a brief outline of the personal appearance of a young lady, whose artless smiles could, at the age of fifteen or sixteen, win the affections of a rough soldier, and cause him, at the earliest opportunity, to transfer the services he considered due his country, to the fertile valley in which she dwelt. The writer has conversed with not a few who were well acquainted with her, several of whom were numbered among her most intimate female friends, all of whom ascribe to her the character of a virtuous and amiable girl.

At the period of which I am writing, she had just passed "sweet seventeen," and was entering her eighteenth year; a period in the life of woman peculiarly calculated to convey and receive tender impressions. She was rather tall, and slim; possessing a genteel form, with a full bust; and features, if not handsome, at least pretty and very insinuating. Her hair was a rich auburn; her eyes a dark hazel, peering from beneath beautiful eye-lashes; her teeth clean and well set; her nose—but alas! that was large, and altogether too prominent a nasal organ to grace the visage of a

perfect beauty. Her ruby lips and peach-colored cheeks, however, contrasted charmingly with her clear white skin, besides, nature had given her, what all men like to see, a neatly turned ankle. Miss Feeck's literary acquirements, we must conclude, were limited. She had not been sent to a fashionable boarding school, and instructed in the genteel and desirable arts, to the entire exclusion, indeed *abhorrence*, of a practical knowledge of domestic household duties, as is too often the case at the present day. She, however, possessed a good share of common sense, was not too vain to be instructed, and practically understood house-keeping. Uniting, as she did, a very amiable disposition with her other good qualities, it is not surprising that she won the soldier's affections, and proved to him an agreeable and happy companion.

Murphy, who was twelve years the senior of Miss Feeck, was a stout, well made man, with rather a large body and small limbs, was not quite as tall as his lady-love, but was handsomely featured, having jet black hair, black eyes, and a skin shaded in the same dye. He possessed great muscular power, was fleet on foot, and wary in the covert as an Indian. He indulged too much in profane levity—was passionate, and often rough-tongued; but was warm-hearted and ardent in his attachment, and proved himself a kind and indulgent husband, an obliging neighbor and worthy citizen. He returned to Schoharie soon after the enemy desolated Vrooman's Land.

He had been back but a short time before it became apparent that what had, at an earlier day, seemed only a partiality on his part, and a juvenile preference on hers—won, perhaps, by his "deeds of noble daring"—was ripening into ardent, reciprocal love. But when did love's torrent ever flow smoothly on? As soon as their mutual preference became known to the parents of Miss Feeck, every effort was made by them to prevent the young lovers from meeting; and when they did chance to steal an interview, which sometimes happened when duty called him from the Middle to the Upper fort, it was, of necessity, brief and unsatisfactory. Every effort was made by the parents to prevent those interviews, and Margaret was prohibited from leaving her father's

house, *alone*, on any account. Indeed, she was not allowed to go out of the picketed inclosure to milk, unless a vigilant cousin, or some member of the family attended her—while Murphy was forbidden to enter the house under any pretext. The couple were plighted, but a serious obstacle interposed between them and Hymen's altar. The law then required the publishing of the bans for several Sabbaths in a religious meeting. Those marriage proposals were usually read by a clergyman, but as the Schoharie flocks were left to the mercy of the wolves, that of Murphy and his affianced was publicly read for several successive Sabbaths by John Van Dyck, (a good old deacon, living in the vicinity,) at a conference meeting held at the Middle fort, a certificate of which ceremony was placed in the hands of the groom.

Cupid is seldom wanting in stratagems, and agents to execute them. Although it had been contemplated by the parents to confine Margaret in a small room of the house, and she was so closely observed, still Murphy found repeated opportunities to nullify the paternal edict of non-intercourse, and communicate with his betrothed—not by letter, for he could not write—but through the agency of a trusty female named Maria Teabout, who was, as I have elsewhere stated, part native. Maria was the bearer of five or six verbal messages between the couple. As she was about to start on one of those errands, expressing some fear about her own safety, Murphy, whose character she almost venerated for the act, placed his hand upon her head, and repeating a few words—no doubt a lingo of his own, as he was at no loss for words—told her that no harm would ever befall her *if she proved faithful to him*. She assigned as a reason why she escaped injury or captivity in the war, the protection invoked at that time. As every thing was in a state of preparation for consummating their happiness, on a certain day about the 1st of October, 1780, Maria was sent with the final message from Murphy to his sweetheart—which was, in substance, *Come, for all things are now ready*. A report had some time before reached the ears of Margaret's parents, that she had engaged to marry Murphy; which report, in answer to their interrogatories, she denied, hoping by *white lies*

to lull their suspicions. Still their vigilance was not relaxed, and it was with no little difficulty Maria found an opportunity at this time to inform Margaret, that her lover had the necessary certificate of publication, and would meet her that evening near the river, with a horse, and convey her to the Middle fort. The answer to Murphy's last message was brief and artless; "*Tell him,*" said Margaret, "*I will meet him near the river, at the time appointed.*"

The day designated for a meeting with her lover, was one of no little anxiety to Margaret. The thought of leaving the home of her childhood against the wishes of her parents—possibly forever, and uniting her future destiny with that of a poor, though brave soldier, whose life was surrounded with constant danger, to say nothing of future prospects, was one of serious moment, as may be imagined, to a reflecting mind. But love will brave every danger, and encounter every hardship. In the course of the day she had matured her plan for eluding the vigilance of her parents, who little suspected her intended elopement; and with impatience she awaited the setting sun. Margaret dared not change an article of apparel, as that would excite suspicion, and in any thing but a bridal dress, she went at the evening hour for milking, to perform that duty, accompanied as usual by a neighboring female cousin on the same errand. The task accomplished, the girls separated, her cousin to go to her own home at a little distance from the fort, and our heroine to the presence of her mother. On arriving with her pail of milk, some of which had been emptied upon the ground, she told her mother that one of the cows, it not being with the rest, had not been milked.—"Then," said her mother, "you must go after it, that cow *must* be milked." This was placing matters precisely as she desired, and taking another pail she left the house with a light heart—barefooted, the better to disguise her real object. Hanging her pail upon a stake at the cow-yard, she stole away unobserved in the direction of the river, and was soon concealed from observation by the darkness then fast obscuring the Onistagrawa. Murphy, "as the evening shades prevailed," accompanied by three of his trusty comrades well armed, left the Middle fort, crossed the river and proceeded

along its western bank to meet his intended. Having gone full two-thirds of the way to the Upper fort, and above where she was to await his arrival, without meeting her, he began to apprehend his plan had proven abortive, and that her parents—aware of her intention—had taken proper means to prevent her leaving home. Satisfied in his mind that such was the case, he began to retrace his steps,—gently calling her name as he with his friends proceeded homeward. On arriving just below the present site of the Middleburgh bridge, great was his surprise to hear her sweet voice respond to his call from the opposite shore of the river. Fearing she might be followed, our heroine had not stopped where her lover had agreed to seek her, but went forward. Not meeting him, she supposed some military duty had called him away, and believing her intention to leave home had already been discovered, by finding the cow in the yard and the pail near, she resolved to proceed alone to the Middle fort, and had actually *forded the Schoharie*, the water at the time being quite cold, before the voice of Murphy greeted her ear. On his crossing the river, she mounted the horse behind him, and they rode to the fort where they were heartily welcomed by its inmates, about eight o'clock in the evening.

Some little time elapsed before the absence of Margaret was known at the paternal dwelling, which favored her flight; but when the discovery was made, it aroused the most lively apprehension of the parents, for her safety. Scouts were daily returning to the fort, with reports of either seeing parties of the enemy, or evidence of their recent proximity to the settlement; and the first supposition was, that one of those straggling parties had surprised and carried her into captivity. But on finding the empty milk-pail, and learning from Margaret's cousin that the cows had all been milked while she was present, and that Maria had been up that morning from the fort below—the elopement of the daughter was rendered evident. Margaret's father, accompanied by Joachim Follock, a soldier in the Upper fort, proceeded without delay to the Middle fort, the former often calling in *Low Dutch* to his *Mar-chra-che*, to which call the Onistagrawa feebly echoed,

“*Scratch-you.*” On approaching the fort late in the evening, they were challenged by a sentinel, and not being able to give the countersign, came near being fired upon. Mr. Feeck could not, by the most earnest entreaties, prevail upon his daughter to return home with him that night—still, to know that she was safe and unharmed, he felt amply compensated, after so great an excitement, for his journey to the fort, and the danger of having a bullet sent through his head. He returned home, as we must suppose, little suspecting what the second *act* was to be in the comedy, of which he was not even to be a spectator, much less an actor.

As Margaret had left home in a sad plight to visit Hymen’s altar, her young female friends at the fort lent her from their own wardrobes, for the occasion—one a gown, another a bonnet and neckerchief, a third hose, shoes, &c. ; until she was so clad as to make a very respectable appearance. Early in the day succeeding the elopement—preliminaries having been arranged the evening before—Murphy and Miss Feeck, accompanied by Miss Margaret Crysler, William Bouck, an uncle of the latter, and Sergt. William Lloyd, a Virginian, set out in a wagon furnished by Garret Becker, for Schenectada. Although Murphy had the certificate of Mr. Van Dyck, a worthy old gentleman who was pretty well known abroad, that a notice of his intention “to commit matrimony” had been legally read, still it was feared the father might take effectual means in the cities of Albany and Schenectada to prevent the marriage of his daughter : and in anticipation of such an event, Maj. Woolsey, who then commanded the fort, gave Murphy a furlough to go to the head-quarters of the Commander-in-chief, if necessary, to have the marriage take place.

The party went to Schenectada, where Murphy on his arrival purchased silk for a gown, and other articles necessary to complete the female attire of a bride, and the immediate requisition of several dress-makers of that ancient town hastily fitted them to the pretty form of our heroine ; soon after which she was united in wedlock to the heroic Murphy—who had discovered himself successful, thus far, not only in the art of *war*, but of *love*. The couple were united, if I am rightly informed, by the Rev. Mr. Johnson,

who preached in Princetown several years, and subsequently in Harpersfield. On the following day the party returned to Schoharie, where the successful groom was loudly cheered by his compatriots in arms. During the absence of the wedding party, the officers of the garrison, assisted by the young ladies in the vicinity, made preparations for their reception in a becoming manner, at the house of Peter Becker, who then lived where Ralph Manning now resides—but a short distance from the Middle fort. A sumptuous feast was prepared for the numerous guests, which was followed in the evening by a ball, given in honor of the happy event. Nearly all the officers of the garrison were among the guests; on which occasion the beauty and fashion then existing in that valley were brought together. After the delighted company had partaken of a rich supper, the tables were removed and the guests began to dance. The young wife, from her modest and unsophisticated demeanor, as an old lady who was present assured the author, appeared to very good advantage in the evening, and “*was indeed a pretty bride.*” She, however, had previously been allowed to go into company but little, and her knowledge of dancing was limited—consequently at this ball, given in honor of her nuptials, she was led while performing her part of the dance.

Only two or three figures were danced, when a scout returned to the fort and reported, that they had fallen in with a party of Indians not far distant, whereupon the linstock was applied to the alarm gun, and its thunder went booming along the valley, echoing and re-echoing among the surrounding mountains—a most unwelcome sound at the moment, but its import too well understood to be disregarded; and the party all repaired to the fort to finish the festival.

Now for a reconciliation. When Margaret's parents learned that she was married—that she was in truth the *wife* of Murphy—they were at first highly offended, and resolved never again to admit her into their house. But *time*, which has healed worse wounds than theirs—which were occasioned more by the *poverty* of their son-in-law than by his demerits—began to work its own

cure of wounded pride. The mother, who felt the absence of an only child, who had been her constant companion, the most sensibly, was the first to yield to the dictates of nature; and Maria, who had acted as a stair-case between the lovers, was now employed by Mrs. Feeck, to obtain for her an interview with her daughter. Margaret, if she had not dimpled cheeks, or a hand of French, and a foot of Chinese dimensions, had an affectionate and feeling heart, and longed to see her mother. The meeting, according to appointment, was held in a field not far from her father's dwelling: but as she dared not approach her mother, much less enter the picketed inclosure which surrounded their dwelling—fearful that an effort would be made to detain her—they conversed on a grass plot for some time, at a little distance apart. The parent was anxious to effect a reconciliation with Margaret and have her come home, but she could not think of admitting her Irish husband with her. "Never," said the daughter with spirit, "as much as I love home and my parents, will I enter your house until my husband, who is quite as good as I am, enters it with me!" As Margaret was about to return to the fort below, her mother requested her to remain until she could go to the house and get her something to eat. She soon returned with a pie, which—as the daughter retreated on her approach—she set down on the ground, then retired a little distance, and had the satisfaction to see her darling—her only child—advance, take it up, and eat of it. This act was witnessed by *Mrs. Frederick Mattice*. After eating part of the pie, she set out to go back, and the moistened eye of the mother followed, with womanly pride, the retreating footsteps of her daughter.

The father had not been present at the interview mentioned, and his heart also yearned to embrace his daughter, although pride prevented its acknowledgment. Repeated messages were sent to Margaret, offering full pardon on her part for the past, urging her to visit the paternal dwelling: to all of which, her answers were similar to the one previously given her mother. After a little time, it was hinted that Murphy intended to take his wife to Pennsylvania, which report caused the parents of Margaret much anx-

ity. A new mediator, in the person of Cornelius Feeck, a relative of the young bride, was now deputed to wait upon the latter. Among other fine sayings of his, which were uttered to induce her to return home, he told her "how much her father thought of her." "Yes," she replied, with dignity and some warmth—conscious of the change in her personal appearance which the goodly apparel bought by her generous husband had wrought—"When at home, I had two or three striped linsey petticoats and a calico frock: now see how I am drest!" she added, at the same time flouncing the skirt of a rich silk gown—"This shows who cares most for me!" She also intimated the intention of soon accompanying her husband to Pennsylvania.

On learning the result of their kinsman's interview with their daughter, who had heard from her own pretty mouth (which, gentle reader, was neither too large nor too small,) that she expected soon to remove to another state, the anxiety of the parents became exceedingly irksome. The fear of losing their daughter forever, wrought a wonderful change in the feelings of the parents, and false pride now yielded at once to the Christian spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation; and the next message from them offered a full pardon to groom and bride for past offences, promising to bury in oblivion all former animosities—receive them home with a festival such as the Germans and Dutch were proverbially known to make at weddings in former days—and treat them as children deserved, having no bad habits, and no serious fault; unless *genuine love* could be so called. The liberal terms proposed were accepted: a treaty of family alliance formed; and at an appointed time, the happy couple, accompanied by about *thirty* officers and soldiers, and a party of citizens—the whole attended by martial music—proceeded to the Upper fort. As the guests drew near the entrance, Mr. Feeck ran forward, threw open the gate, and extending to Murphy and his wife each a hand, welcomed them home. Said he, as he grasped the hand of the patriot soldier, "You have my daughter, but you shall not take her to Pennsylvania: I have enough to support us all." Murphy was a man of powerful lungs, and giving the old man's hand a

gripe he long remembered, replied in his usually loud voice—"She is no longer your's, Masther Fake ; she is my wife. I did not marry her to get your property, as I can take care of her myself." As the party entered the house, the parents both wept for joy at the restoration of their child ; and the good things were abundantly served to the guests, whose hearts—if I dare tell it in temperance times—"were made glad with good wine." This reconciliation took place about a month after the marriage ; from which time, the couple made their home at Mr. Feeck's. On the death of her parents, Margaret inherited their valuable estate, and her sons still live on the patrimonial farm.—*Mrs. Angelica Vrooman, Mrs. Van Slyck, Mrs. Frederick Mattice, Maria Teabout, and others.*

Most of the riflemen who continued in Schoharie during the war, and some of the more fearless citizens, enlisted to perform the duty of scouts, more or less of whom, were kept constantly out from the Schoharie forts, in the summer season. They were called *Rangers*, a term very applicable. Their duties were at times of the most dangerous and fatiguing kind, and not unfrequently in the fall and spring of the year, when they had to encamp on the ground at night without a fire, they suffered almost incredible hardships. The music of those scouts, was that produced by a *conch-shell*, which was carried by the leader, and served to call the party together when they chanced to become separated in the woods.—*David Elerson.*

If the duties of the Schoharie Rangers were peculiarly hazardous and perplexing, still they saw some happy hours. Among the soldiers at the Middle fort were two fiddlers, who often played for their comrades to dance, when the latter could find female partners. On a certain occasion, the officers at the Middle fort, resolved to have a dance. The soldiers concluded to have one on the same night, and spared no pains or expense to rival the officers. They sent to Albany for *ten gallons of wine* among other *necessaries*, and succeeded in getting the ladies all away from their epauletted superiors, so as entirely to prevent the latter from dancing. My informant said that this dance cost him *thirty dollars*, and he supposed it cost several others quite as much.—*Elerson*

In the fall of 1780, a small party of the enemy, a dozen or more in number, entered the Ballston settlement, under the direction of Joseph Bettys, a subaltern officer in the British service, known in border difficulties by the familiar name of Jo. Bettys. He resided in the Ballston settlement previous to the war, and when the contest began, took up arms for the states, but afterwards entered the British service, proving to his former neighbors a source of frequent terror.

Major Andrew Mitchell, of Ballston, having visited Schenectada on business, there learned, possibly through the Oneida runners, that a small detachment, mostly tories, had left Canada, the destination of which was unknown. In the afternoon, Mitchell set out for home on horseback, accompanied by one Armstrong, a neighbor. After proceeding several miles, and arriving on the north side of Allplass creek, the thought occurred to him, that possibly *he* might not be free from danger, as a liberal reward was paid for the persons or scalps of officers. He was riding through the woods at the time, and scarcely had the thought visited his mind, which caused him to quicken the speed of his horse, when he was hailed in a commanding voice to *stop*, by a man who sprang upon a fallen tree near the road. The Major put spurs to his gallant steed and was soon out of sight of the highwayman, who fired at him as he passed. Armstrong could not keep up with his companion, but as his person was not sought for, he escaped unmolested.

Before the Revolution, Jo. Bettys and Jonathan Miller, another celebrated tory, dwelt, one on each side of Maj. Mitchell. After the transaction occurred which is noticed above, it was satisfactorily ascertained that the man who fired on the major, was his old neighbor Miller; who had accompanied Bettys in his expedition, and then had at his beck some half a dozen genial spirits. The ground being sandy, the horse's hoofs made but little noise, and the militia officer was not observed until opposite the party, secreted on both sides of the road expressly to capture him.

An enterprise of Bettys in the Ballston settlement, within a few days of the affair related, proved more successful. He sur-

prised and captured Aaron Banta, and his sons, Henry and Christian, Ensign Epenetus White, and some half a dozen others. The elder Banta was left on parole, and the rest of the prisoners, who were among the best citizens in the vicinity, hurried off to Canada. The escape and return of part of them with Col. Gordon, who was taken the year before, is already known to the reader.—*Charles and Hugh, sons of Maj. Mitchell.*

A scout, consisting of Timothy Murphy, Bartholomew C. Vrooman, William Leek, and Robert Hutt, under the command of Sergeant Lloyd, left the Middle fort only a day or two after the celebration of Murphy's marriage, expecting to be gone eight or nine days. Their absence was protracted to the thirteenth day, when they were welcomed at the fort, on the evening preceding the invasion of Schoharie by Sir John Johnson. The scout while absent, visited Punchkill, Sharon, Cherry-Valley, Unadilla, Susquehanna, Delhi, Minisink, and Cairo; seeing the tracks of Indians in several places, but none of their persons. They however captured a tory prisoner at Prattsville, and brought him to the fort. The return of this scout was most opportune for the welfare of the garrison, as will soon appear.

In the latter part of September, 1780, Sir John Johnson left Niagara with about five hundred British, Royalist, and German troops, and pursued the road opened the year before by Gen. Sullivan, most of the way from the Genesee valley to the Susquehanna; where he was joined by a large body of Indians and Tories there assembled under Capt. Brandt; making his effective force as estimated at the several forts, one thousand men. There is a tradition, that several hundred of the Indians who left Niagara with Brant, returned, owing to a quarrel. Johnson's object in making this long journey so late in the season, was to ravage the beautiful valleys of the Schoharie and Mohawk rivers, when the crops of the husbandman were secured and could be burned, and if possible to capture and destroy the three Schoharie forts.

From Charlotte river, the eastern branch of the Susquehanna, the enemy proceeded toward the Schoharie, and passing down Panther creek, arrived near its shore in the evening of October

16th, and encamped just above Ottegus-berg,* a romantic mountain on the west side of the river, near the upper end of Vrooman's Land.

Judge Brown assured the author, that two days before the arrival of the enemy, he obtained a knowledge of their approach through a sister who was tory-fied, and communicated the fact to Col. Vrooman; whereupon Marcus Bellinger, the supervisor, was sent to Albany to procure a wagon-load of ammunition, in anticipation of such an event. Bellinger was detained in the city from some cause, but arrived in safety at the Lower fort, on the evening of the 16th inst.

Col. Johnson intended to resume his march sufficiently early on the morning of the 17th,† to pass the Upper fort, situated about three miles from his encampment, unobserved, and arriving at the Middle fort, just at daylight, surprise and capture it; supposing, with very good reason, that the possession of it would soon cause the surrender of the other two more feebly garrisoned. The enemy, passing along the bank of the river, crossed it nearly opposite, and not one third of a mile distant from the Upper fort. Owing to some unknown delay, the troops were not in motion as early as they had intended, and the rear of the army was yet upon the bank of the river, when Peter Feeck, who had started to go after cows just as day began to dawn, discovered it, and notified a sentinel, who discharged his musket. The troops were instantly called out, and the alarm gun thrice fired. Captains Jacob Ha-

* This mountain was so called by the early German settlers, and signified the Panther-mountain, the creek taking its name from it near which it enters the Schoharie. A mountain situated on the opposite side of the river above Panther mountain, distant from the latter not more than a mile or two, was called by the early Germans, Wock-holter-berg; and signified the Berry mountain—so called from the unusual quantity of juniper or other berries found upon it. The Schoharie by its serpentine course, flows at the base of both mountains, giving its banks a rugged appearance.

† *Col. Stone*, in the "*Life of Brant*," erroneously dates this transaction on the 16th of October. *Campbell*, who wrote at an earlier period, has given its true date, and so far as it goes, a much more authentic account of the invasion. Col. Stone blended part of the invasion in August, with that in October, and incorporated several popular errors in the narrative.

ger, and Joseph Harper, both men of acknowledged courage, with two companies of troops, numbering it is believed, less than one hundred men, were in this fort at the time. The command of the garrison devolved on Capt. Hager, the senior officer, who sent a party of volunteers to the river early in the morning, among whom were Henry Hager, his son, Lawrence Bouck, and Isaac Vrooman. They saw several of the enemy on the opposite shore, and crossed the river and captured an Indian who lagged behind his fellow. As they approached him he fired upon them, the ball striking the powder-horn of Vrooman. When they drew up to fire, he sprang behind a tree, which received three of the bullets discharged at him: he then fled, abandoning his horse, a poor black mare with a sore back, which, with a heavy pack on, was taken to the fort.

The Middle fort, at this, time was under the command of Major Woolsey, a continental officer, unfitted for the important duties of the station he held, who is said to have been a *broken officer* before going to Schoharie.* Col. Vrooman was fortunately in the fort, as were Lieut. Col. Zielie and Maj. Thomas Ecker, officers belonging to his regiment. Captains Lansing, Pool, Hall, Miller and Richtmyer, were in the fort on that day, several of whom were continental officers, and all, it is believed, were men of real courage. The fort was garrisoned by about two hundred continental troops, or nine months' men, as then called, and between one and two hundred militia. Once during the night preceding the invasion, the sentinels gave a partial alarm, caused by the approach of a hostile scout.

Some of the citizens and soldiers were already up at the Middle fort, and hearing the alarm gun of the fort above, the drums were quickly beating to arms. Livingston, an officer of artillery, was looking for a match to respond to the evidence of danger, when Susannah Vrooman ran to the house and brought him a live coal,

*When Major Woolsey, who was remarkably spry, first went to Schoharie, and was seen to leap fences, and give other evidences of agility, he was taken to be very smart, and was, of course, much respected, until found wanting in courage. He was the first man who wore a garment, since called a roundabout, in the Schoharie valley, considered at the time a novelty.—*Mrs. Angelica Vrooman.*

with which the gun was instantly fired. The voice of a brass nine pounder was thrice responded to from the Lower fort, and war's thunder rolled along the valley. The discharge of the alarm guns at the forts, became the signal for the foe to apply the incendiary torch, which was accordingly done to the buildings of Frederick Mattice, situated on the east side of the river in Clauverwy, (where Edward Pindar now resides) and opposite that part of Vrooman's Land which was desolated the preceding August. The barn of Mattice was the first of the beacon lights seen at the Middle fort that day, the number of which, from buildings, barracks of grain, and stacks of hay, viewed at that place, was estimated by an eye-witness, at *three hundred*. An invasion having been anticipated, the citizens lodged at the several garrisons, and the movement of the hostiles commencing thus early, no individuals were found in their dwellings except such as were either tinctured with royalty, or chose to brave the coming dangers to save their property.

A strong northeast wind continued to blow throughout the day, and served to fan the flames of destruction. The weather was also exceedingly cold, and snow in squalls almost constantly filled the air. Maj. Ecker called for volunteers soon after daylight, and *nineteen* bold spirits left the fort with him to learn the cause of alarm, just as the fire of Mattice's buildings was discovered. As the wind then blew almost a gale, the soldiers left their hats, and substituted kerchiefs tied closely about their heads. The head of Timothy Murphy was adorned by the one that had concealed the pretty neck of his young bride, placed there by her own trembling hands; the head of Bartholomew C. Vrooman with that of Susannah Vrooman, his intended, (to whom he was married about two weeks afterwards,) and those of others by the shawls of friends or lovers. Maj. Ecker, among whose followers were Lieut. Martinus Zielie, Sergeant Lloyd, Murphy, Elerson, Hoever, Vrooman, Richard Hanson, Peter Van Slyck, Wilbur, Joachim Folluck, Adam Shell, Tufts, and Leek, proceeded from the fort in the direction of the present village of Middleburgh, and fell in with the enemy's advance not far from the site of the Brick church. Murphy

was on the extreme right toward the river. Ecker's men now fired upon the enemy from behind a board fence, and some of them several times. From his position, Murphy discovered that the enemy was extending his right to cut off their retreat to the fort, and communicated the fact to Maj. Ecker, who instantly ordered a retreat. Murphy, although he had the greatest distance to run, was the last man who left the ground, and remained at the fence until he obtained a fair extra shot, when he also fled to the fort. Hundreds of balls were fired within gun-shot at the volunteers, and several boards in the fence from which Murphy fled, were literally riddled with bullets; and yet not one of the party was wounded. Most of the volunteers were riflemen, and wore short linen frocks, through which several of the enemy's shot passed, as also they did through other parts of their dress, and one struck the powder-horn of Vrooman.

Colonel Johnson had given orders to his troops to spare the churches in Schoharie, but the Dutch church, standing opposite the burying ground, and near the present residence of Dr. James Van Gaasbeck, in Middleburgh, was burned. It is said to have been set on fire by William Crysler, a tory, owing to a grudge he held against some of its members.—*Andrew Loucks*. This church was built after the model of the ancient Dutch church in Albany, with a steeple rising from the centre. It was well finished within, and painted white outside.—*Mrs. Van Slyck*.

Early on the morning of the 17th, Maj. Joseph Becker, then in command of the Lower fort, knowing the lack of powder at the Middle fort, sent two men, each with a bag containing the necessary article on his back to that garrison. Hearing the alarm guns of the Upper fort, and the response of the other two, they increased their speed, and fortunately arrived at their destination just as the enemy invested that post. Mattice Ball, one of the two, and from whose lips this fact was obtained, said they were detained there during the day.

The enemy, crossing the flats obliquely, passed the fort near the hill east, and halted on a small eminence nearly north of it, in the orchard of Peter Becker, near the present residence of Peter

I. Borst. At this time many of the Indians were scattered over the flats, engaged in the work of destruction. As the enemy were proceeding from the river toward the hill east of the fort; Lansing, a captain of the Albany militia, followed by a party of volunteers, sallied in that direction and met the advance, with which he exchanged several shots. *Elerson*, stated that at this time he was behind a board fence near the wood, beyond his comrades, when he observed an officer in a red coat advance from the British ranks, at whom he discharged his rifle. He saw the enemy's guns leveled at him, and instantly fled to the fort. He supposed that *seven hundred* fired at him in this flight, yet he escaped from them untouched. The fence from which he ran, like that which had concealed *Murphy* just before, was completely peppered with bullets. Capt. *Miller*, who commanded a company of *Claverack* militia, then in the fort, called to *Elerson's* wife, to see her husband run. Col. *Vrooman*, also, as *Elerson* was informed, watched his flight with intense anxiety. A shot sent among the British troops from the brass-cannon, while they were firing on *Elerson*, caused some confusion among *Johnson's Greens*. They were then passing the most exposed part of the fortress. There was a small gate on the east side, through which Capt. *Lansing* and his men entered.

Col. *Johnson* had with him a small mortar, and a field-piece—the latter a brass six-pounder. The carriage for the cannon was carried in parts, and required screwing together. They were made ready to fire, at the stand he had chosen in *Becker's* orchard, and a cannonading and bombardment commenced, while a constant firing was kept up with small arms, but generally at too great a distance for the latter to take effect. Three shells were well thrown from this position by the enemy at the fort, and many cannon-shot were fired but with less precision, the most of them passing entirely over the destined object. The first shell fired, sung in the air like a pigeon, and exploded directly over the house; and as its fragments fell upon the roof, *Mrs. Richtmyer*, an old lady, then in an upper room, who had been an invalid, and unable to rise alone from her bed for a long time, was so frightened that she

sprang from it, and went below, surviving the effect but a short time. The second shell fell within the pickets near the well, and while the fuse was burning off and the ball dancing in a mud hole, every person exposed to its explosion had ample time to gain a respectful distance, and it scattered its fragments without injuring any one.* The third shell fell through the roof of the main building, and lodging on a pile of feather-beds in the chamber, which were deposited upon several chests of bedding, it exploded tearing the beds in pieces, doing little other mischief, except that of frightening Christian Rickard, an old bachelor, who chanced to be in the room, almost to death. The explosion completely filled the room with feathers, and groping his way down stairs, Rickard made his appearance below, where many of the women and children were, covered with feathers, and spitting down from his mouth, which sudden fear had caused him to open too widely for such an atmosphere. When asked what had happened, he replied in Low Dutch, (as kindly rendered by a Dutch friend, at my elbow) "*Ik donk de duyvel is op de solder, de veri vliegen so rondt dat ik niet zien con.*"—I think the devil is in the chamber, for the feathers fly around so that I cannot see. The beds were set on fire but were easily extinguished, as water had been provided for such emergency.

After the firing had been continued for some time by the enemy, and several shells thrown, it suddenly ceased, and a white flag was seen to leave the British ranks and advance toward the fort. The flag-bearer was accompanied on his right by an officer in a green uniform, and on his left by a fifer, playing Yankee-doodle. When the flag was discovered approaching, Maj. Woolsey gave orders to have it admitted, but not another officer in the fort, to their credit be it said, was in favor of its admission; and Murphy and Elerson, who conjectured *what their fate might*

*It is stated in the *Life of Brant*, that a woman brought several buckets of water from a well without the works exposed to the enemy's fire, for the thirsty soldiers; one of whom, when required, dared not perform the feat. *This story has no foundation in truth.* The well was within the pickets, and afforded an abundant supply of water, as I have been assured by nearly a dozen credible witnesses, who were in the Middle fort at the time alluded to.

be, should the enemy learn the actual strength of the garrison, and succeed in its capture—determined, so the latter informed the author, that before the flag should enter the fort, one or the other of them should shoot Woolsey himself. On that day, Murphy used his double-barreled rifle,* and as the flag drew near he fired upon it—not with the intention of killing its bearer, or either of his companions, as is generally supposed, but to say, in effect, “approach any nearer and you are a dead man.” The trio with the flag halted, faced about and marched back to their former station.

When Murphy fired on the flag, Maj. Woolsey was not present, having visited his quarters to prepare himself to enforce submission to his commands; for soon after, he returned pistol in hand, and demanded who had dared to disobey his orders? “I fired on the flag,” said Murphy. Maj. W. then threatened the brave soldier with instant death if he repeated the act; and the latter, who believed the willingness of the commandant to admit the flag proceeded from cowardice alone, retorted with warmth—“Sooner than see that flag enter this fort, will I send a bullet through your heart.” Seeing an evident disposition in all the officers present to sustain Murphy—for they had rallied round him to a man, (not from a desire to see just commands violated, but to defend the fort at all hazards,) the major walked towards the house. In this time, the flag attended as before, had again advanced, and Maj. W. had not proceeded two rods when Murphy again fired, and its bearer faced about and retired.

During this parley the firing on both sides had ceased, with the exception stated, and was not resumed until after Col. Johnson, from his great desire to get a flag into the fort, despatched it by the same party a third time. It is possible that from his position he had, with a spy-glass, observed the movement of Maj.

*Much has been said about Murphy's double-barreled gun—and more than it merited: at least, so a son of Murphy assured the writer he had often heard his father say. He had such a gun, while at Schoharie, but it was so heavy he seldom used it, except on garrison duty. An anecdote told by Campbell, of the use of this gun, I have not been able to authenticate so as to warrant its insertion.

Woolsey. They had not proceeded as far as at first, however, when a third bullet from Murphy's rifle passed over their heads, saying, in effect, "thus far, but no farther;" and they returned to the ranks. The firing was then renewed.

Maj. Woolsey, after the spar with Murphy, entered the dwelling where the women and children were confined; but their jeers savoring too much of satire, he left their presence and sought safety elsewhere. The cellar under the kitchen part of the dwelling was occupied as a magazine, and Col. Vrooman, to conceal the deficiency of powder, brought it himself when wanted. All the officers in the fort, except Woolsey, divested themselves of their hats early in the siege and substituted cravats: while several of them laid off their coats, and taking guns, all fought manfully.* As powder was needed Col. Vrooman laid down his gun and sword and went to get it. Near the cellar door he encountered Maj. Woolsey, who had just left the presence of the women, as may be supposed, not in very good humor. "Maj. Woolsey, is this your place," intorrogated the brave colonel, "who are placed here to defend this fort?" He replied, half dead through fear—"Col. Vrooman, the men will not obey me, and I give up the command to you." At this moment a cannon shot struck the house and fell harmless at their feet. The colonel instantly caught it up, and playfully extended it to the major, with the simple exclamation—"Send that back to them!" With perfect indifference the coward replied, "That I think would be s—n work." The fire of the Dutch colonel was instantly ignited at the indifference and filthy expression of the commandant, and speaking in his usually quick manner, he rejoined—"Maj. Woolsey, had I my sword I would run you through with it." The major, perhaps ashamed of his conduct, wheeled and walked off, and the colonel got his powder and returned to his men, exclaiming as he gave them the necessary article, "Fire away my brave lads, we have plenty of ammuniton." The troops were gratified to learn that

* In the early part of the war the captains all carried guns, but at a later period they were prohibited from bearing them, from a complaint that while loading they neglected duties to their men.

the command of the fort was surrendered to him, and obeyed his orders with alacrity. More than once when he went for powder, as he afterwards confessed, did his hair rise on his head, not from fear of the enemy, but lest the small supply of ammunition should be completely exhausted, and the foe, becoming conscious of it, storm their works.—*Mrs. Angelica Vrooman.*

The firing of shells was not renewed by the enemy, and the discharge of grape and round shot was only continued at intervals from the fort, as the supply of powder would not warrant its constant use. Destructionists were to be seen at this period of the siege, scattered over the flats in almost every direction. The garrison was too weak to make a bold sortie, but many small parties were sent out during the day to harass the enemy, and save, if possible, a large barn belonging to John Becker, which stood almost in the direction of Col. Johnson's position: around which clustered numerous stacks of hay and grain. As several Indians were seen approaching the barn, a party from the fort went to meet them. Several shots were exchanged, and Sergeant Cooper, of Albany, received a wound in one leg; and was instantly borne off by two of his comrades to the fort: but while proceeding thither, he received a ball through his body, of which his carriers were unconscious. As they entered the fort, Susannah Vrooman enquired where Cooper was wounded? The reply was, "in the leg." She remarked that he bled from the body, and on laying him down, it was ascertained that he had received a wound there, of which he soon after died.

About this time, several volunteers entered the fort, who had been pursued by the enemy. Miss Vrooman stood near the entrance in an exposed situation, and Samuel Reynolds, as he entered, said to her—"Susannah, get away from here or you will be shot!" The words were scarcely uttered before a ball entered his own head, of which wound he died nine days after. He was from New Jersey: was a likely soldier, and died lamented. Jeremiah Loucks was also wounded in one arm, and Tufts slightly in the head—the latter, while entering the fort—who, with the two mortally wounded, it is believed, were all that were injured

belonging to the Middle fort. The wounded were properly attended by Doct. John King, the settled physician at that place, who acted as surgeon during the war.

Nicholas Sloughter, who acquired the reputation of a good soldier, had a very sick child in the fort, and as he was leaving it, with a party of volunteers under Murphy, was told that his child appeared to be dying, and he had better remain. "I can do the child no good," was his reply; "my duty is to protect the *living* as well as the *dying*." Before his return, he and Murphy took a prisoner, dressed in a green uniform; who gave his name as Benjamin Butts. He was a New England man, who had been made prisoner some time before, and while in Canada, had enlisted into the British service as a *ranger*, to embrace an opportunity to desert. He returned home soon after.—*Mrs. Van Slyck*.

During the seige of the Middle fort, a scout under Lieut. Martinus Zielie, captured a French Indian while stealing a horse owned by Harmanus Bouck. Lewis Denny, a French Indian, nearly white, (mentioned as having scalped a squaw and afterwards married her,) joined the Americans in the Revolution, and remained at Middleburgh. Being in the fort when Lieut. Zielie returned with his prisoner, the latter was so saucy, that Lewis, who could understand his insolent gibberish, instantly knocked him down. This prisoner is said to have been an Indian interpreter.—*George Richtmyer*.

Elerson had command of a few rangers during the day; one of whom, John Wilbur, fell in with a tory, catching a horse, near the present residence of Peter Swart, and asked him to what party he belonged? He replied, "*the Indian party*;" and instantly received a bullet from Wilbur's rifle. He took off his scalp, and as he entered the fort with it in his hand, Maj. Woolsey told him he ought to have his own scalp taken off. This man and another, shot during the day, were supposed to be Indians at the time, but proved to be tories from the vicinity of Albany.—*David Elerson, Mrs. Van Slyck and George Richtmyer*.

While Elerson was out with his party, he saw an Indian approaching the stacks at the barn near the fort, at whom he fired.

The warrior ran off towards the woods east of the barn. In the following spring, a dead Indian was discovered in that direction, by Bill, a slave owned by John Becker, while getting fire-wood. He was found sitting with his back against a tree, having his gun between his knees and resting in his arms. His eyes had been dug out, as supposed, by birds. This Indian was presumed to have been the one fired on by Elerson.—*Elerson, Mrs. Van Slyck and Judge Hager.*

We have seen that Murphy did not spare his rifle balls when the Middle fort was invested. Needing an additional supply, Angelica Vrooman, as she informed the author, took Murphy's bullet mould, lead, and an iron spoon, went to her father's tent, and there moulded a quantity of bullets for that fearless ranger, amidst the roar of cannon and musketry.

Jacob Winne, of Albany, was commissary at the Schoharie forts; occupying a part of the Becker house, two rooms in which are said to have accommodated *five families each*. Samuel Van Vechten, of Albany, was press-master, and Douw Fonda, forester, all of whom, it is believed, were in the Middle fort when besieged by the troops under Johnson. The commissary was a little *corned* during the action, and finding Maj. Woolsey stowed away in one of the small family huts, bored him not a little. Not only the commissary, but many others, some of whom were females, made themselves merry at the coward's expense, jeering and teasing him with perfect impunity.—*Mrs. Van Slyck and Andrew Loucks.*

Col. Johnson remained with the regular troops near the Middle fort, until his destructives had effectually demolished every species of property they possibly could in that vicinity, when he moved down the valley about 3 o'clock, P. M. After the enemy were out of sight, Maj. Woolsey ordered several apple trees near to be cut down and brought around the fort, fearing the enemy might return and attempt to storm the works. He left Schoharie the next day, and was never seen again leaping fences on horseback, in that delightful valley.—*Andrew Loucks and others.*

As may be supposed, the most intense anxiety was felt at the Upper, while the firing continued at the Middle fort; and soon after it began, Capt. Hager gave orders that in case the enemy appeared before that fort, the women and children should go into a long cellar under the Feeck house. While preparations were in progress to resist an attack should it be made, Mary Haggidorn, a buxom lass of goodly proportions, who partook of the spirit which animated her brothers, and who had heard the cellar order with other feelings than those inspired by fear, stepped up to the commandant and thus addressed him: "Captain, I shall not go into that cellar! Should the enemy come I will take a spear, which I can use as well as any *man*, and help defend the fort." Capt. Hager was gratified to find a soldier where he little expected one, and admiring her fearless spirit, he replied, "Then take a spear, Mary, and be ready at the pickets to repel an attack!" She did take a spear, nor was it discarded until the danger was past. As soon as the firing ceased the second time at the fort below, Capt. Hager dispatched Ensign Peter Swart, William Zimmer, and Joseph Evans to learn whether their worst fears were to be realized—whether the British cross had taken the place of Freedom's stars. On their return with the report that all was safe, the welkin rang with *huzzas for the American flag*.—*Manuscript of Judge Hager.*

What loss the besiegers sustained in their attack on the Middle fort is uncertain, but it is supposed to have been several times greater than that of the Americans. Where had formerly stood the barn of Judge Borst, charred bones were found, supposed to have been those of several of their number which they had purposely burned. What induced Sir John to abandon further attempts to take the fort is uncertain, but it is conjectured that from the firing on the flag he was led to suppose the troops were conscious of being able to defend it. The enemy succeeded, during the day, in burning part of the grain which had been stacked near the fort for safety.—*Mrs. Van Slyck.*

Maj. Becker had at his command at the Lower fort, on the arrival of Sir John Johnson in its vicinity, Capt. Stubrach with his

company of militia, a part of the *associate exempts* under Captain Peter Snyder, (who succeeded Capt. Vrooman at his death,) and a body of Norman's-kill militia ; making his effective force, from one hundred and fifty to two hundred men.—*Peter Vrooman**

Early in the morning, Jacob Van Dyck, Anthony Brontner and Barney Cadugney were dispatched by Maj. Becker to ascertain the cause of the firing at the forts above. Arriving at the house of Jacob J. Lawyer, they found his wife and a wench at home preparing to bake. At the house of Hendrick Shafer, the females were also at home, where they saw food upon a table. The women of those families chose to brave the dangers of the day, to save their dwellings from the general conflagration, while the men were in the fort below. The scout proceeded as far as Bellingher's, and saw the British troops about a mile distant. Near this place, they met the advance of the enemy, and were pursued by seven Indians led by Seth's Henry. They were fired upon, and the balls struck near them. A ball striking the fence by Cadugney's side, threw a splinter into his arm. He called to his companions that he was wounded ; and near the present residence of Peter Richtmyer, Van Dyck drew the splinter from his arm, telling him he was not hurt much : which he would hardly believe. Gaining upon the Indians, who had halted to reload their pieces, Cadugney took occasion, as the latter were out of sight, to conceal himself in a hollow stump—near which they passed without discovering him.

When the firing ceased in the Middle fort for the flag to advance, the inmates of the fort below were apprehensive it had been taken, and Major Becker dispatched another scout, consisting of George Snyder, Jacob Enders, John Van Wart and John Hutt, to ascertain whether the fort had been captured. The second scout met the first near where Storm Becker resides, and joined it in flight. They were hotly pursued, and were obliged to scatter. Enders and Snyder were together, and as the enemy were leveling a volley of balls at them, they sprang behind a rock, against

* He was a major of militia after the war. He married Angelica, daughter of Col. Peter Vrooman.

which several of the leaden messengers spent their force. Enders, who was fleet as an antelope, often took trees to favor the flight of his less speedy companions, which always treed the enemy. Van Dyck struck off into the woods east of the residence of Jacob H. Shafer, again struck the flats below, and regained the fort in safety. Enders and Snyder also arrived there before the enemy. Van Wart (who is said to have put on his go-to-meeting hat before he left the fort,) had observed on his way up, several apple-pies just taken from the oven at Lawyer's, and not having had any breakfast, declared his intention of having some of the pie on his return. He was warned not to stop; but disregarding the caution of his companions, as the enemy were not then in sight, he halted. While he was eating, Westhoft, a German school teacher, who had been teaching school the preceding summer in Ingold's barn near by, opened the door and exclaimed: "Here they come!" as a party of Indians arrived at the house. In the act of jumping from a back window, he was fired upon in front and rear, the enemy having already surrounded the house. He was instantly dispatched, and his body much mutilated. He was a Low Dutchman, born near Albany; was a cooper by trade, and had resided nine years in the Ingold family, near where he was shot.

As the Indians entered Lawyer's dwelling, one of them raised a tomahawk to strike the schoolmaster, but Mrs. Lawyer seized his arm and arrested the fatal blow. She pleaded for his life and it was spared, adding another evidence to the influence of woman. Brett, an old female slave, was considered a lawful prize, and was taken along a little distance, but was finally permitted to return.—*Anna Eve, widow of Jacob J. Lawyer.**

John Ingold, who dwelt where his son and namesake now resides, was in the fort that day with all his family except Anthony Witner, his step-father. As a hostile invasion was expected, the

* *Mrs. Lawyer* stated to the writer, in 1835, that while her husband and a hired man were harvesting grain during the war, they were fired upon by the enemy, and the laborer killed; the former fled across the river and escaped. *Mrs. Lawyer* was a daughter of Philip and Christina Berg. She had two children, a son and daughter. The latter is now the wife of Ex-Gov. Bouck.

present John Ingold, then a lad fourteen years old, went the evening before with a wagon to take old Mr. Witner to the fort, but he declined going, and said he chose to stay and defend his house. He had given his grandson an old gun which was then at the fort; this he requested to have sent to him in the morning. The Ingold dwelling was burned, and as a part of two skeletons were found in its ruins, it was conjectured that a plunderer had been killed by Mr. Witner, before his death. The remains of the latter were identified by his silver knee-buckles. A barrack filled with peas, standing scarcely three yards distant from Ingold's barn, was set on fire and the enemy supposed from its proximity it would burn the latter; but as the former stood west of the building and the wind blew a gale from the northeast, the fire was fortunately not communicated to it. A fence on fire and slowly burning to the windward, which would have carried the flame to the barn, was extinguished after the enemy left. The dwelling of Hendrick Shafer was not burned, that of Tunis Shafer, which stood where David Shafer lives, was burnt with its out buildings; and that of Lawyer, below Ingold's, shared the same fate the night following.—*John Ingold, Mattice Ball, and others.*

The firing at Middleburgh was heard in Cobelskill, ten miles distant, and Lawrence Lawyer and Henry Shafer proceeded towards Schoharie, to learn the cause. Arriving on the hills near, they caught a view of the general conflagration; and they unexpectedly fell in with a party of Indians, but escaped their notice by the timely movement of several cattle in the woods close by, which directed the enemy from their concealment. The two friends remained secreted until the Indians had retired, when they hastened back to Cobelskill, to warn the citizens of their danger.—*Lawrence Lawyer.*

Johnson's troops had been so long in the valley, that ample time was gained to get every thing in readiness at the Lower fort, for its defence. Several barrels of water were provided to extinguish the church, which contained the women and children, should it be set on fire. The magazine which was thus liberally replenished, was kept *beneath the pulpit in the church, and was*

under the charge of Dr. George Werth, a physician, settled in the vicinity, who acted as surgeon. In the tower of the church were stationed, under Ensign Jacob Lawyer, jr., fifteen or twenty good marksmen, who could command considerable territory. Quite a number of fearless women at the Lower fort are said to have stood ready at the pickets, when the enemy appeared in sight, armed with spears, pitchforks, poles, &c.,* to repel an attack.—*Maj. Peter Vrooman, Col. Dietz, of Beaver Dam, Jacob Becker, Judge Brown and others.*

The enemy approached the Lower fort in a body, about four o'clock P. M., and were saluted with a small mounted cannon without the pallisades, (the one formerly owned by John Lawyer,) charged with grape and cannister shot. Col. Johnson raised a spy-glass as the swivel was drawn out, and suddenly lowering it, said to his men, *It is only a grass-hopper, march on!* It was supposed to have done fearful execution, as many of the enemy fell, but to the surprise of the Americans, they arose and advanced; having only fallen to let the shot pass over them. A grape shot entered the knapsack of a soldier, and lodged against a pair of shoes. He was more frightened than hurt, and carried the shot to Canada. The American soldiers were hardly able to obtain shoes, and this Canadian had an extra new pair, which saved his life.—*Becker, Van Dyck, Vrooman and Dietz.*

Jacob Van Dyck, Nicholas Warner, Jacob Becker, John Ingold, Sen., and John Kneiskern, were among the men stationed with

* Judge Brown, who was accounted a genuine whig, was suspected, though unjustly I believe, of disaffection on the day Schoharie was burnt. He stated to the writer, that he was at the Lower fort on the morning of that day, and aided in the early preparations for its defence; and had intended to volunteer his services in case of a hostile attack. His wife was determined to go to Livingston's manor, where she had relatives; and to set out that day. She went out and seated herself in the wagon, outside the pickets; and declared her intention to remain there and be shot rather than again enter the fort, where she had already been over *two years*. Brown probably knew, that "*If a woman will, she will,*" and he might "*depend on't,*" said he felt ashamed to be seen quarreling with his wife—reluctantly yielded to her wishes—entered the wagon and drove off. The smoke of burning buildings was then visible up the valley. This I consider *another specimen of female influence.*

Lawyer in the church tower. When Capt. Stubrach and others were firing the "grass-hopper," Peter, a brother of Ensign Lawyer, who had command of the men on the church, was seen to approach the fort from the direction of the river, in advance of the enemy. He proceeded to the tower, and held a secret conference with his brother, soon after which they both left the fort together, and did not return until the invaders were out of sight. The conduct of the ensign subjected him to some censure at the time—indeed, it needs an explanation at the present day.

Hearing that his ensign had deserted his station, which was too commanding not to be properly occupied, Capt. Snyder immediately took charge of the men, who rendered good services by their skill as marksmen.—*Becker, Van Dyck, and Warner.*

The enemy, when fired upon, filed off, the regulars, under Johnson, to the west, and the Indians, under Brant, to the east. The former crossed the flats, between the fort and the river, and did not halt until after they had passed Foxes creek, *below the old saw-mill*. They were several times fired upon from a block-house, upon that side, which mounted a six-pounder, charged with grape and canister, but with what effect is unknown. Most of the Indians crossed Foxes creek in a body, but a few stragglers lingered to burn buildings. The wood-work of Tunis Swart's tavern, the present residence of Lodowick Fries, was burned. The parsonage, which stood some twenty rods east of the present one, was not consumed. A house now standing on a knoll some thirty rods southeast of the church, was occupied in 1780 by the widow of Domine Schuyler, and one of her sons. It was erected one and a half stories, with a gambrel roof, but was altered to its present form after the war. About the time Swart's dwelling was fired, an Indian was seen approaching this house with a fire-brand. Several rifles were instantly discharged at him from the tower, and he sprang behind the trunk of an apple-tree, which is still to be seen. Five balls struck the tree as he sprang behind it. No more was seen of the Indian, who abandoned the attempt to burn the house.—*Nicholas Warner and Jacob Becker.* This apple-tree has an antiquated look, stands alone, and I really hope that the "Woodman" will "spare that tree!"

I have said Col. Johnson halted after crossing Foxes creek. Preparations were now made to give the Americans a passing salute—the gun carriage was screwed together, and the gun placed upon it. At this time it was supposed by the men in the tower, from the ease with which the gun was carried and the manner of its transportation in a wagon, to be a “*peeled log*,” placed with the design of frightening its inmates to surrender the fort. On applying the linstock it twice flashed, and the Americans were the more confirmed in their opinion that the foe was “*playing possum*”—but the third application of the match was followed by a peal of war’s thunder, which sent a ball through one side of the roof of the church, and lodged it in a heavy rafter on the opposite side. The shock jarred the whole building. A second discharge of the enemy’s gun lodged a ball in the purlin-plate; and the hole made by its entrance is visible at the present day.—*Jacob Becker, and Cyrus Clark, corroborated by others.**

While the enemy were discharging their cannon, rum sweetened with gun-powder was carried round in a pail to the soldiers, by Mrs. Snyder, to divest them of fear. This was a common beverage in former times, when hostile armies were about to conflict. The liquor was thought to embolden, while the powder maddened the warrior. As she presented the glass to the soldiers at the pickets, the hands of some trembled so as scarcely to hold it.—*Peter M. Snyder.*

While the enemy were firing on the church, an Indian crept behind an elm tree on the bank of the creek northwest of it, and lodged three rifle balls in the tower. They struck nearly in the same spot over head, but the first two were not buried sufficiently deep to remain, and fell upon the deck, one of which was taken up by John Kneiskern, but found it too hot to be retained. By removing part of the paling, a rifle was brought to bear on the

* Not many years ago, a new covering was put upon the church by Mr. Clark, who states that the cannon shot lodged in the western plate in 1780, was then taken out and presented to John Gebhard, Esq. of Schoharie; and the one from the rafter to P. M. Snyder, in consequence of the intrepidity of Snyder’s mother when the balls were lodged. This relic was presented the writer by Mr. Snyder in 1837. It weighs a little over six pounds.

presumptuous foe. As he showed part of his face, to try a fourth shot, a marksman planted a bullet in the tree near his head, when he decamped in hot haste.—*Jacob Becker, and Jacob Van Dyck.*

The enemy made but a short stay near the Lower fort. Brant, after burning the tavern and out building of Jacob Snyder, and those of some other citizens along Foxes creek, came into the river road a few rods north west of the *Brick House* of Capt. Mann. This house was two stories in the Revolution, but was razed a story some time after. Brant was joined on the rise of ground above Mann's, by the regulars under Johnson, who made a little show of giving another salute; but a shower of rifle balls from the church tower, with several successive and well directed discharges of grape-shot, from the block-house in the north east corner of the inclosure, caused him to move down the valley. A dwelling and grist mill standing near the fort, (where those of Griggs now are,) were set on fire, but extinguished after the enemy left. The barn and other out buildings were consumed.—*P. M. Snyder, Maj. P. Vrooman and Jacob Becker.*

Whether the enemy sustained any loss in their attack on the Lower fort is unknown. If any had been killed, their bodies were no doubt consumed in some of the burning buildings in Kneiskern's dorf.

At an interview with Jacob Enders, the soldier previously mentioned, he related the following incident. After the enemy began to move down the valley, he left the fort to hang upon his rear. Discovering an Indian, he followed him along the creek toward the river, until he got a shot at him. He had on a large pack, and over one shoulder hung a goose, he had recently killed. When Enders fired, the Indian fell upon his knees, and dropped his pack and goose; then springing upon his feet, he set off on a moderate trot toward the river. Enders pursued until the Indian turned and raised his rifle on him, when he halted to load, and the Indian without firing, again ran off. After pursuing until he was exposed to the fire of others of the enemy, Enders gave over the chase. On arriving where he had left the pack and goose, he found that John Rickard, a fellow soldier, who had

seen the spoils abandoned from his position in the block-house, had been there and taken them to the fort. Enders claimed them, but Rickard would not give them up, or any part of them. The pack contained *eight pairs of new mocasons*.

On the day Schoharie was burned, three soldiers, Abraham Bergh, Jacob Kneiskern, and one Grenadare, with several other persons, were returning to the Lower fort with three head of fat cattle for that garrison; and on arriving near the present residence of Daniel Larkin, they discovered the advance of the enemy, and drove the cattle into the adjoining woods. The citizens made good their retreat, and the soldiers secreted themselves to watch the motions of the enemy. They observed a small party of Indians approach Mercle's place, on the Ferry road. The trio succeeded in getting within gun shot of the party, and as the latter were at a pump, fired upon them, killing one of their number with a buckshot. The Americans then made good their retreat, and reached the fort in safety.—*David, a son of Abr. Bergh.*

Having executed his mission in Schoharie so far as he found it practicable, Sir John Johnson encamped for the night near Harman Sidney's, the present residence of John C. Van Vechten, nearly six miles north of the Lower fort. A noble deer confined in a pen at Sidney's, which he was fattening with no little care for his own use, was killed and feasted on by the enemy. Some soldiers at work for its owner a few days before, wanted to kill the animal then, but he chose to reserve it for another occasion. In the morning, Col. Johnson sank his mortar and shells in a morass, and directed his course to Fort Hunter. One of the shells was recovered some weeks open in mud knee deep; and on being broken open it was found to contain dry powder, which was divided among the victors.—*Col. Deitz, William Becker, and Jacob Enders.*

After Sir John Johnson passed the Lower fort, Georgē Meriness was despatched to Albany by Maj. Becker, with intelligence of his invasion, and success in Schoharie.—*William Snyder.*

That beautiful valley, on the evening after the invasion, presented a most gloomy picture. Ruin and desolation followed in the train of the foe, and many a man who had risen in the morn-

ing in *comfortable*, if not in *affluent* circumstances, found himself in the evening *houseless*, and almost ruined in property. His barns and barracks which the morning light had disclosed well filled with the rich reward of his season's labors, were so many heaps of smouldering ruins. His cattle, horses and swine, which had grazed "upon a thousand hills," either lay dead in the adjoining fields, or had been taken by the ravagers: while some of his fences had been burned and others demolished. Thus was revenged the destruction of the Indian possessions in the Chemung and Genesee valleys the year before by Gen. Sullivan; which, had they a historian, would be found a no less gloomy picture. Scarcely a log house at that early day was to be seen in the Schoharie valley: the dwellings were mostly good framed buildings, well finished and some of them painted. But here and there a building, from some cause, escaped the devouring element, to render the general ruin the more obvious. The dwelling of Peter Rickard was set on fire, and after the enemy had left it, an old negro, owned by John Lawyer, went to it from his concealment in the woods near, found a quantity of milk on the premises, and with that extinguished the flames. The house of one of his neighbors was also set on fire and put out.—*Andrew Loucks*. It is possible one or two other houses may have escaped the general conflagration under somewhat similar circumstances. Several families residing on the uplands, east of the Court House, remained at home *undisturbed by the enemy*.—*Eleanor, widow of Nicholas Feeck*.

Henry Haines, jr., of New Dorlach, who was with the enemy in the Schoharie valley, on the evening after its conflagration, arrived at the Lower fort, and enquired for John Rickard, his half brother, who was a whig. Haines had burned his feet so badly in plundering a building on fire, that he could not travel; and claimed the sympathy of his kinsman. Rickard pitied the wretch and concealed him in his hut for several days under lock and key, to keep him from the revenge of his injured fellow countrymen: allowing him, possibly, to pick the bones of Enders' goose.—*Peggy Ingold, corroborated*.