

CHAPTER XV.

The events of 1781, opened with an unpleasant occurrence. The sufferings of the soldiers had been very severe, added to which some had been detained in service beyond the term of their enlistment, while all were in arrears of pay for their services. In the evening of the first day of January, the troops of the Pennsylvania line stationed at Morristown, New Jersey, numbering 1300, paraded under arms—determined to march to Philadelphia and demand from Congress immediate redress. Their officers endeavored by persuasion to lull their murmurs and disperse them to their quarters, but to no purpose—although one was killed and several wounded. Gen. Wayne, in front of these men, cocked his pistols to compel obedience to his commands, but in an instant an hundred guns were leveled at his breast. “We love and respect you,” said the malcontents, “but fire and you are a dead man.” Declaring their intention of not going over to the enemy, they elected temporary officers—and marched off in a body for Princeton. Several agents sent by Sir Henry Clinton to win them to the British interest, were handed over by the revolters to the Americans, who executed them as *spies*. Committees from Congress and the Legislature of Pennsylvania, met them at Princeton, paid part of their arrears in *specie*, and they returned to their duty. This mutiny was followed by one of less consequence in the troops of New Jersey, which was quelled and the ringleaders instantly executed.

Early in the year 1781, a block-house was erected on Mr. Houck's land in Kneiskern's dorf, near the present residence of George Taylor, and picketed in. A similar one was constructed

about the same time in Hartman's dorf. A block-house, similar to the one called *Fort-Plain*, was erected that spring near the dwelling of Jacob Shafer in Cobelskill, about half a mile east of Cobelskill village. This block-house was erected by Capt. Duboise of Catskill, and was called Fort Duboise. It was surrounded by a deep moat, which was partially filled with water from a brook running near. About half an acre of ground, on which stood the dwelling of Shafer, was embraced in the inclosure, which was also surrounded by pickets. The gate or principal entrance was on the eastern side. This fort, with a small garrison, was for some time under the command of Capt. Duboise.

Early in the spring of this year, several minor transactions of interest occurred in the Saratoga settlements. In the present town of Clifton-Park resided one Fillmore, a lieutenant of militia, who possessed a fearless spirit. He was engaged, in the proper season, in making maple-sugar, and usually boiled all night, returning home in the morning to be relieved by a daughter, until he had foddered his cattle and taken breakfast. On going to the woods she was instructed, in case she saw any suspicious looking persons, to give no signs of fear, but communicate the discovery to her father as soon after as prudence allowed. One very foggy morning, when Miss Fillmore was in attendance at the sugar-bush, an individual passed it, without seeing her, going in the direction of a retired dwelling occupied by a widow lady. As soon as the strange figure was out of sight, she ran home to apprise her father of the discovery. She described the man to be a *suspicious looking person, having a gun and a hairy pack.*

Lieut. Fillmore, rightly suspecting the visitant to be the notorious Jo. Bettys, got two of his neighbors, named Perkins and Corey, to accompany him, and all well armed proceeded unobserved to the widow's house, one of the three going upon the back side of it, to prevent his egress. The other two burst open the door, and disclosed the object of search at the breakfast table. He had imprudently seated himself with his back toward the door, and his rifle lying across the table. The instant an entrance was forced, the lieutenant seized the villain by the collar and drew him

from the table, as he was reaching for his trusty piece. He was soon overpowered by the three militiamen, and tightly bound. Before he started for Albany, he desired to smoke, and was partially loosened to afford him an opportunity. He went to the fire-place to light his pipe, and was noticed to cast something in the fire. One of his captors snatched it from the live embers, and found it to be a silver bullet which screwed together; inside of which was a message to Sir Henry Clinton from an officer in Canada, written in figures. On the testimony contained within the bullet, Bettys was convicted and hung at Albany as a *spy*. Considering his desperate character, the enterprise of Lieut Fillmore and his companions in arresting him, was one of the most daring performed in the whole war.

When the arrest of Bettys became known in the Ballston settlement, Maj. Mitchell enjoined secrecy of the affair, rightly conjecturing that he had not traversed the northern forests of New-York, alone. A Mrs. Camp or Van Camp, a widow living in the neighborhood, had a son in the British service, who it was thought, might possibly have accompanied Bettys. The arrest of the latter having been kept close during the day; Kenathy Gordon, a sergeant, was entrusted by Maj. Mitchell with the search to be made the same night. Attended by John Sweatman and several other fearless neighbors, properly armed, young Gordon gained access to the house of Mrs. Camp after bed-time, and enquired for her son. She declared her ignorance of his whereabouts, pretended to be highly incensed at having armed men enter her dwelling and disturb the family at midnight, and still more *on being suspected of harboring an enemy*.

This woman talked very patriotic, but the warmth she manifested satisfied the sergeant, who was a resolute fellow, that her son was in the house; and he went to the fire-place, seized a blazing brand and started up stairs. Young Camp and Jonathan Miller had accompanied Bettys to the neighborhood, and were then in an upper room. Hearing the noise below, they sprang out of bed, seized their guns and leveled them. At the click of their locks, Gordon jumped down stairs, and *swore if they did not*

descend and surrender themselves prisoners in less than five minutes, he would smoke them out. Believing he would execute his threat and burn the house, they concealed some money under a rafter, and then came down and submitted to Gordon's authority, who conducted them to the dwelling of Maj. Mitchell, where they were secured until morning. The prisoners had not the least suspicion that Bettys had been arrested, until after they were. On his way to the major's dwelling, Miller was heard to say *he would rather he shot than to enter it.* Obadiah Miller, a brother living in the vicinity, was sent for in the morning, and unexpectedly ushered into the presence of his tory kinsman, whose visit to the neighborhood was unknown to him. His surprise was evidently irksome, and he trembled like a leaf. It leaked out in the sequel, that the two Millers were together in the woods when the attempt was made the fall before to capture the major, which he possibly suspected. The two prisoners were taken to Albany, from whence they were liberated or effected an escape.—*Charles Mitchell.*

In the spring of 1781, Col. Livingston, with his regiment of New York troops, marched up the Mohawk valley to Fort Plain. On arriving at the house of George Adam Dockstader, situated four miles west of the present village of Fonda, the regiment halted. This was the only house except the parsonage, left standing in the valley the year before, from Tribe's Hill to the Nose, a distance or nine or ten miles. An upper room of Dockstader's house was found to be locked, and Maj. Davis,* a spirited officer of the regiment, demanded the key: but the magic iron of ingenious in-

*Maj. Davis was a native of East Hampton, L. I. He became a prisoner to the enemy in the latter part of the war, was confined in one of the *charnel houses* in New York, and there died, as was believed, by having poison administered to him in chocolate. An American captain, who was a fellow-prisoner, tasted the beverage, but suspecting its ingredients, would not drink it, and advised Maj. D. not to—but the latter had already swallowed a portion of it. He was immediately taken ill, and died soon after. Several other prisoners died at the same time, from the same cause. Such was the fate of many—yes, very many, brave American officers and soldiers. They were either poisoned outright, or subjected to such privations for the want of wholesome food, clothing, medical attendance, fuel, and ventilated rooms, as hurried them off by hundreds to eternity.—*Williamson.*

vention had disappeared, and could not possibly be found. "Well, then," said the intrepid major, "bring me an axe; I can open it." Rather than have the door mutilated, the family produced the key, when lo! the room was found to be literally filled *with hams and other smoked meat*. The major concluded, and no doubt correctly, that from the different colors the meat presented, it had been smoked in many places; and that most of it must have been gathered by Indians and Tories, and there deposited to be used as occasion might require. He therefore thought it advisable to victual his own men from it, and leaving a year's supply for the family, the rest was "*pressed into the service*," to the gratification of the troops.—*James Williamson, a soldier present.*

On the 2d day of March of this year, James Williamson, a sergeant, was sent, (as he informed the writer) with Corporal Samuel Betts and half a dozen soldiers, from Fort Schuyler to guard about the same number of wood-choppers, and attend to measuring a quantity of wood already chopped, distant about half a mile from that post. While thus engaged, Brant came suddenly upon the Americans, with a large body of Indians and Tories, and discharging a volley of balls to intimidate them, rushed up and captured the whole party, except Williamson, who fled, amidst a shower of bullets, in safety to the fort. Only two of the Americans were wounded, William Moffatt and Timothy Reynolds—the former with a broken thigh, and the latter a bullet-hole in his cheek, the ball having entered at the mouth. Moffatt fired on the Indians, on which account he was tomahawked, scalped, stripped of his clothing, and left for dead. The enemy immediately set forward, and forded the Mohawk some distance below.

On the arrival of Williamson at the fort, an alarm gun was fired, by which the captives knew their sergeant had escaped. A strong force immediately turned out, and were piloted by him in pursuit of the foe. At the place where the Americans had been surprised, Moffatt was found alive, but died soon after. On reaching the path near the river, which led from Fort Schuyler to Fort Dayton, Brant halted his men, and cut the straps which contained the buckles, from his prisoners' shoes, which he carefully dis-

posed along the path on the crusted snow, that his enemies might know what he had done, giving the captives deer-skin straps with which to tie their shoes. The pursuing party found the buckles, but as it was near night the chase was given over, from fear, probably, of an ambuscade, as the numbers of the presumptuous foe were unknown. Brant first conducted his prisoners to the Oneida castle, some sixteen miles southwest of Utica, and after procuring a supply of corn directed his course to Fort Niagara by the great southwestern route.* Early in the same spring, two boys, who had gone back of an orchard, only a few hundred yards from Fort Herkimer, to drive home cows, were surprised and captured by seven Indians and two tories, and hurried off to Canada.—*Williamson*.

On the 9th day of July, 1781, a party of the enemy, numbering about five hundred, mostly Indians, under the command of Captain John Dockstader, a tory, who had gone to Canada from the vicinity of the Mohawk, entered a small settlement called Curry Town,† in the present town of Root, three miles southeast from Spraker's Basin. A small block house had been erected near the dwelling of Henry Lewis and picketed in, previous to this invasion, which took place about 10 o'clock, A. M.; and so unexpected was it, that most of the settlers were at their occupations at home when the first alarm was sounded. The Henry Lew-

*An incident mentioned by *Priest*, in the memoirs of David Ogden, (a captive at the time,) as having taken place before their arrival at Niagara, deserves a notice. Having halted at noon to rest, "Brant took a notion that Corporal Betts should exercise his men and fellow-prisoners, to see, as he said, whether the Yankees could go through the tactics of *Baron Steuben*. The corporal was very loth to do this, through diffidence or a broken spirit, hanging back considerably; but Brant insisted upon it, when Betts drew out his men in due order, fifteen in number, quite a company, dressed them in a straight line, and then went through the manual exercise according to *Steuben*, to the full approbation of Brant. But as they did this, the tories assayed to make sport of them, which Brant forbid with a terrible frown, saying that the Yankees went through with it a d—d sight better than they could, and that he liked to see the thing done well, although it were done by the enemy."

† So called after William Curry, the patentee of the lands in that settlement.

is house is still standing. Jacob Dievendorf, a pioneer settler at that place, was at work in a fallow, with his two sons, Frederick and Jacob, and a negro boy named Jacobus [James] Blood. The last two were captured; and Frederick, a lad twelve or fourteen years old, in attempting to escape to the fort, was overtaken, tomahawked and scalped. Mrs. Dievendorf, with several female children and five or six slaves, fled from her dwelling and reached the fort in safety. Mrs. D. was a large fleshy woman, and in hastily climbing a fence, on her way to the fort, it fell with her. Peter Bellinger, a brother of Mrs. Dievendorf, who was plowing in the settlement, hearing the alarm, unharnessed a horse, mounted it, and rode toward the Mohawk, pursued by several Indians, who arrived in sight of the river almost as soon as he did; he, however, escaped. Rudolf Keller and his wife happened to be at the fort when the invaders appeared; Keller, Henry Lewis, and Conrad Enders being the only men in the fort at the time. Keller's oldest son, discovering the enemy, ran home: and as they lived too far north of the fort to think of gaining it, he hurried the rest of the family into the woods northwest of the house, where they gained a place of temporary safety. As they entered the woods they looked back and saw the Indians at their dwelling. Frederick Lewis and Henry Lewis, Jr., were among the first to gain the fort. The former fired three successive guns to warn the settlers of danger, and several, thus seasonably warned, found a safe retreat in the forest. Jacob Tanner, with his family, were among the last to gain the picketed inclosure. The escape of this family would afford the artist a fair subject for his pencil. As the Indians were approaching his dwelling, he fled from it with a small child in one hand and a gun in the other, followed by his wife, with an infant in her arms, and several children on foot hold of her clothes. The family were pursued toward the fort by the tawny savages, with uplifted tomahawks, thirsting for their blood. Finding he could not cut off their retreat, the Indian in advance drew up his rifle and fired at Tanner. The ball passed just over the head of the child he carried, and entered a picket beside him. Several guns, fired from the fort, caused the enemy to gain a more respectful distance.

The Indians plundered and burnt all the buildings in the settlement, a dozen or more in number, except the house of David Lewis, who resided where Henry Vorhees now does, and a log school-house. Lewis was a tory, and although his house was set on fire, an Indian chief with whom he was acquainted, gave him permission to put it out when they were gone. He did so, and part of the building is still standing. Jacob Moyer and his father, who were cutting timber in the woods not far from Yates's, were found dead and scalped, one at each end of a log. They were killed by the party who pursued Peter Bellinger. The Indians were visible about the settlement until after four o'clock, P. M., when they moved off with their booty. They either killed or drove away most of the cattle and horses in the neighborhood. Several of the latter which were let loose by the Dievendorfs on the approach of the enemy, fled from their pursuit, and leaping a fence the sagacious animals gained a place of safety in the forest.

The lad Frederick Dievendorf, after lying insensible for several hours, recovered and crawled toward the fort. He was seen by his uncle, Mr. Keller, who went out to meet him. As he approached the lad, whose clothes were dyed in his own blood; the latter still bewildered, raised his hands imploringly and besought his uncle not to kill him. Mr. Keller assured him of his intended kindness; took him up in his arms and carried him to the fort. His wounds were properly dressed and he recovered; but was killed several years after by a falling tree. Jacob Dievendorf, senior, fled before the Indians on their approach, and in his flight ran past a prisoner named James Butterfield, at a little distance from whom he threw himself under a fallen tree. His pursuers enquired of Butterfield what direction he had taken. "*That way,*" said the prisoner, pointing in a different direction for the one taken. The party were thus put upon a course which soon carried them past Dievendorf, and left him his own master. Some of the pursuing Indians passed over the log under which the object of search was concealed, and had they looked back, must have discovered him. The captives taken along by the enemy, were Jacob Dievendorf, jun., the negro Jacob, two lads by the

name of Bellinger, and a little girl by the name of Miller, ten or twelve years old.*

On the morning of the same day on which Curry Town was burnt, Col. Willet dispatched Capt. Gros from Fort Plain, with forty men, with the two-fold object of looking for provisions, and for American foes. As it was known that the settlements of New-Dorlach and New Rhinebeck, were mostly inhabited by Tories; thither Capt. Gros directed his steps, in the hope of getting a few beeves for the garrison. Near the former residence of one Baxter, he struck the trail of the enemy; drew up his men beside it, and marched them three times over the ground; when he found that one hundred and twenty men would hardly begin to beat a corresponding track. By this test the number of the enemy was estimated to be, at least five hundred, the number it was afterwards ascertained fully to equal.

Selecting two of his best men to follow the trail, Capt. Gros marched his company to Bowman's creek, to await the report of the scout. The latter proceeded about a mile and came upon the ground where the enemy had encamped the previous night. They approached sufficiently near to observe a large number of packs; and saw a few Indians cooking food—making preparations, as they supposed, for the return of their comrades, who, as it proved, had then gone to destroy Curry Town. They proceeded hastily to the creek and reported to Capt. Gros what they had discovered, who dispatched John Young and one other man on horseback to Fort-Plain, to inform Col. Willet of the espionage, proposing to await his further orders at Bowman's creek.

Willet sent a message to Lieut. Col. Veeder to march as speedily as possible with what troops he could collect at Fort Paris and elsewhere, to the theatre of action. Collecting all the men that could with safety be spared from Fort Rensselaer and Fort-Plain,

* The preceding facts respecting the invasion of Curry Town were obtained by the writer at repeated interviews with *John, a son of Rudolf Keller, above named; Jacob Dievendorf, the young captive named; and Toby Blood, at that time a young slave in the Dievendorf family.* Butterfield, although a stranger to Dievendorf at the time of saving his life, came to Curry Town after the war, and was hospitably entertained by him.

with the militia he could in the mean time assemble, Col. Willet set out for Bowman's creek. Passing Fort Clyde, a picketed block-house in Frey's Bush, a draft was made upon that for additional troops, and about midnight he united his forces with those of Capt. Gros: the aggregate number of which was 260, many of whom were militia. Willet set out for the camp of the enemy, and arrived in its vicinity about daylight. They were encamped in a cedar swamp on the north side of the Western turnpike, near the centre of the present town of Sharon. A part of this swamp may now be seen N. E. of the public house kept by Jacob Hiller, about two miles east of the Sharon springs. At that period the swamp extended farther eastward, and the encampment was on the highest ground in the swamp, only a few rods distant from the turnpike, as now laid. On the south side of the road a ridge of land may be seen, and still south of that a small valley. By a circuitous route Col. Willet gained this little dale, and there drew up his men with care in a crescent.

Thus prepared to receive the enemy, who were nearly double his own forces, he sent several men over the ridge to show themselves, fire on the foe, flee, and thus elicit pursuit within the American defiles. The decoy succeeded admirably, the whole party snatching up their weapons joined in the pursuit of the fugitives; and Willet's victory must have been most signally complete, had he stationed his men nearer the enemy's camp, as he might have done without observation: but having nearly half a mile to run, the stool-pigeons were so hotly pursued that the lines were broken to rescue them, which prevented the surprise from being entirely successful. So closely were the camp spies pursued, that Frederick Bellinger, one of the number, was overtaken and slain. Willet's men had been previously instructed to take trees or fallen logs and not leave them, and they were in all cases to reserve their fire until they had a fair shot. The battle lasted about two hours, when, to use the words of an American soldier who was in that battle, "*The Indians got tired of them, and made off.*"—*John Adam Strobeck*. He was a private under Capt. Gros, was in the hottest part of the engagement, and was wounded in one hip.

The enemy, in their retreat, were hotly pursued by the Americans, led on by Col. Willet in person, and so completely were they routed, that most of their camp equipage, and plunder obtained the day before, fell into the hands of their victorious pursuers. Willet continued the chase but a short distance, fearing he might in turn fall into a snare, and the tables be turned upon him.—*Strobeck*.

When the enemy returned in the evening to their encampment—distant from Curry Town 12 or 14 miles—they captured a German living near the former place, named Carl Herwagen. Finding it necessary to retreat, the Indians chose to kill their prisoners, lest they should lose the value of their scalps. Herwagen, who had been tied to a tree during the engagement, was loosened by his captor, who told him to run with the retreating Indians, instead of doing which he turned and fled the other way—was shot down, tomahawked and scalped. The prisoners were all scalped except Butterfield and one of the Bellinger boys, who were taken to Canada.—*Jacob Dievendorf*,* *Mrs. Tunis Vrooman* and *Frederick Hiller*. The latter settled in the vicinity of the Indian camp soon after the war.

Col. Willett, had *five* men killed in this battle, two of whom were Bellinger before mentioned, and a soldier named Kittle: and *eight* wounded, *two mortally*; Capt. Robert McKean, a brave and meritorious officer who died the next day at Fort Rensselaer,† and a private who died at Fort Plain. Among the wounded was a son of Capt. McKean, who received a bullet in his mouth. The loss of the enemy was very severe, although never satisfactorily known; it was supposed in killed and mortally wounded, to be about fifty. Capt. Dockstader undertook the principal direction of this body of destructives, as was afterwards ascertained, to show

* The *Life of Brant* erroneously states that he, (Dievendorf,) was buried by Willet's men. He says he partially buried himself in leaves, to keep off the punkies and musketoos which annoyed him.

† This fort, erected early in 1781, was at Canajoharie, where a stone-house owned by Philip Van Alstine was inclosed. This ancient dwelling, now owned by John H. Moyer, is still standing. It was for a time the head quarters of Col. Willet.

himself worthy of a major's commission. He is said to have had one other engagement, and returned to Canada with his forces greatly reduced, glad to retain a captain's commission.—*Strobeck*.

Two of the enemy carried a wounded comrade from the battle field, on a blanket between two poles, all the way to the Genesee valley, where he died. Col. Willett returned to Fort Plain without burying any of the dead. After the battle was over and the conquerors had left the field, Col. Veeder,* arrived there with one hundred men from the north side of the river, mostly from Stone Arabia. He buried the Americans killed in battle, and fortunately found and buried those murdered near the camp. Young Dievendorf, who had been scalped, was discovered alive rustling among the leaves, and his bloody face was mistaken for that of an Indian by one of Veeder's men who leveled a gun to fire upon him; but a fellow soldier seasonably knocked up the weapon. Miss Miller, also scalped, was found alive, and was with the lad Dievendorf taken along to Fort Plain. The little girl was very weak when found, and on drinking a draught of cold water she instantly expired before reaching that fort. Jacob Dievendorf and his brother Frederick, under the care of Doctor Faught, a German physician of Stone Arabia, recovered from their wounds.—*Strobeck, Dievendorf and Hiller*.

Jacob Dievendorf's head was *five years* in healing. He still lives in Curry Town; is one of the wealthiest farmers in Montgomery county; and is in truth a *living monument* of that unholy policy which armed the savage, taught from his infancy to practise cruelty on an enemy instead of mercy, with a tomahawk and scalping knife, to slay the helpless women and unoffending offspring of the rebel sons of Briton, who dared demand as their right, *the privileges of British subjects*.

Most of the cattle driven away from Curry Town, being abandoned in the retreat of the enemy, found their way back alone to their former pastures: one of twelve horses taken by the enemy was recovered near the Indian camp, and three more broke loose from their new masters and returned to the settlement.—*John Keller*.

* Col. Veeder resided in the Mohawk valley, two miles west of the village of Fonda, on the farm now owned by Lynds Jones.

On the morning of the same day on which Col. Willet engaged the enemy, the Rev. P. N. Sommer, the Lutheran minister of Schoharie, then blind, was to have preached in New Rhinebeck, in which settlement he had several sons with whom he dwelt. His hearers, some from a distance of five or six miles, were assembling at the barn of Conrad Brown, and he had taken his text, as a messenger, named Utman, arrived and reported that he had heard several hundred guns fired in rapid succession a few miles distant. The minister, it is said, turned deadly pale on hearing the report, and the meeting was instantly broken up. Philip Hoffman, the old gentleman living near the France family, who had escaped from the tomahawk of Crysler and his mercenaries the preceding fall, hastened home from the meeting to secrete his wife once more; and just as he arrived at his house some half a dozen Indians came up and killed and scalped them both. No other injury was done in the settlement at that time.*

The Indians, in their retreat from Sharon, crossed the west creek in New Dorlach, near the former residence of Col. Rice, on their way to the Susquehanna.—*Brown.*

John D. Hiller, who now owns the ground on which the Sharon battle was fought, found several relics of that contest after the land was cleared up; one of which, the barrel of a fowling gun, of London manufacture, is still in his possession. Many human bones which were bleaching on the land below, were collected and buried.

I conjecture that some small parties of the Indians who accompanied Capt. Dockstader, lingered about the Susquehanna and returned to the frontier settlements. In the latter part of July, a party of the enemy, consisting of Capt. David, a Mohawk sachem, Seth's Joseph, a Schoharie Indian, and brother of Henry, and seven others—one of whom was suspected by the prisoners to have been a painted tory—surprised William Bouck (a relative

* *Henry France, Marcus Brown, and the record of the Lutheran Church, which records the murder of Hoffman and wife, and Herwagen, as having transpired on the 10th day of July, the date given by several living witnesses. Col. Stone erroneously dates the occurrence on the 1st of July.*

of his namesake previously captured,) and his son Lawrence, (then 18 years old,) Frederick Mattice and his son Frederick, (a lad 10 years old,) and two little girls: one a sister of young Mattice, and the other a cousin. The captives when surprised, were engaged in harvesting wheat in the afternoon, near a large oak tree, which is still standing on the lands of John Henry, in Middleburgh. Two other lads, George, a son of Frederick, and Nicholas, a son of Wm. Mattice, who were in the field when the enemy appeared, escaped by flight.*

The party moved directly up the Schoharie valley, and after proceeding several miles, the two girls were liberated and returned home. They encamped the first night twelve or fifteen miles distant from the wheat-field. When the journey commenced, the Indians had but little to eat: near the Gen. Patchin place, they shot a hedgehog, which, when they encamped at night, after burning off the quills instead of skinning, they roasted for their supper. Tomahawks were used instead of carving knives to distribute it, but the prisoners declined eating.

At night, the captives were stripped of part of their clothing and tightly bound. In the evening a thunder shower came up, and all the party took shelter under a large tree. As they laid down to rest, Lawrence Bouck was so closely pinioned, he told Capt. David he could not sleep, and the rope was loosened. He then laid down between two Indians, while a third one located himself so as to substitute his body for a pillow. While the Indians were eating supper, Lawrence, having an opportunity, told the elder Mattice, who was his uncle, that he intended to make his escape that night. Some time in the night, he worked himself out from under the precious head he pillowed, and sat up. Perceiving the party all asleep, he succeeded in loosening the cord which bound his arms. A band, such as the Indians generally used to carry burdens over their shoulders, adorned his neck; which, in his first efforts to loosen, he shirred in a noose tightly

* The particulars relating to the captivity of these persons, were derived at personal interviews, from *Lawrence Bouck and the younger Mattice*: two of the captives.

around his throat ; but this also he removed ; then at a single bound, without touching his hands, he sprang upon his feet : a feat which he declared himself unable ever afterwards to perform. Casting his eye over the group indistinctly visible upon the ground around him, he saw no movement ; and taking French leave of his drowsy companions, he directed his steps towards the Upper Schoharie fort, only a mile or two from which he had been captured. Bouck afterwards learned from his father, that his running awoke the Indians, several of whom pursued him one hundred yards or more ; but it being too dark to discover the course he had taken, they returned. The two Mattices were led out in the morning and tied to a tree *to be killed*, the Indians suspecting them of having loosened the cords which bound their fellow prisoner. Mr. Bouck told them that his son would not have made his escape, had he not feared they would bind him so tight as to cause his death. He was treated with far less severity on the way to Canada, than was either Mattice or his son.

Lawrence Bouck arrived near the Patchin place, on his return, just at daylight, where he saw numerous tracks, and was at first seriously alarmed, as the captors had asserted, the day previous, that a large body of Indians were to attack the Schoharie settlements that day ; but on examining the tracks, his fears were dispelled, by observing that the feet which made them had not been mocasoned, as those of Indians would have been.

When it was known at the forts that the Boucks and Mattices were taken prisoners, Col. Vrooman dispatched Capt. Gray, with a small company of troops, in pursuit. He followed until evening, and not overtaking the enemy, returned to Schoharie. Had he prosecuted the pursuit next day, it was believed he would have come up with them. It was the tracks of these soldiers that Lawrence Bouck discovered while returning.—*George Richtmyer.*

The captives were twenty days journeying to Niagara, and several times were greatly straightened for food. Once on the way, probably on the Susquehanna, they lived a day or two on green apples ; and for *four days they had nothing to eat*. At Oquago they fortunately found a colt which had been lost by Capt. Dech-

stader's party. This was killed, divided and feasted upon. Part of the animal was dried by the fire and taken along. One wild duck was also shot on the way. They went down the Susquehanna river to Chenango Point, (now Binghamton)—on foot, however—and from thence to the Genesee valley, where the prisoners were compelled to run the gantlet. Young Mattice had been previously divested of all his clothing, except his shirt, which rendered him peculiarly vulnerable to the gads and corn-stalks used by the young Indians. In the Genesee valley they obtained green corn and pumpkins. On arriving at the Tonawanda creek, the *punkies* tormented young Mattice nights, and he adopted the expedient of the lad Dievendorf—that of burying his person in the forest leaves—to keep them off. They all laid down to rest nights, *like so many dogs in a kennel*.

On arriving at Niagara the prisoners were confined in the guard house. They were soon after separated, Bouck being taken first to Montreal and then to Quebec—from whence, being exchanged for an American prisoner, he was removed to Halifax, and soon after sailed for Boston. From the latter place he traveled to Schoharie, where he arrived between Christmas and New Year's day, the year succeeding his capture.* The Mattices did not return home until after the conclusion of peace. A tory brother of the elder Mattice, who had left Schoharie in 1777, then residing in Canada, on learning that Frederick was a prisoner, tried to persuade an Indian to kill him. Such was the fraternal affection too often manifested in the Revolution by those who espoused the royal cause. Mr. Mattice was retained by an Indian, five weeks, to construct a log house. During this time, the latter, on one occa-

* Peter Zimmer, of Schoharie, taken the July following Bouck's capture, and Adam Garlock of Sharon, fellow prisoners, accompanied him home from Boston. On their way they had to beg provisions, and the cupboards of the patriotic Yankees were willingly opened to them. Garlock evinced some delicacy lest they might tax too heavily the hospitality of strangers, and when the inquiry *whether they would not have more bread*, was made, he replied *no, they had a great plenty*. His ready answers cost his companions several stinted meals, until they threatened to flog him if he again prevented their satisfying their hunger. They afterwards fared better, and reached home in safety.

sion, returned from Niagara drunk, and got his prisoner up in the night to murder him. He struck a blow at his head with some missile, which the latter parried, and the Indian's squaw caught hold of her liege lord and held him, sending Mattice out of the hut, where he remained until the *demonizing* effect of the alcohol passed from the warrior's brain.

On the ratification of peace in the summer of 1783, the British and American prisoners were all liberated, at which time the Mattices were put on board of a sloop, with about six hundred others, and taken to Bucks Island, near the outlet of Lake Ontario, from whence they were sent to Montreal in bateaus. After a delay of two weeks, the Mattices, with a great number of other prisoners, proceeded by water up the river Sorel, and landed at Plattsburg, on Lake Champlain, and were set free about the 16th day of December. The snow was then some six inches deep, through which they had to foot it home. The prisoners were tolerably well protected against the weather by old clothes given them at different places. Three brothers, named Van Alstyne, who had been captured in the Mohawk valley, returned home with the Schoharie prisoners.

On Sunday preceding August 14th of this year, about four hundred Indians and Tories, under Capt. Caldwell, made their appearance in Ulster county, but were so warmly received by the citizens and militia in several skirmishes, that they retreated with much more loss than gain. At this time, Gov. Clinton, fearing the next point of attack from the enemy would be Schoharie, wrote to Gen. Gansevoort, the commanding officer at Albany, to send a detachment of troops there to protect those settlements. About the same time, Col. Vrooman, of Schoharie, who had heard of the enemy's proximity, wrote Gen. Gansevoort for assistance. Troops were accordingly dispatched, under Colonels Van Rensselaer and Wemple, to Schoharie, where they were joined by a party of Oneidas from Schenectada.*—*Letters of Gov. Clinton to Gen. Gansevoort, and note to the same in Stone's Life of Brant.*

*The aid thus seasonably sent to Schoharie was fortunately not called into requisition. I conclude that the forces under Capt. Caldwell consisted prin-

At the Keyes' place in Sharon,* dwelt in the Revolution, a Hanoverian named Christian Myndert, whose family was the only one in that part of Sharon. Having been alarmed several times in the summer, he removed towards fall, in 1781, to Fort Duboise; leaving, at the time of his departure, several hogs running in a field, and a quantity of peas growing on the ground. In the latter part of October, Myndert, accompanied by Lieut. Jacob Borst, of Cobelskill, sergeant Wm. Kneiskern, and Jacob Kerker, proceeded to the dwelling of the former, in Myndert's valley, to secure his peas, shut up his hogs, and take care of some other property. John Crouse now lives on the Myndert farm. The day was cold and stormy, rain and snow alternately falling. The party were endeavoring to secure the hogs, when six Indians commanded by Walradt, a tory from the Mohawk valley, who had been watching their motions for some time, secreted themselves in Myndert's barn near his dwelling.

After Lieut. Borst and his companions had been thus engaged, they repaired to the house, wet and cold, to warm themselves. On entering it, they set their guns in one corner of a room and gathered round the fire place, where was igniting a quantity of dry wood. At this time the enemy entered the dwelling, and so suddenly, that not one of the party could seize a gun in time to fire. Borst snatched up his, however, but in attempting to turn around to discharge it, he was prevented by an Indian who had anticipated his movement. Kneiskern seized a chair to strike one of the invaders, but the latter grappled it in the same instant. Seeing the foes nearly double their own number, with arms in their hands, the Americans surrendered themselves prisoners

cipally of the same destructives led by Capt. Dockstader to Curry Town four weeks before; that the latter officer, meeting a body of the enemy on their way to the frontier settlements of New York, with most of his men, joined Caldwell in the enterprise. If so, this will account for the information of Mr. Strobeck, that Dockstader was again engaged with, and defeated by the Americans, after Willet's battle in Sharon, with very serious loss, before his return to Canada.

* The tavern stand of Zachariah Keyes, an inn-keeper, known to every one who traveled the western turnpike twenty-five years ago. Several pleasing anecdotes of him are omitted for the want of room.

without further resistance. The latter were then bound, Borst and Kneiskern very tightly, some little plunder made, and all set forward on their journey to Canada. They proceeded to New Dorlach, but a few miles distant, on their way toward the Susquehanna, and encamped for the night. Borst and Kneiskern, thinking their foes all asleep, were planning their destruction and their own escape, when an Indian who had been watching their intimacy, approached and asked them what they were talking about; and whether they did not contemplate killing their captors. They replied that they were complaining of the cords being so tight they could not sleep. The Indians did not allow them an unguarded moment, and they found it impossible to escape.

It began to snow soon after they left Myndert's place, and the captives suffered very much on their journey from the severity of the weather, the want of proper food, and the cruelty of their masters. As they approached Indian settlements, they were compelled to run the gantlet, by which severe corporal chastisement was inflicted on all, but the most severely on Borst, who fell into a decline soon after reaching Niagara, owing to his cruel treatment on the journey, and death soon after ended his miseries. Thus ignobly fell one of the most daring spirits Schoharie produced during the war. Kerker, who was confined with Borst, was a good nurse, and took care of the latter while lingering with consumption. Kneiskern, who was imprisoned on an island in the St. Lawrence, succeeded one night, in company with several other prisoners, in making his escape. They dug out beneath the pickets which inclosed the fort where they were confined, made a raft on which they floated down the river; and one of the party, from fear the raft might not be sufficient to carry them in safety, swam eight or nine miles with but little support, his clothes being upon it, to where they effected a landing on the American shore. After suffering incredible hardships in the forest, living on birch bark, roots, &c., they arrived in safety among friends, where their wants were supplied, and they reached their homes.—*Henry France, and John M. Brown.*

Some time in the summer of 1781, Solomon Woodworth, who so gallantly defended the Sacondaga block-house, single-handed, in the spring of 1780, having been appointed to the command of a company of rangers, was stationed at Fort Herkimer. Accompanied by his lieutenant, Wilson, forty-three soldiers, and five friendly Indians, he left that fort on a pleasant summer's morning, and crossing the Mohawk, passed up the West Canada creek, on a secret expedition. His movements, however, had been carefully noted by his foes, who were hovering about the settlement in great numbers, thirsting for his blood. Capt. Woodworth's command made a fine appearance on leaving the fort, and were in unusually good spirits. They had proceeded but a few miles up the stream when they found themselves instantly surrounded by a large body of the enemy, with whom they contended bravely for a time, but were overpowered by numbers, and their leader and many of his men killed. Of the whole fifty, who set out in the morning full of life and hope, only fifteen whites and two Indians again reached the fort, having cut their way through the thick ranks of the foe-man. A party sent to bury the dead, found their bodies greatly mutilated and disfigured, done by the Indians to revenge the death of the five slain by Woodworth and party as before shown.

The same season a man named Weaver went to catch a horse in the vicinity of Fort Dayton, and was shot down and scalped. He was left for dead, but revived and lived three days. Captain Small and a soldier who went from the same fort that fall to an orchard to bury apples, were surprised by a party of Indians and both killed. Two men were shot at Fort Herkimer the same year for desertion. They were tried at a fort below, and sent there to be executed. • As they sat upon their coffins, a sergeant and six privates fired at one, and a corporal and six privates at the other; after which two soldiers advanced and discharged their pieces with the muzzles near, into the heads of the unfortunate men, blowing out their brains.—*Sylvanus Wilcox, a soldier at Fort Dayton in 1781, and general of militia after the war.*