

CHAPTER XVI.

On the afternoon of October 24th, 1781, a body of the enemy, consisting of nearly seven hundred British and royalist troops and Indians, under Maj. Ross, who was accompanied in the expedition by Maj. Walter Butler, of Cherry Valley memory, entered the Mohawk river settlements, making their first appearance in Curry Town. Passing through that ill-starred place, which had been pretty effectually destroyed the preceding July, they avoided the little fort and did not fire the buildings then standing, from fear of frustrating part of their enterprise. Proceeding from thence to the Mohawk valley, they met and captured Jacob Tanner, Rudolf Keller, and his wife, Frederick Utman, Michael Stowits, and Jacob Myers, citizens of Curry Town, as they were returning from the funeral of a Mrs. Putman, who had been buried that afternoon near Lasher's canal tavern. Mrs. Keller was left near Yates's, by the interposition of a nephew who was among the Tories, and the party afterwards avoided capturing females. Mr. Myers, who was far advanced in years, being unable to endure the fatigues of so long and rapid a march, was killed and scalped on the way to Canada, and his body there left a prey for wild beasts.—*John Keller.*

Maj. Ross proceeded down the Mohawk, taking the new road but recently laid over Stone Ridge, in Root. On the Ridge they captured John Wood, the son of a widow, at whose house they arrived near twilight. Joseph Printup,* a lieutenant of militia, was

* William Printup, an Englishman, father of the one named in the context, who was among the early settlers of the Mohawk valley, was a blacksmith, and resided near the lower Mohawk castle. While there, he was employed by the British government to repair guns, make axes, hatchets, hoes, &c., for the natives. One day when Printup was at work in his shop, an Indian, who

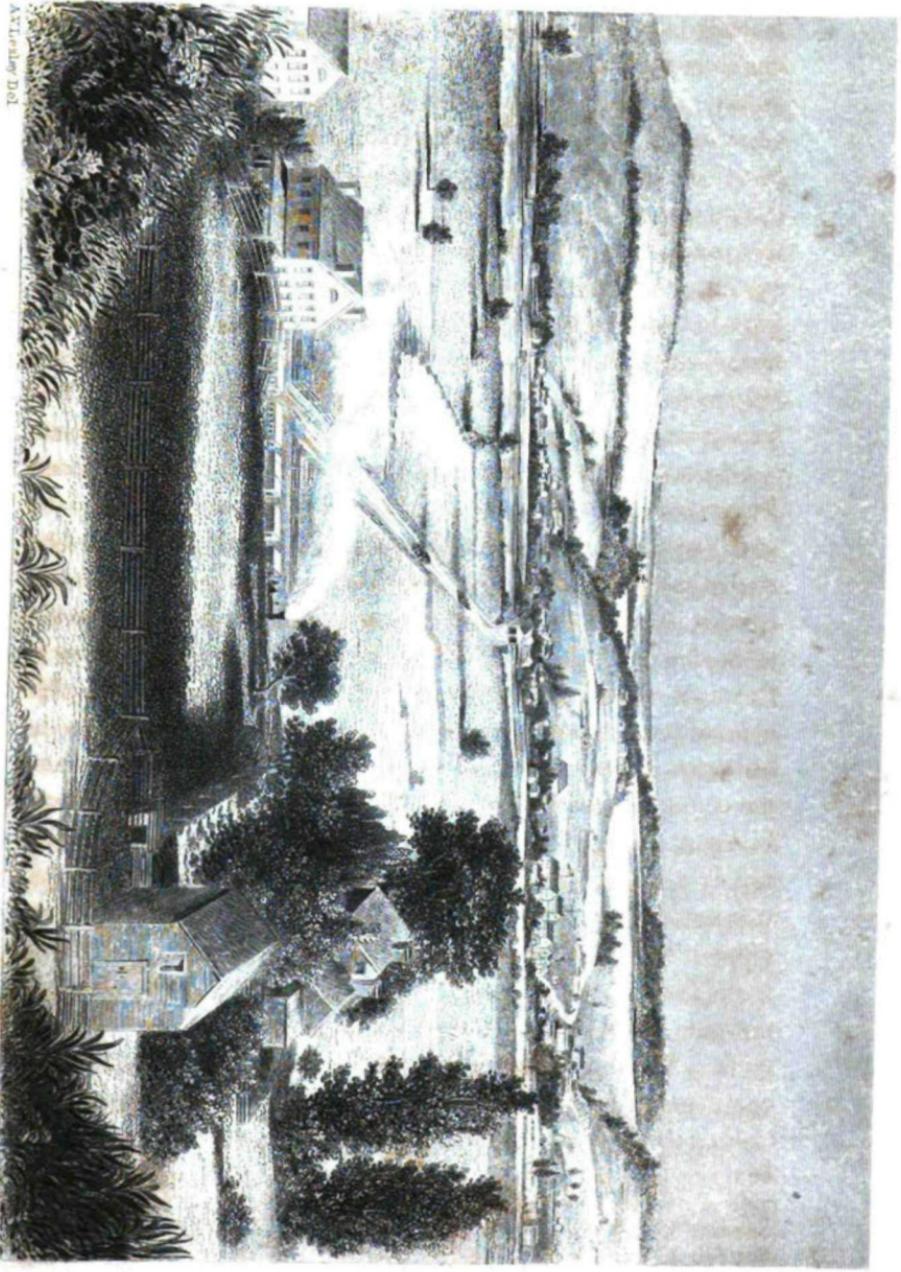
living at that time near the residence of his son, the late William L. Printup. He was at home as Ross approached, and Jacob Frank, a brother-in-law, John Loucks and John Van Alstyne, neighbors, were also at his house. Printup had just been cleaning his gun, and as he loaded it and returned the ram-rod, he remarked, "*Now I am ready for the Indians!*" He had scarcely uttered the words, when an advance party of them, just at dusk, was seen approaching the door. Frank and Loucks sprang out of the house and fled up the hill south; the former was shot down, however, and scalped, but the latter unscathed, effected his escape. As the Indians approached his door, Printup fired at them, when they rushed into the house, and one of them, placing the muzzle of his gun near Printup's breast, drew the trigger,—at which instant the latter struck the weapon down, and its bullet passed through the fleshy part of the thigh. A tory acquaintance, who was with the enemy, then interfered to save Printup's life, and he was taken prisoner, soon after which the enemy resumed their march down the river. A little distance east of Printup's, a halt was made at a large rock beside the road to kill him; but the tory again interposed, and declared he should not be killed while he could keep up with his captors. Van Alstyne lent his services to aid his wounded companion, who leaned upon his shoulder, and was thus enabled to continue the journey.—*John, a son of Joseph Printup.*

had taken umbrage at him from some cause, entered the shop and bade him kneel down and pray. "Pray!" said Printup, "for what?" "Because I am going to kill you," was the reply. "To kill me? I'll beat your head in with my hammer," he retorted, raising the instrument he held in his hand, and giving evidence of suiting the action to the word, as he turned upon his red foe. The latter, armed only with a knife, was taken all aback, and seeing the determined look of his antagonist, fled from his shop, hotly pursued by Vulcan in his leather apron, with uplifted hammer. The chase was continued for some distance, in the presence of many Mohawks, who were not a little amused; and who added several loud whoops, crying out, "*Kill um Print! Cha-aw-go-cheth-e-taw-go!*" terrifying the poor fellow so that he buried himself in the recesses of the forest, and never again disturbed the labors of the King's blacksmith. The Indian word *Cha-aw-go-cheth-e-taw-go*, signifying *Pursue and kill him if you can*, was the name by which Printup was ever after called by the natives.—*J. L. Groat.*

Jacob, a brother of John Van Alstyne named above, resided on the Stone Ridge at this time. He had been to attend a religious meeting near the present village of Fultonville, and was returning home on horseback, when he unexpectedly fell in with the enemy. A large Indian seized the bridle, several of his fellows drew Van Alstyne from the horse a prisoner, and the former mounted. The Indian was hardly upon his back, when the horse, not fancying his new rider, reared, floundered and soon left him upon the ground with a broken shoulder. The sagacious animal then set off at full speed, and the enemy opening to the right and left, gave him a free passage; and not caring to fire on him, he escaped from them and returned home, greatly alarming Van Alstyne's family as may be supposed. The prisoner was divested of part of his clothing and the march resumed.—*Cornelius G. Van Alstyne.*

Charles Van Epps, who resided where the dwelling of Evert Yates now stands in Fultonville, escaped with his family as the enemy approached. Evert Van Epps, a nephew of the former, started in the evening, which was very dark, to go to his uncle's, (distant from his own dwelling scarcely one quarter of a mile,) to enquire after the news. Possibly he had heard the firing at Printup's two miles above, and suspected all was not right. He had not proceeded half way to his uncle's residence, when, as he had crossed a small bridge and was opening a swing gate near the end of it into the road, in the present garden of John Mead, he heard the click made by cocking several guns, and a voice sternly demand "Who's there?" The first thought of Van Epps, who could distinguish no visible object, was, to turn and flee; but supposing some of the enemy might be in his rear, or that he would instantly be fired at if he attempted to run, he remained at the gate and was soon surrounded by a hostile party, who were on their way to his house. On securing this prisoner, the enemy again moved forward.—*John E., son of Evert Van Epps.*

Opposite is a very accurate view of Fultonville, as seen in the summer from an eminence in Fonda, on the opposite, or north side of the Mohawk. In giving place to this plate, it may be necessary to assign some reason for its insertion. The village has but few historic associations, and is but the fourth of importance



St. Paul, St.

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in Montgomery county; Amsterdam, Fort Plain and Canajoharie each having a population more than twice as large. The engraving is inserted in compliance with the wishes, and at the expense of its enterprising citizens; from whom the author has received, as his list of subscribers can show, flattering encouragement to publish. Fultonville, named at a meeting of the citizens soon after it began its existence, in honor of Robert Fulton, has sprung up on the Erie canal since its completion, and contains an hundred dwellings, with a population of six hundred inhabitants. A good part of the village is now built on ground called in the Revolution, "Van Epps's Swamp." The small dwelling seen in the extreme left of the picture, was erected just after the war of the Revolution closed, by John Starin. This house stands near the bank of the river, and was for a long time known as a public house. Indeed, before the Mohawk turnpike was constructed, a line of stages was established on the north side of the river, and at this inn the passengers from Albany usually dined. About the year 1795, this house was the western termination of the mail-route in the Mohawk valley, which route was afterwards extended to Herkimer, and still later to Utica. When the mail-route ended at the house in question, to which it was borne once a week, Myndert Starin, a son of the inn keeper, as often carried it to Johnstown, four miles north, then its place of destination, either on foot or on horseback. In the river, nearly opposite this dwelling, may be seen the rock which originated a name for the ancient village of "Caughnawaga," on the north side, which, as already stated, literally signifies, "Stone in the water." A few rods from the site of the dwelling near the bank of the river, seen in the right hand of the picture, (more ancient site of the Charles Van Epps dwelling,) stood a small block-house, erected near the close of the Revolution.

But to return to the war path. Seasonable alarm was communicated by John C.,* a son of Charles Van Epps, who chanced fortunately to be on horseback, to the river settlers below, who made their escape. On arriving at a brook in a small ravine, near the present site of John Van C. Alstyne's store, at Auriesville, John Van Alstyne said to his fellow prisoner, Printup, "Were it not for you, I would now make my escape." His wounded friend replied—"Never mind me: if you can escape, do so, and leave me to my fate." They were walking between two Indians, when Van Alstyne sprang out, dashed up the ravine with the fleetness of an Indian, and escaped: the enemy did not care about firing on

* He was a justice of the peace after the war. While crossing the river on the ice, some years ago, he broke through and was drowned.

him from motives of policy. Again the Indian who had captured Printup was about to sink a tomahawk into his head, but was prevented by the tory who had before interdicted such an occurrence. From Auriesville, the enemy proceeded to Fort Hunter, forded the Schoharie near its mouth and prosecuted their enterprise as far as Yankee Hill, in the present town of Florida. From thence, becoming fearful of pursuit, the main body forded the Mohawk and directed their course to Johnstown. Small parties of the Indians, however, carried their designs still further; but Capt. Wm. Snook, who had been notified of their approach, sent Conrad Stein, an officer under him, to warn the settlers of danger, and they generally effected their escape, with a portion of their property. A short time before the Revolution, Matthias Wart and Marcus Hand, Germans, settled in the interior of this town. The invaders burnt the dwellings of Wart, Henry Rury, Captain Snook, John Stein, Samuel Pettingell, Wm. DeLine, Patrick Connelly, George Young, and several others in the neighborhood. Near the house of Rury, a man named Bowman was captured, and in attempting his escape, soon after, was killed. The female part of Rury's family, consisting of his wife, her sister Harriet Notman, and a little girl named Jane Shelp, were made prisoners by One Armed Peter; who conducted them some distance from the house. Harriet had a child in her arms, and falling down with it, Peter insisted on carrying it, as supposed, to prevent his being shot, should he meet an American marksman. Arriving at a by-place, the party halted, and the Indian asked the young women *if they had any money*. An outside pocket was then worn over the dress, and Harriet, loosening hers, handed it to him. From it he transferred *two doubloons* to his own person, and then returned it. Giving a loud yell, it was responded to by some half a dozen so terrific, as to cause Miss Jane to faint away beside a log. Being joined by several of his comrades, Peter gave the prisoners their liberty, and no further injury or violence was offered them.

The suffering of Printup must have been acute while crossing the Schoharie and Mohawk rivers, the waters of which were then

ould. On arriving at Johnstown, Mrs. Van Sickler, a Scotch woman, and resident of the place, interceded in his behalf, and he was left at her house: from whence he returned home and was cured of his wounds.—*Van Epps, Printup and John Hand.* At Johnstown, Hugh McMonto, a constable, and William Crowley were surprised and killed.—*Mrs. Penelope Forbes.*

What other mischief the invaders occasioned previous to their arrival in Johnstown, I have not learned; but it is presumed that other prisoners were made, and possibly some other citizens slain. On the following day, Col. Willet having collected what troops could be spared from the garrisons in the Mohawk valley, and militia in the vicinity, marched to attack the enemy, who were overtaken near Johnson Hall, where a severe engagement took place, which lasted for several hours, with alternate success. Capt. Zielie, a brave militia officer, was captured by the enemy during the day, and taken to Canada, receiving while there his full share of suffering. Ross was finally compelled to retreat, which he did with serious loss. He proceeded about four miles and encamped for the night, at which time the prisoner Van Alstyne escaped.*—*C. G. Van Alstyne.* Retreating westward

* The following incident attendant on the Johnstown battle, was told the author by *Joseph Wagner.* In the Revolution a hedge-fence ran eastward from Johnson Hall, and the men under Willet were upon one side of it, and those under Ross the other. After a few shots the Americans retreated in confusion, but were rallied, returned to the field; and acting in concert with troops in the enemy's rear, gained a signal victory: When the Americans first retreated, Wagner was the last man to leave the ground. Seeing an officer genteelly clad spring into the fence near, he fired and brought him down. In an instant a hundred guns were leveled at his own person, and he fled in safety amid their discharge. After the battle was over and Willet's men had encamped, Wagner attended by several friends visited the field to learn the fate of the handsome officer he had fired at. He found him on the ground near where he had fallen, and addressed him much as follows:—*My dear sir, I am the man who shot you in the afternoon, but I have a fellow feeling for you: permit me and I will take you to our camp, where you shall receive kind treatment and good care. "I would rather die on this spot,"* was his emphatic reply, *"than leave it with a d—d rebel!"* The young officer, who was very good looking, with long black hair, was left to his fate.

By dawn of day the Americans were put in motion, and Wagner saw no more of the warrior named; but on the approach of several Oneidas in the

from Johnstown,* the enemy took the Fish House road.—*Joseph Wagner*. Arriving at the East and West Canada creeks, the enemy forded them four abreast, carrying poles to prevent falling.—*Van Epps*. Near the West Canada creek, a skirmish took place

morning, he observed in the hands of one, a *scalp*, the hair of which resembled that of his.

Capt. Andrew Fink, a native of the Mohawk valley, who possessed a spirit suited for the times, was also in the Johnstown battle. In a correspondence between Andrew Fink, his son, and H. F. Yates, in which a part of the military services of the captain are mentioned, I find the following facts noted. During the action near the Hall, the British took from the Americans a field-piece, which Col. Willet was anxious to recover. He sent Capt. Fink with a party of volunteers to reconnoitre the enemy, and if possible get the lost cannon. Three of the volunteers were Christian and Myndert Fiak, brothers of the captain, and George Stansell. While observing the movement of the enemy from the covert of a fallen tree, Stansell was shot down beside his brave leader, with a bullet through his lungs; and was borne from the woods by Hanyost Fink. Strengthening his party of volunteers, Capt. Fiak again entered the forest, soon after which he picked up a British knapsack containing a *bottle of French brandy and a cocked hat*. The cannon was soon after re-captured, and it being near night, Willet drew off his men and quartered them in the old Episcopal church in Johnstown; gaining entrance by breaking in a window.

* Most of the Scotch settlers in and around Johnstown either went to Canada with the Johnsons at the beginning of difficulties, or if they remained, were more the friends of the British than the American government. Duncan McGregor, who resided several miles north of Johnson Hall, was an exception. At the time of Ross' invasion, several Indians and a tory entered this pioneer's house in the evening, who left it as they were approaching, unobserved by them. He gained the rear of his log-dwelling, and through a cranny watched the motions of the party. He was armed with a gun and a sword, and resolved that if any injury or insult was offered his wife, to shoot the offender and flee to the woods. Mrs. McGregor detected a tory as one of the party, by observing his white skin where the paint had worn off. This white Indian enquired of her, "if she could not give them something to eat." She replied that she had some jonny-cake and milk. "That will do," said he, and soon they were eating. As they rose from the table, one of them espied a handsomely painted chest in one corner of the room, and asked what it contained? "It contains books," said she, "and other articles belonging to a relative in Albany." "Ah!" said the speaker, "he belongs to the rebel army I suppose!" She replied that he did; and her countenance indicated no little anxiety as he exclaimed with a menacing gesture, "*be careful you do not deceive us.*" One of the intruders with a tomahawk instantly split the cover, and the books and sundry articles of clothing were thrown upon the floor. The clothing was added to their stock of plunder, and soon after the warriors departed.—*A. J. Comrie*.

between Willet's advance under a sergeant, and a party of the enemy, in which several of the latter were killed.—*John Ostrom.*

After the enemy had passed West Canada creek, Walter Butler lingered behind, unconscious of being within reach of American rifles, and having dismounted, he was in the act of drinking water from a tin cup, as he was discovered by Daniel Olendorf, and Anthony, a Mohawk sachem, both well known in the valley. The two, who were a scout in advance of Willet's army, readily recognized the tory chieftain, and both fired upon him. He fell, and the Indian, casting off his blanket and upon it his rifle, dashed through the stream, tomahawk in hand, to him. He was lying with one elbow upon the ground, the hand supporting his aching head, and as his foe approached, he raised the other hand imploringly and cried—"Spare me—give me quarters!" Remembering the onslaught at Cherry-Valley, and the part the suppliant had there acted amid the unheeded prayers of weeping mothers and orphan children, the Indian replied, "*Me give you Sherry-Falley quarters!*"—burying, with the words, his keen-edged tomahawk in his brain. At the moment he fell, Col. Willet and several of his officers arrived upon the bank of the creek. Informed by Olendorf of Butler's proximity, he instantly forded the stream, attended by Col. Lewis, the Indian chief, on horseback, followed by Col. And. Gray of Stone Arabia, and John Brower of the Mohawk valley, on foot: the two latter walking together to stem the current. They reached the spot just as Anthony raised his knife to perform the last act in the tragedy. Seeing his chief he asked him if he should do it, making a circular motion around the bleeding head. The red colonel asked Willet *if he should be scalped*, who replied, *he belongs to your party, Col. Lewis.* An approving look was sufficient, and the reeking scalp-lock was torn off, in the presence of those witnesses, as the victim lay quivering in death. Such was the fall of Walter Butler.—*Daniel and Peter Olendorf, sons of Daniel Olendorf named in the context; and John I. Brower, son of John Brower above named.*

Which of the American scout shot Butler is uncertain, but Olendorf stated to his friends that he aimed at the cup, which, as the

sun shone upon it, afforded him a good mark; and as Butler was wounded in the head, it is highly probable the ball of Olendorf's rifle brought him down. The Indian having stripped his victim, re-crossed the creek to his companion, and hastily putting on the regimentals began to strut about and assume the airs of a British officer. "*I be Brish ofser!*" said he to Olendorf. "*You are a fool!*" replied the latter. "*Me fool?*" responded the Indian with warmth—" *Me fool? No, me Brish ofser!*" and again the bushes had to bow their submission to his assumed character. Said Olendorf again, "You are a fool! and if any of our men should see you at your back, they would mistake you for the villain who once wore those clothes and instantly shoot you down." This was a view of the case which the Indian had not taken, but the words were hardly uttered by his comrade ere he doffed them and resumed his blanket.—*The Olendorf brothers.*

The prisoners captured by Maj. Ross and party, suffered much on their way to Canada from the cold, being seventeen days journeying to the Genesee valley, during which time they were compelled to live almost wholly on a stinted allowance of horse-flesh. Some of the prisoners wintered in the Genesee valley, and were taken to Niagara the following March. Keller, one of the Curry Town prisoners, on arriving at Niagara, was sold, and one Countryman, a native of the Mohawk valley, then an officer in the British service, was his purchaser. In June he was sent to Rebel Island, near Montreal; in November, to Halifax; thence to Nova Scotia, and finally to Boston, where he was exchanged, and left to foot it home without money, as were many of the prisoners during the war. They were, however, welcomed to the table of every patriot on whom they chanced to call, and suffered little by hunger. Keller reached his family in Minden, near Fort Plain, whither they had removed in his absence, on the 24th day of December, 1782. Van Epps, a fellow prisoner, again reached home about eighteen months after his capture, and the rest of the prisoners, taken that fall, either returned at the time he did, or at subsequent periods, as they were confined in different places.—*Keller and Van Epps.*

About the 1st of November, 1781, a party of the enemy under Joseph Brant, and Capt. Adam Crysler, a former resident of that vicinity, entered Vrooman's Land early in the morning, near the residence of Peter Vrooman, a little distance from the Upper Schoharie fort. Isaac Vrooman, father of Peter, had removed his family below the Helleberg some time before, and had, at the time of which I am writing, visited his son to procure his aid in moving his family back to his old residence in Schoharie. A few days before the arrival of his father, Peter had removed from a ~~house~~ he occupied at the fort, to his dwelling, which he intended should be his winter quarters, thinking the season so far advanced that the enemy would not re-appear that fall.

Peter was a self-taught blacksmith, and had a little shop near his house, where he usually did his own horse-shoeing. It was found necessary, previous to leaving home, to set several shoes; and the father rose before daylight, carried a shovel of coals from the house to the shop, and made a fire. As it began to get light, the old gentleman left the shop, as was supposed, to call his son. On his way two guns were fired at him—the one by the tory chieftain, and the other by an Indian warrior beside him. The door of Vrooman's dwelling was on the side opposite the shop, and the son, already up, hearing the report of the two guns, and rightly conjecturing the cause, sprang out of his house, and ran towards the fort, a few hundred yards distant. He had gone but a short distance from his house, when he was discovered, fired upon, and hotly pursued by several Indians, but reached the fort in safety.

The wife of the younger Vrooman, on hearing the guns, ran up stairs, and from a chamber window saw an Indian in the act of tearing off the scalp of the elder Vrooman, who was then on his hands and knees, bellowing most piteously. After the scalp was torn off, the Indian, who was the reader's old acquaintance, Seth's Henry, dispatched his victim with a war club, cut his throat, and with the bloody knife added another notch on the club, to the record of the many scalps he had taken in the war; after which he laid it upon the body of the murdered man and left him. The reader will remember that this Schoharie chief left a war-club in

the same neighborhood some time before, which recorded a most startling account of his prowess and cruelty; the record was much larger at a later period, and I think it hardly possible that an equal number of scalps and prisoners were made during the war by any other individual Indian. When the enemy entered Vrooman's house for plunder, Mrs. Vrooman went below, and being known to several of the Indians, she addressed them in their own dialect, and they spared her life, probably from the recollection of former kindness.

The invaders did not linger long in the vicinity of the fort, but advanced up the river, appropriating to their own use whatever was attainable. Soon after the arrival of Peter Vrooman, a party of fifteen or twenty were dispatched from the fort in pursuit of the foe, of whose numbers they were totally ignorant. Who commanded this American scout is unknown, but Timothy Murphy is said to have had its principal direction. They proceeded with alacrity along the eastern shore of the Schoharie, and when on "Bouck's Island," a few rods above the present residence of Gov. Bouck, they were fired upon by the enemy, who were concealed on the bank of the river above Panther mountain, and one of their number, Derrick [Richard] Haggidorn, mortally wounded. The Americans returned the fire and retreated. As Haggidorn fell, he called to his companions not to leave him to a merciless foe; whereupon Murphy addressed his brave comrades nearly as follows: "My boys, every ball was not moulded to hit, let us save him."* He was then taken between two of his friends and borne off in safety to the fort, where he died the next day, much lamented, as he had been a patriotic and faithful soldier.

* The remark of Murphy, that *every ball was not moulded to hit*, was peculiarly applicable to his own case. He was almost constantly exposed in border wars from the beginning to the close of the Revolution, ever seeking the post of danger—the front rank, if an enemy was near, and probably, at the lowest estimate, had several hundred bullets fired at him by good marksmen, without ever receiving the slightest wound. To look back on the multiplied dangers he passed through, without injury—but a few of which have come down to the writer in a tangible form—it would almost seem as though fortune had her particular favorites.

Whether the enemy received any injury from the return fire of Murphy and party was unknown ; but not long after, Jacob Frimire, a soldier who was out on a hunt from the Upper fort, found the body of a white man sitting against a tree, with his gun and equipments by him ; supposed to have been a tory under Brant and Crysler, and to have been mortally wounded by the scout on Bouck's Island : the appearance of the body justifying the belief that he had been dead about that length of time. The dead man, who had been shot through the body, was found a mile or more from where the skirmish had taken place, near where a brook intersected the mill stream known as Bouck's saw mill creek : the brook was afterwards called *dead man's creek*.

As the enemy were concealed, their number was still unknown on the return of Murphy and party, but enough having been seen and heard to judge somewhat correctly of their strength, Colonel Vrooman dispatched Capt. Hager with fifteen or twenty Schoharie rangers, and a company of eastern troops, numbering about sixty men, under Capt. Hale. The command of the Americans was given to Capt. Hager, who, taking two or three days' provisions, moved up the river. The enemy, as was afterwards ascertained, numbered between sixty and seventy Indians and tories, under the command of Brant and Crysler. One of the principal objects of the invasion was, the removal to Canada of Crysler's family, which, up to this time had remained in Brakabeen.

Capt. Hager halted his men just at dark near the present tavern stand of Wm. Fink, where they encamped in a pine grove beside the road. The night was a very cold one, and the troops suffered considerably, deeming it imprudent to build fires in the night near an enemy whose strength they did not know.* Three hours be-

* Johan Jost Dietz and Peter Vrooman, the former a colonel and the latter a major of militia after the war, were left at the place of encampment, in charge of a keg of rum and a quantity of provisions, to await the return of the troops : and well did they perform their duty, as they assured the writer when together in 1837 ; being unable a part of the time to leave the trust if they would, lest others who liked " the striped pig " should fall in with them and bear off the keg, they secured a liberal share of its contents within their own stomachs.

fore the dawn of day, the pursuit was renewed : and near the residence of the late Gen. Patchin, the Americans ascended the mountain by a narrow and uneven road ; overhung by a heavy growth of hemlock. As the night was cloudy and dark, the progress of the troops was necessarily slow. On arriving at the forks of the roads which led, one to Harpersfield and the other to Lake Utsayantho, they halted, struck up fires and ate breakfast : it being then about daylight. It was discovered that the enemy had gone towards the lake, and a consultation now took place between the officers about the road to be pursued. Capt. Hager was in favor of making a rapid march on the Harpersfield route and, if possible, head the enemy at a favorable place for surprise ; but was overruled and the trail of the enemy followed.

Capt. Hager and his men had pursued the enemy but a short distance on the Lake road, before their approach was known to the latter, who made preparations to receive them. About a mile from the place of breakfasting, they met two of Capt. Hager's horses hobbled together, which the enemy had taken the preceding day. The captain who was walking in front of his men at the time, with the cautious Murphy beside him, stepped up to the horses and cut the cord which fastened them together. They had proceeded but a little way farther, when they heard the whoop of several savages, whom they supposed were in search of the horses. A rapid march soon brought the Americans where the enemy had encamped the previous night ; seven large fires being still burning. Several horses laden with plunder and a number of cattle were abandoned by the Indians near the fire.

On arriving at the lake, the road, which was little more than an Indian foot path, ran along its margin. A ridge of land extended nearly to the Lake where the Americans were approaching, and as they were rising the eminence, the enemy who were concealed near its summit, discharged upon them a volley of balls. The instant they fired, Capt. Hager commanded Hale, who was marching in the rear to "*flank to the right and march on !*" Hager intended to bring the enemy between his command and the lake ; but Hale, instead of obeying the order, faced to the right about,

and followed by his men with one noble exception, retreated in double-quick time. Brant and his destructives seeing the cowardly retreat of Hale and his men, advanced to meet Hager, who was left with less than twenty men to resist a force more than triple his own. The little band had taken trees, and were beginning to return the enemy's fire at the time Hale retreated; but seeing that they must soon be entirely surrounded if they attempted to maintain their position, their brave leader ordered a retreat. On leaving the ground, they were necessarily exposed to the fire of the enemy, and Sacket, a Bostonian, (the exception to Hale's men,) sealed his bravery with his blood, as did Joachim Van Valkenberg,* one of Capt. Hager's followers. Joseph, a brother of Capt. Hager was also wounded severely in the right shoulder, but the ball was extracted and he subsequently recovered. It was thought by the Americans at the time a most providential circumstance, that, exposed as they were in their retreat to the fire of so many good marksmen, only two should have been killed. Capt. Hager, with Murphy still at his side, then ran to overtake the cowardly Hale; and after a chase of about five hundred yards overtook him: as both of them gained his front, they placed the muzzles of their rifles at his breast, and the captain in a voice of thunder exclaimed, "*Attempt to run another step and you are a dead man!*"

Thus unexpectedly brought to a stand, Hale, at the order of Capt. Hager, which he was not in a situation a second time to

* The following anecdote was related to the author by *Lydia Kline*, a sister of Van Valkenberg. Among the Indians who returned to Schoharie, after the war, was one who called at the house of Henry, a brother of Van Valkenberg above named, having with him a gun. Henry instantly recognized the gun as that of his deceased brother, and taking it up he asked the Indian where he got it. He replied that he had killed a man at the 'Little Lake,' and thus obtained it. Said Henry, "This is my gun, and I shall keep it." The red man was unwilling to concede that point, it being as he believed a lawful prize from the fortune of war. Henry however retained the gun, and told the Indian to take it from his grasp and he should have it. Mortified at thus losing his gun, the Indian left the house and went into a swamp near by. Not long after this event the body of a dead Indian was discovered in this swamp, but the cause of his death, or by whose hand he had fallen, remained among the mysteries of the times.

misunderstand, faced about and began to retrace his steps. But the golden moment to punish the invaders of Schoharie and avenge the murder of Vrooman, was past. Brant, to whom possibly the actual force under Capt. Hager was known, having, as before remarked, a French war acquaintance with the latter, and knowing what resistance he might expect if a stand was effected by him, chose, encumbered as he was with Crysler's family, to make a rapid march to the Susquehanna. The two soldiers who fell near the lake were scalped by the foe.

Having restored order and infused a share of his own fearless spirit into his ranks, Capt. Hager was about to renew the pursuit as Col. Vrooman arrived upon the ground, with forty men drawn from the Lower fort. After a short consultation, the chase was continued, but still in ignorance as to the enemy's numbers; after proceeding about two miles and losing all trace of their footsteps, they having left the usual path for some unknown route, the pursuit was abandoned, and the troops returned to Schoharie.—*Manuscript of Judge Hager, one of the pursuing party.*

In the latter part of the war, supposed in the year 1781, six *tories*, who had threaded the forests from Niagara to Schoharie in the hope of making a profitable adventure, were concealed in and around the settlements for a week or more. They were led by Nicholas Snyder, a former resident of the valley and neighbor of my informant *Jacob Enders*, whose person they thought to secure. The party were secreted in a small swamp several days, near the dwelling of William Enders his father, on Foxes creek. After awaiting in vain nearly a week for a sight of Jacob's person, two of the number dressed in Continental clothes, went to the house of Enders, and supposed to be *patriots*, were very kindly treated: they enquired of Mr. Enders, while partaking of his hospitality, *if he had no sons to aid him in his farming!* He replied that he had a son, *who was then in the nine months' service at the Middle fort.*

Mortified at being thus foiled in their attempts, the *tories* then sought to surprise and capture Capt. Stubrach, to effect which they laid in wait for him some time under a bridge in Kneiskern's

dorf; but the captain was not to be caught napping, and the enterprise proved abortive.

Capt. Henry Eckler, late of Warren, Herkimer county, was out with a friend in the summer of 1781, in the vicinity of Fort Herkimer, and unexpectedly fell in with Brant and a party of his warriors. The chief, who was well acquainted with Captain E., addressed him by name, and asked him if he would surrender himself his prisoner. "*Not by a d—d sight, as long as I have legs to run!*" and suiting the action to the word, he turned and fled at the top of his speed, and his companion with him. The surprise took place near a piece of woods, into which the fugitives ran, pursued by a band of yelling savages. Eckler had proceeded but a little distance in the woods, when he found it would be impossible for him to run far with the speed requisite for his escape by flight; and passing over a knoll which hid him from the observation of his pursuers, he entered, head first, a cavity at the root of a wind-fallen tree. He found its depth insufficient, however, to conceal his whole person, and like a young ostrich or partridge, that, with its head concealed, feels secure, if it remains still, he resolved to keep silence and trust to Providence for the issue. The party pursuing soon arrived upon the knoll, and halted almost over him to catch another glimpse of his retiring form. But they looked in vain; and while they stood there, and he heard their conversation, he expected every moment would be his last, as he was sure if his foes looked down they could not fail to see at least one half his person. He thought, as he afterwards told his friends, that had Brant, who also came upon the bank above him while he was thus concealed, but listened, he must have heard his heart beat, as it felt in his breast like the thumping of a hammer. Supposing Eckler had fled in an opposite direction, his pursuers overlooked his place of concealment, and expressing to each other their surprise at his sudden exit, and declaring that a *spirit* had helped him escape, they withdrew, when he backed out of his hiding place, and regained his home in safety. His comrade also effected his escape uninjured, although he had a long and strong race for his liberty.—*Dr. Z. W. Bingham, who also communicated the facts detailed in the next succeeding adventure.*

In the fall of 1781, a man was captured in the vicinity of Fort Plank, a picketed block-house, situated in the western part of the present town of Minden, some three miles westward of Fort Plain.* The prisoner of whom I speak was captured by seven Indians, and hurried off into the wilderness. At night the party halted at a deserted log tenement in that part of Danube known as Otsuago,† or as usually spoken, the Squawke. As the weather was cold the Indians made a fire, and after partaking of a scanty supper, gathered round it to talk over the result thus far of their expedition. They had, as they stated, taken but a few scalps, very little plunder, and but one prisoner, who, they concluded, was hardly worth taking to Canada alone. They there resolved to have a *pow-wow* in the morning, kill and scalp the prisoner, return toward the Mohawk, and seek among the defenceless or unguarded whom they might plunder or slay.

The enemy, after discussing thus freely their future plans in the Mohawk dialect, laid down upon the floor to rest, with their feet to the fire. The prisoner was compelled to lie down between two Indians, under cords fastened to their bodies, which crossed his person over the breast and thighs, and not long after, all, save the prisoner, were in a sound slumber. If the Indians were soon dreaming of rich hunting grounds, human scalps, "beauty and booty," the case was far otherwise with the poor captive, who understood every word they had said, and had listened with horror to his own approaching fate. Believing his foes all under the padlock of Morpheus, he began to tax his ingenuity for some means of escape. Hope of procuring those means was fast fading from his excited mind, which already began to suffer the imaginary pangs of savage torture, when, in moving his hand upon the floor, it accidentally rested upon a fragment of broken window-glass.

*Col. Stone, with several other writers, has fallen into the error of supposing Fort Plank but another name for Fort Plain.

†This is the Indian name for the creek which runs into the Mohawk at Ft. Plain, and signifies "The Springs," alluding to its sources.—Wagner.

No sooner did the prisoner seize the glass, than a ray of hope entered his bosom, and with the frail assistant he instantly set about regaining his liberty. He commenced severing the rope across his breast, and soon it was stranded. The moment was one of intense excitement; he knew that it was the usual custom for one or more of an Indian party to keep watch and prevent the escape of their prisoners. Was he then watched? Should he go on, with the possibility of hastening his own doom, or wait and see if some remarkable interposition of Providence might save him? A monitor within whispered, "Faith without works is dead," and after a little pause in his efforts, he resumed them, and soon had parted another strand; and as no movement was made, he tremblingly cut another; it was the last, and as it yielded he sat up. He then was enabled to take a midnight view of the group around him, in the feeble light reflected from the moon through a small window of a single sash. The enemy still appeared to sleep, and he soon separated the cord across his limbs. He then advanced to the fire and raked open the coals, which reflected their partial rays upon the painted visages of those misguided heathen, whom British gold had bribed to deeds of damning darkness; and being fully satisfied that all were sound asleep, he approached the door.

The Indians had a large watch dog outside the house. He cautiously opened the door, sprang out and ran, and as he had anticipated, the dog was yelling at his heels. He had about twenty rods to run across a cleared field before he could reach the woods: and as he neared them he looked back, and in the clear light of a full moon, saw the Indians all in pursuit. As he neared the forest, they all drew up their rifles and fired upon him, at which instant a strong vine caught his foot and he fell to the ground. The volley of balls passed over him, and bounding to his feet, he gained the beechen shade. Not far from where he entered, he had noticed the preceding evening a large hollow log, and on coming to it, he sought safety within in. The dog, at first, ran several rods past the log, which served to mislead the

party, but soon returned near it, and ceased barking without a visit to the entrance of the captive's retreat.

The Indians sat down over him, and talked about their prisoner's escape. They finally came to the conclusion that he had either ascended a tree near, or that the *devil* had aided him in his escape, which to them appeared the most reasonable conclusion. As morning was approaching, they determined on taking an early breakfast and returning to the river settlements, leaving one of their number to keep a vigilant watch in that neighborhood for their captive until afternoon of the following day, when he was to join his fellows at a designated place. This plan settled, an Indian proceeded to an adjoining field, where a small flock of sheep had not escaped their notice, and shot one of them. While enough of the mutton was dressing to satisfy their immediate wants, others of the party struck up a fire, which they chanced, most unfortunately for his comfort, to build against the log, *directly opposite their lost prisoner*. The heat became almost intolerable to the tenant of the fallen basswood, before the meat was cooked—besides, the smoke and steam which found their way through the worm holes and cracks, had nearly suffocated him, ere he could sufficiently stop their ingress, which was done by thrusting a quantity of leaves and part of his own clothing into the crannies. A cough, which he knew would insure his death, he found it most difficult to avoid: to back out of his hiding place would also seal his fate, while to remain in it much longer, he felt conscious, would render his situation, to say the least, *not enviable*.

After suffering most acutely in body and mind for a time, the prisoner (who was again such by accident,) found his miseries alleviated when the Indians began to eat, as they then let the fire burn down, and did not again replenish it. After they had dispatched their breakfast of mutton, the prisoner heard the leader caution the one left to watch in that vicinity to be wary, and soon heard the retiring footsteps of the rest of the party. Often during the morning, the watchman was seated or standing over him. Not having heard the Indian for some time, and believing the hour of his espionage past, he cautiously crept out of the log; and find-

ing himself alone, being prepared by fasting and steaming for a good race, he drew a bee-line for Fort Plank, which he reached in safety : believing, as he afterwards stated, *that all the Indians in the state could not have overtaken him in his homeward flight.*

The events of the year 1781, are among the most important during the war, and gave the seal to American independence. In the early part of the year, the southern states became the theatre of war, and Gen. Greene, who had succeeded Gates after his southern disasters, aided by Morgan, Lee, Marion, Sumpter, and other brave officers, fought many battles with skill and alternate success to the American arms. On the 19th of January, Generals Greene and Morgan met and defeated, with an inferior numerical force, mostly militia, Col. Tarleton with the flower of the British army. Not long after, Lee and Pickens—the latter a militia officer—fell in, by accident, near the branches of the Haw river, with a body of royalists on their way to join Col. Tarleton, and killed upwards of two hundred of their number. On the 15th of March, Gen. Greene met Lord Cornwallis near Guilford Court House, and although victory several times perched upon the *spangled banner*, the Americans were finally compelled to retreat—with a loss, however, less than that of the victors. On the 25th April, the battle of Camden was fought, between the armies under General Greene and Lord Rawdon, when fortune again showed herself a fickle goddess—siding, in the latter part of the action, with the foes of freedom. The killed and wounded on each side was between two and three hundred. The vigilance of the prudent though daring Greene, and the spirit with which the British were every where met at the south by the yeomanry of the land, caused them, by the early part of June, to abandon nearly all of their line of military posts in the Carolinas, and concentrate their forces. Probably in no other section of the union were the friends of liberty and royalty more equally divided : or was a spirit of bitter acrimony and rancorous hostility more vividly manifested during the war, than in the Carolinas in the summer of 1781. Indeed, many of their most valuable citizens were sacrificed in a spirit of partisan strife or retaliation. The last important engagement in

South Carolina, took place on the 8th of September, at Eutaw Springs, between the troops under Gen. Greene and Lieut. Col. Stewart. This was one of the most bloody battles during the war for the numbers engaged, and was fairly won by the Americans; but in their retreat, a body of the British entering a large brick house, kept their pursuers in check until the officers could rally the fugitives: who returned to the charge, and in turn compelled the Americans to retreat; which was done in good order, and the wounded borne from the field. The armies were each 2000 strong when the action began. The Americans lost in killed and wounded 550 men, and the enemy about 700.

Early in the season the traitor Arnold was sent with an army into Virginia. In this expedition, Arnold destroyed, by conflagration and otherwise, much property, public and private, at Richmond, Westham, Smithfield, and some other places. While the traitor was thus serving his new master, Washington concerted a plan for his capture—but the French fleet not co-operating with Gen. Lafayette, to whom was entrusted the enterprise, it proved abortive. Arnold was soon after superseded by Gen. Phillips, who sailed up James river, destroying much property at Boswell's Ferry, City Point, Petersburg, and Manchester.

In May, a project was formed by Gen. Washington and other officers assembled at Wethersfield, Connecticut, to attempt the recovery of New York city. The French fleet, under Count de Grasse, expected to co-operate by water, arriving in Chesapeake bay, the contemplated siege of New York was abandoned, and the capture of Lord Cornwallis, who was strongly fortified at Yorktown, undertaken. The seige of the place began about the 1st of October, and on the 19th, Cornwallis and his army of eight or nine thousand men, surrendered themselves prisoners of war to the American and French armies, with a park of 160 pieces of artillery, mostly brass. The enemy's naval force in the harbor was assigned to the Count de Grasse, and the land forces to Gen. Washington. The loss of a second entire army inclined Britain to think of making a peace. This great victory was celebrated

throughout the Union with festivals and rejoicings, and a day of *national* thanksgiving was appointed.

The destination of the American army was so judiciously concealed from Sir Henry Clinton, commanding at New York, that Washington was treading a southern soil when that officer supposed him in his own neighborhood.

A fact attendant on the capture of Cornwallis, deserves a notice. It was the usual custom in the Revolution, when one army was vanquished by another, to have the standards borne by lieutenants and transferred to officers of the same rank. At the surrender of the troops at Yorktown, it was observed that the British flags were in the hands of orderly sergeants. Two officers of that grade, James Williamson of the New York, and a man named Brush, of the Connecticut troops, were quickly selected to perform this honorable duty, in consideration of services rendered during the seige, to evidence which each wore on his person the soldier's *mark of honor*. The British army passed between files of American troops, and as the standards reached Williamson and Brush, they received, furled, and laid them down. When the first standard-bearer reached Williamson (from whom these facts were derived) he was ordered by him to halt. "Sir," said he, "*I will receive your standard.*" The British orderly at first hesitated, and seemed not a little surprised that he was to deliver it to a knotted officer, but with a very graceful salute he presented it and passed on. The old veteran remarked that he had quite a pile of British flags when the vanquished army had all passed. It was afterwards supposed that the enemy designed, by delivering their ensigns through non-commissioned to subaltern officers, to cast a slur upon the stars of America.*

* The following anecdotes were attendant on the march of the American army to and from Yorktown. At Baltimore, one Gregg, who belonged to Col. Cortlandt's regiment of New York troops, was flogged eight hundred lashes. Several complaints having been rendered to the colonel that the soldiers were stealing from each other; in order to stop the habit effectually, he gave orders that the first one guilty of theft should receive fifty lashes for the value of every shilling stolen. A missing shirt was found shortly after in Gregg's knapsack, which two of his fellow soldiers adjudged to be worth *two dollars*. Poor Gregg was literally flayed. He lingered a long time between life and

Chagrined at the turn affairs had taken at the south, Clinton sent the traitor Arnold on an embassy of destruction to New London, Ct. Fort Griswold, situated on elevated ground in Groton, on the east side of the Thames, nearly opposite, commanded the

death, but finally recovered. It turned out in the end that a rascally soldier had stolen the garment, and placed it in Gregg's knapsack on purpose to see him flogged.—*James Williamson.*

Cady Larey one day stole a turkey, and put it in the knapsack of a fellow soldier named Berrian, expecting, no doubt, to feast on it. It was discovered, and Col. Cortlandt sentenced Berrian to receive a severe whipping for the theft. His back was bared, and as the lash was about to descend upon it, Larey, conscience-stricken, advanced into the ring and confessed the crime—declaring that if any one deserved a flogging it was himself. The act of confession was so manly, that Col. C. forgave them both.—*Williamson.*

All classes could safely be trusted with secrets in the Revolution. A cheese having one day disappeared in an unaccountable manner in a New England regiment, great search was made for it, but in vain. Among others examined was a faithful negro waiter to one of the officers, who was interrogated, and replied much as follows: "Jack, have you seen any one steal a cheese?" "No, massa; me no see any one steal chee." "Have you seen a cheese in the hands of any one?" "No, massa." "Well, Jack, have you seen any cheese?" "Why, ye-ye-yes massa, me see a chee go by, but nobody wid em."—*Capt. Eben Williams.*

At Baltimore the regiment of Col. Cortlandt embarked in a vessel, and after the troops were all on board, the colonel gave strict orders that no one should go on shore without his permission. The night following, Larey and Berrian, the two soldiers mentioned in another anecdote, yielding to a temptation to violate their officer's commands, which their love of liquor prompted, swam ashore. While returning to the ship, Larey was drowned, but his equally boozy companion was discovered floundering in the water, taken on board, and instantly cited before his commander. He confessed his guilt, and at the mention of his companion's name began to cry. "Why do you cry?" demanded the colonel. "Because poor Larey was drowned," he replied; "for about his neck was tied a canteen—eh! of as good brandy as ever a man tasted—eh." The colonel finally forgave Berrian because of his penitence and great sorrow for the loss of his companion and the precious jewel about his neck—but admonished him and his fellow soldiers never to be guilty of another act of disobedience, if they would not share the fate of poor Larey, who could never drink his own brandy.—*Williamson.*

On the return march of Colonel Cortlandt's regiment from York Town, a gentleman near whose house it had encamped, complained in the evening to Colonel C., that his watch had been stolen by a soldier. Secrecy was enjoined until the troops were paraded to march in the morning, when a rigid search was made of the person and knapsack of every soldier in the regiment, but the search was in vain, and the army moved forward. Some days after, the watch was discovered on the person of a soldier, who was publicly whip-

city; and in order to rifle the latter, it became necessary to capture the former. For this object, a large body of men under Lt. Col. Eyre were dispatched; but they were repelled with spirit by its inmates, about 120 men, mostly militia, assembled in its vicinity. The Americans were too few to resist so large a force, and the works were finally carried; but not until, according to Arnold's official account, 48 of the assailants were slain, and 145 wounded, many mortally. Numbers were killed with cold shot thrown from the ramparts. The Americans lost but a few men until after the works were carried and they had grounded their arms, when about seventy of their number were brutally massacred, and nearly all the rest wounded; several are said to have escaped injury by hugging British soldiers, so as to endanger the lives of the latter if those of the former were attempted. One man, who fled from the fort as the enemy entered, was shot at with some others also escaping, and falling uninjured, he remained in the grass feigning himself dead, until the enemy withdrew, when he joined his friends. As Maj. Montgomery entered the fort, (Col. Eyre, his superior, being wounded) he asked who commanded it. The brave Lt. Col. William Ledyard responded very civilly, "I once had that honor, the command is now yours:" presenting at the same time the hilt of his sword. The brutal major seized it, and with the spirit of a demon, passed it through the vitals of the unarmed giver. An American officer next in command to Ledyard, and standing near him at the time, revenged the act by cutting down Montgomery, but was in turn slaughtered. The command of the enemy then devolved on Maj. Bromfield. The dastardly example of the officers was followed by an indiscriminate slaughter of the unresisting soldiery. We talk of the savage massacres of Cherry-Valley and Wyoming—here was a more than *savage* massacre, for it was committed by

ped for its theft. Exhibiting it exultingly afterwards, he exclaimed—"Who would not take a flogging for such a watch as this?"

When asked how he had managed to conceal the watch, the rogue said he was about to bake a bread-cake as he obtained it, and putting it within the dough, baked it in. The bread was in his knapsack when searched, but no one thought of breaking the loaf to find a concealed treasure.—*Williamsen*.

a people claiming to be *civilized*. In vindication of the British character, it has been stated that the Americans continued the fight after they had struck their colors. This however is not true: the flag-staff upon the walls was more than once shot off by the enemy, but the flag was waving above them when they carried the fortress. A regiment of militia under Col. Gallup, who witnessed the whole transaction at a distance of one mile from the fort, would not march to its rescue. Had he led his men into the fort, as a sense of duty should have prompted, the British could not have taken it. Ledyard sent a messenger to Gallup to march into the fort to his assistance when the enemy were landing, but the latter pretended not to have received the message. Gallup was tried by court martial for his want of bravery on the occasion, and broken of his office.

The enemy while in possession of the fort, loaded an ox-cart which chanced to be near, with wounded Americans, and started it down the declivity with the intention of running it into the river, but it struck a large apple-tree after gaining considerable velocity, and thwarted their merciless intention. The shock when it struck was tremendous, and several of the bleeding soldiers were killed outright. One Stevens who was in it at the time with a broken thigh, and was nearly killed by the shock, afterwards stated *no one could conceive the acuteness of his suffering when the cart struck the tree*. The enemy after burying their own dead, spiking or destroying the cannon, and laying a train of powder to the magazine, left the fort. The explosion was however prevented, as has been stated by some previous writer, by a wounded soldier who crawled upon the train, and saturated it with his own life-blood so that it did not communicate with the magazine. The British burnt New-London, destroyed some shipping in the harbor, and embarked for New-York. Soon after they left the fort, the Americans in the neighborhood entered it. The former had buried their dead but slightly, with their clothes on. The Americans, who found it difficult to obtain clothing, dug up their dead foes; divested them of their apparel; dug deeper graves, and again buried them; interring also their fallen countrymen. Facts

from *Mr. Ephraim F. Simms*, of Otsego county, who obtained them at the request of the author, from Capt. Peckham Maine, a former resident of that county. The latter, then a lad, entered Fort Griswold soon after the enemy left it, and aided in stripping and burying the dead.

A patriotic old lady is still living in the vicinity of this fort, or was but recently, who was in it at the time it fell into the hands of the British, of whom the following anecdote is related. As the enemy were approaching the fortress, one of the guns was about to become useless for the want of wadding; when our heroine loosening a flannel petticoat on her person, threw it to the cart-ridge-man with the exclamation, "this will enable you to fire a few shots more!" The garment was torn up, and the gun continued its fearful execution upon the foeman. In consequence of the patriotic deed related, this old lady has been visited by many distinguished individuals, among whom, if I mistake not, are numbered several Presidents of the United States.—*Rev. J. M. Van Buren.*