

## CHAPTER XVII.

Although the preceding year had closed with a cessation of hostilities, predatory border enterprises were continued during the summer of 1782.

Christopher P. Yates, Esq., who was one of the best informed and most efficient patriots in the Mohawk valley, in a letter dated "Freyburg, 22d March, 1782," written to Col. H. Frey,\* a brother-in-law, respecting timber, thus observes :

"We have already had three different inroads from the enemy, which you have doubtless heard before. The last was at Bowman's kill, from whence they took three children of McFee's family. If they act upon the same principle as the last year, which from their conduct is evident, their intention in coming to the creek so early was to clear it of all inhabitants, that they might pass unobserved. I fear that in the course of the present year they will infest us chiefly on the south side of the river, and in small parties: for this reason I think our bush to be in more danger than it has yet been. God grant that I may be wrong."

\* Col. Stone in the *Life of Brant*, speaking of the acts of the first meeting of the Palatine district, thus observes—"The original draft of the proceedings of that meeting is yet in existence, in the hand-writing of Colonel Hendrick Frey, a patriot who lived to a great age, and is but recently deceased." "This," says the memoranda of H. F. Yates, "is a total and entire mistake. The draft was made by Christopher P. Yates, and is in his hand writing. Col. Stone meant John, instead of Hendrick Frey. The latter was a tory, and was one of the disaffected sent by the Tryon County Committee to Hartford, Connecticut. The whole of those papers, [the early correspondence of the Tryon County Committee,] were drawn and written by C. P. Yates. He was the only scholar among them; and was a man of strong mind, much reading, and a very forcible writer. He was the competitor at the bar of Montgomery County, of the late Abram Van Vechten, from the year 1787, till the Legislature by law, prevented the clerks from practising law in their respective counties."

As in the Schoharie, so it was in the Mohawk valley in the Revolution.

In the spring of this year, a party of fifteen Indians proceeded by a circuitous route through the Schoharie settlements, without committing any hostile act to Beaver-dam, Albany county, where was a small settlement, a grist-mill, &c. The settlers were mostly Tories in this vicinity, except the Dietzes and Weidmans. To destroy the family of Johannes Dietz, an old gentleman who lived between the mill and a Scotch settlement at Rensselaerville, was the especial object of the invaders in making their tedious journey. The family consisted of the old gentleman and his wife, his son Capt. William Dietz and wife, four children of the latter, a servant girl, and a lad named John Bryce, whose parents lived at Rensselaerville.

The enemy arrived at Dietz's just before night, and surprised and killed all the family, except Capt. Dietz and young Bryce, then 12 or 14 years old. Robert Bryce, a brother of John, 11 years old, had been sent on horseback that day to the mill at Beaver-dam with a grist, in company with several other lads on the same errand. Their grain was ground, but as it was nearly sun-

Many of the most influential families were not only related to each other, but were often divided in their political opinions; and not unfrequently members were found in hostile array. Major Frey had a brother named Bernard, who joined the enemy, and with some of his former neighbors of the Mohawk valley, doubtless assisted in desolating portions of it. Colonel Hendrick Frey married a sister of General Herkimer, and his patriot brother, Major Frey, married another relative of the General. The wife of Christopher P. Yates was the youngest sister of the Freys named. The Finks, Coxes, Klocks, Bellingers, Parises, Feeters, Nellises, Foxes, Groses, Eckers, Wagners, Seabers, Helmers, Eisenlords, Snells, (seven men of this name were killed in the Oriskany battle.—*Jour. of N. Y. Congress*.) Nestells, Sprakers, Zielies, Van Alstynes, Roofs, Van Slycks, Dievendorfs, Fondus, Veeders, Visschers, Harpers, Putmans, Quackenbosses, Van Eppses, Wemples, Hansons and Groats were also among the patriotic German and Dutch citizens of the Mohawk valley; not a few of whom were connected by ties of consanguinity.

Of Gen. Herkimer, it may be well here to remark, that he was much better informed than many suppose. Says the manuscript of Yates, "I claim not for the General, that he was versed in Latin and Greek, or in the philosophy of the German schools; but I claim for him, that no German emigrant was better read in the history of the Protestant reformation, and in the philosophy of the Bible, than General Herkimer." I may add, in truth, he possessed largely those sterling qualities, good common sense, sympathy, honor, and a spirit of bravery in a just cause, unrivalled by that of a Montgomery or De Kalb.

down they all concluded to tarry with the miller over night, except Bryce, who resolved to return as far as Dietz's, three miles toward his home, and stay with his brother. He arrived just at twilight near the house, when an Indian sprang from a covert by the road-side, and seized his bridle-reins. A short time before his arrival, the family had been led out of the house to be murdered, agreeable to a savage custom, perhaps that their mangled remains may terrify surviving friends; and as the horse, with Robert still on him, was led near the house, the lad discovered the disfigured bodies of all the family, except Capt. Dietz and his own brother, who were tied to a tree near by.

The enemy, after plundering the dwelling of such articles as they desired, set it on fire, and, with the outbuildings, it was soon reduced to ashes. Securing the scalps of the eight bleeding victims, or *sixty-four dollars worth* of American blood in an English market—after placing their plunder on a number of horses belonging to the Dietzes, and that of young Bryce, on which his grist was retained for food—they started forward on their tedious journey to Canada. They traveled about two miles and encamped for the night, distant from the paternal house of the Bryce boys about a mile. Little did their parents dream of the fate and future prospects of their sons. By dawn of day next morning, the journey was resumed. The Indians desired to take the southern route to Niagara, and hoped to gain the sources of the Schoharie without molestation. Tidings of the untimely fate of this family were next day communicated to the Schoharie forts, and a body of troops was dispatched by Col. Vrooman in pursuit.

Lieut. John Jost Dietz, a relative of the family, who was sent from the Lower fort with a party to bury the dead, met them in a wagon owned by a neighbor. The bodies had been mutilated by hogs, and presented a most revolting appearance. They were all deposited in one grave, in a yard attached to a small Reformed Dutch church, then standing not far distant from the place of massacre.

Suspecting the route the invaders would take, the Americans proceeded up the river, and towards night, on the second day af-

ter the massacre, fell in with and fired upon them near the head waters of the Schoharie. Several of the Indians were wounded, but they all effected their escape with their prisoners. They however abandoned their horses and plunder at the onset, which were restored to the surviving friends of the family. The Indian who claimed ownership to the person of Robert Bryce, was badly wounded in one leg by the fire of the Schoharie troops, and being unable to keep up with the party, journeyed with his prisoner and two of his partizans at a much slower pace. On arriving at the Indian settlements in western New York, Robert was initiated into the cruel mysteries of gantlet-running: receiving a lesson in which school, on one occasion, nearly cost him his life. He was taken to Nine Mile Landing on Lake Ontario; sold to a Scotchman, who was the captain of a sloop, for fifteen dollars; was removed to Detroit, from whence he was liberated and returned home, after the proclamation of peace, in company with his brother and several hundred prisoners liberated at the same time.

The treatment of Capt. Dietz and the elder Bryce was more severe than that of Robert. Their party were greatly straightened for food on their way, and for several days lived on winter-green, birch-bark, and, possibly, a few esculent roots and wild berries. On the Susquehanna river, near the mouth of the Unadilla, a deer was shot, which providentially saved them from starving. Their progress at this period was very slow, as they were compelled daily to spend much of their time in hunting food. They journeyed through the Chemung and Genesee valleys, and at villages, the prisoners were compelled to endure the running ordeal. Added to the stripes of his foes and the gnawings of hunger, Capt. Dietz suffered the most severe mental agony. He was not only doomed to see the blood-stained scalps of his honored parents, his bosom companion and four lovely children stretched in hoops to tan in the sun, as was the custom, but often to have them slapped in his face by the Indian who bore them, in the most insulting manner.

George Warner, who was captured the same season, informed

the writer that he saw Capt. Dietz in his confinement at Niagara, and conversed with him. The latter appeared heart-stricken and in a decline, under which he sunk to the grave not long after. He told Capt. Warner (the latter was a military captain after the war) where a certain amount of money had been concealed near their dwelling. Capt. W. afterwards understood the treasure had been recovered.—*Priest's narrative and Col. Wm. Dietz of Schoharie, corroborated by others.*

Early on the morning of July 4th, Adam Vrooman (a namesake and cousin of "Pull Foot Vrooman," and son of Isaac Vrooman, who was killed the preceding fall,) went from the Upper Schoharie fort, accompanied by Peter Feeck, (the man who discovered the rear of the British army on the morning of Johnson's invasion,) to drive cattle to a pasture near the dwelling of the late Cornelius Vrooman. Feeck was driving the cattle as his companion went forward to open the gate; and as the latter was in the act of so doing, he received several bullets from a party of seven Indians and Tories concealed in ambush, and fell dead. Feeck fled, and although fired at by the enemy, he reached the fort, nearly a mile distant, in safety. On the same morning, Joseph Brown, who had left the Upper fort on the same errand as had Vrooman and Feeck, was captured by the same party and hurried off to Canada. A band of rangers left the fort on the return of Feeck, and soon struck the trail of the enemy; but the latter having stolen a number of horses in the neighborhood, effected their escape.—*Mrs. Van Slyck and Josias E. Vrooman.*

On the morning of July 26th, 1782, the Tory captain, Adam Crysler, accompanied by his brother William, another Tory named Peter Erkert, and twenty-two Indians, appeared in Foxes creek valley. They had tarried the preceding night, as was believed, at the dwelling of a Tory in the vicinity, whose family and property were left unmolested. Early in the morning the destructives approached the house of Jacob Zimmer, which was one of the first stone dwellings erected in Schoharie county.\*

\*This house, situated a little distance from the hamlet called Gallupville, which dwelling has for many years past been owned and occupied by Theo-

Jacob Zimmer, sen., was absent when the enemy arrived at his house, as was also his son Peter; the latter, however, had not left the neighborhood. Crysler was sadly disappointed in not finding the elder Zimmer at home. His namesake was tomahawked and scalped in the presence of his wife and mother—two who could feel most keenly his loss. The women were not captured, and the enemy, after plundering the house, set it on fire, as also they did the barn, and then proceeded down the creek. The former was extinguished by the women, after the *barn-burners* had left, but the barn was reduced to ashes. Proceeding a little distance from the house, the party met Peter Zimmer, and took him prisoner. Peter enquired of his captors if they had seen his brother Jacob, and was answered that *they had left him at home with the women*, but did not tell him that the bloody trophy one of their number had secured for a British market, was the scalp of his near relative. A Hessian, who had entered New York as a soldier under Burgoyne, and who had chosen to desert and remain in the country, was at work for the Zimmers at the time of Crysler's invasion, and was also murdered, as *his* scalp would command eight dollars in Canada. Blood was said to have been visible on a stone beside the road where this poor Hessian was slain, for a great length of time afterwards.

The morning being unusually foggy, the light of Zimmer's house was not discovered by the citizens below, and as they had refrained from firing, their proximity was unsuspected.

At this period, Johannes Becker, one of the earliest German settlers on Foxes creek, was still living about two miles below Zimmer, and with or near him five sons, Joseph, major of militia, George, John, Jacob, and William; and one daughter named

bold Hiltz, unfortunately took fire on the 9th day of March, 1843, and with most of its contents soon became a heap of ruins. Mr. Zimmer was a patriot, a man of influence, and well known in the country, having been associated as patentee with John Lawyer and others in the purchase and sale of extensive tracts of land in Albany county. To secure such a prisoner (possibly one of the Schoharie council of safety at the time) was an object not to be overlooked by the tory chief; he accordingly led his destructives to Zimmer's house. Mr. Zimmer had two sons, Jacob and Peter, living with him, who were young men grown—the former of whom had a wife also at his father's.

**Maria.\*** The three brothers, John, Jacob, and William Becker, went on the morning of Crysler's invasion, to work in a cornfield on the north side of the creek. Arriving at the field, they found they had but two hoes, and John, the eldest, sent William, the youngest of the three, then twenty-two years old, to the house for another hoe. He soon returned with a report that the women were hoeing a patch of cabbage, and did not like to part with it. As previously stated, many of the farmers concealed their hay and grain in the woods during the war, to avoid the enemy's fire-brand. The day before this invasion, the brothers had been cutting brush to make room for several hay stacks, and to open a road to the place, some distance from the house.

When William returned without the hoe, John told him he could go and finish the road in the woods, make bars, &c. William started, but was called back by John, who told him to stay and hoe with Jacob, saying that he would go and finish the other work himself, as then he would be sure of its being done to suit him! John was afterwards found dead, lying upon the brush he had been cutting, and appeared not to have moved after he received the blow of a tomahawk. The brim and lower part of his hat crown were cut open, and the weapon had penetrated the brain. It was supposed that an Indian had stolen up behind him unobserved, and felled him to the earth, where he scalped and left him. As the enemy went directly from Zimmer's to the field where the Becker brothers had been at work the day before, it was supposed that their place of labor had been communicated by some tory in the settlement. Soon after John had left his brothers hoeing, William discovered the enemy in the upper side of the field, approaching them, and directed Jacob's attention that way. Both at the same instant let fall their hoes and ran towards home. Rightly conjecturing that their foes would if possible cut off their retreat to the house, they ran directly to the bank of the

\* Joseph Becker had two sons, George three, John one, and Jacob four; nearly all of whom are now residents of Schoharie county. Johannes Becker died soon after the war was over, and Major Becker, his oldest son, died Aug. 21st, 1806, the latter in the 68th year of his age.

creek not far above the house, and opposite a small island that has since disappeared. At this place the stream was deep, and they had to diverge from their course to cross a log which extended from the shore to the island. They dashed down the bank with an impetus that carried them both into the water, and Jacob fell down; but regaining his feet he reached the log, crossed, and ran up on the south side of the island, hotly pursued by a single Indian, who had to make the same circuit to cross or else swim the stream—the others having gone below to head them, supposing they would run to the house. Jacob, who was closely followed by the warrior with uplifted tomahawk, on arriving at a place on the southern shore of the island, which terminated boldly, sprang down the bank and remained quiet. William ran but a few rods beyond his brother, and also secreted himself beneath the bank. The pursuing Indian ran to within a few feet of where Jacob lay, halted, and looked up the stream in vain, to catch another glimpse of the fugitives—little suspecting that one of them was almost within reach of him—near where he had last seen him, and who doubtless was still visible had he looked down. He gave up the chase, crossed the island, passing very near the concealment of William, gained the north bank of the creek, and hastened to join his companions below. The Indians did not fire on the young men, as they hoped to surprise Maj. Becker and some others near by. The brothers remained concealed until the firing began at the house, and then crossed the creek and went into the woods, east of their corn-field. When the enemy left the valley, they passed so near the concealed brothers, that the latter distinctly heard them talk.

Maj. Becker, at that period, owned and occupied a substantial stone dwelling, the present residence of his son Henry, late a judge of the county; and near it stood a grist mill owned by him, which was one of the earliest erected mills in Schoharie county. The dwelling is pleasantly situated upon a knoll on the south side of the creek, at a little distance from the Albany road, and had at that period a gambrel roof. A hall passes through it from north to south, with a door at each end. The house contained five front

and five rear windows; and at that time two chamber windows in the east gable end, since altered. The upper part of the house was unfinished and all in one room; and the windows were barricaded nearly to the top with oak plank. The front door was closed up with plank, and the back door, then the only entrance to the house, strengthened by a false door also of oak, to arrest the bullets of an enemy. Just before Crysler and his murderers arrived at Maj. Becker's, Henry, his son, then nine years old, Jacob Zimmer, jun., (nephew of the one murdered) and several other boys about the same age, had been a little distance southeast of the house to drive hogs to a pasture. On their return, and when within ten or fifteen rods of the house, one of the boys said to the rest, "*See the rifle-men over there; they are painted like the Indians!*" The Schoharie Rangers when on a scout, were often clad much like Indians: but young Becker instantly recognized the party to be a band of savages. A few rods above the house was a small island containing perhaps an acre of ground, separated from the bank southeast of the dwelling, by a deep pool of stagnant water, over which had been felled a tree. The enemy being upon the island, had either to make quite a circuit or cross the log, which could only be done in single file. This gave the boys a little start and they ran to the house shouting, "*Indians! Indians!*" They could easily have been shot, as they were but a few rods distant from the enemy, but the latter still hoped to surprise a militia major, which would doubtless have been done, had not the boys thus opportunely discovered their approach. Major Becker chanced to be engaged back of the house—caught the alarm, and running in seized his gun—entered the south west room—thrust it through a loop-hole above one of the windows, and fired on the invaders, breaking an Indian's arm. As the boys ran into the hall door, they encountered several children within; and all tumbled in a heap. Major Becker's wife, who was a woman of the times, sprang to the plank door which fastened with a ring and bolt—drew it to, and held it ajar with the bolt in her hand. John Hutt, as the enemy approached, was at the western end of the house making a whiffletree. Mrs. Becker continued to hold

the door open for Hutt, who took the alarm from the furious barking of three large dogs belonging to the inmates of the house, which had met and were giving battle to the invaders, who halted to shoot them. As Hutt neared the door, a large Indian sprang to seize him; but the former raising the missile which he had retained in his hand, in a threatening manner, the latter recoiled and he sprang into the door, which was quickly bolted by the Major's Spartan wife. Had not Mrs. Becker possessed great presence of mind, and the dogs met the enemy, Hutt must have either been slain or captured by them. The shot of Maj. Becker may also have damped the ardor of the assailants. George Shell, another Schoharie soldier, was fortunately in the house at the time, and assisted in its defence.

The inmates of the dwelling consisting of the three men named, Mrs. Becker, Mrs. Adam Zimmer, possibly one or two other women, and some eight or ten children, went up stairs. The Major took his station at the south-west corner window, which commanded the enemy's approach to his barn, assigned to Hutt the eastern gable windows; and to Shell the north west window opposite his own, which commanded their approach to the mill, which stood a few rods from the house upon ground now occupied by the race-way of the present mill. The lower sash of the upper windows was also secured by plank. The enemy immediately ran round the eastern end of the house and there gained temporary shelter, some under the creek bank, some behind a fence, and others behind a small log building standing at a little distance south east of the house, used as a sort of store-room. The enemy fired numerous balls in at the windows, twenty-eight entering the window Hutt was stationed at. He was a bold, vigilant fellow, and often incurred the censure of Maj. Becker for exposing his person so much about the window, telling him that the force of the enemy was unknown, but their own was *three men*, the loss of one being one third of their strength. Hutt, however, could not be restrained by the prudent counsels of the Major, and kept constantly returning the shots of the enemy. Discovering through a cranny of the log building the hat of one of his foes,

Hutt sent a bullet through the brim of it close to the crown. This hat, it was afterwards ascertained, was on the head of Capt. Chrysler. The balls of the enemy cut the air several times around the head of Hutt like the fall of hail in a hurricane, but fortunately without injury.

While a part of the invaders were firing in at the windows, one of their number was discovered by Shell crawling along the bank of the creek, which was then steeper than at present, with a brand of fire, intent on burning the mill. Shell was an eccentric fellow, and had acquired the habit of thinking out loud. Aiming his rifle at the foe, he was heard by several in the room to *think* much as follows: "*Ah! that's what you're at, is it? you go a little further and you'll catch it. Now, look out; I'll give it to you. When you get THERE, you get it; there, THERE; that will do!*" In the midst of this soliloquy, his head in motion the while, crack went his rifle; and he continued, *There, he has it; he's down; one less; you wont come again; now burn the mill will you! you infernal Indian!*"

After continuing the attack as narrated for some time, the enemy attempted to fire the building. They placed a wheel-barrow under the water conductor leading from the gutter at the north east corner of the house, to within three or four feet of the ground; and piling on combustibles, set them on fire, which quickly communicated with the wooden spout, and threatened the destruction of the building. It was impossible for the inmates of the house to fire on their foes while applying the incendiary torch, without exposing themselves to almost certain death, as some of the Indians were constantly on the look-out for such an exposure. As the flame began to ascend the gutter toward the roof, Major Becker, who had no inclination to be burned alive, set about forcing off the corner of it with a piece of scantling, which fortune placed in the chamber, while his wife went into the cellar to procure water. On entering the cellar, she found an outside cellar-door upon the north side of the building, standing wide open, where the enemy might have entered had they gone to the other end of the building, which they could have done without danger.

Fastening the door, and procuring a pail of water ; she returned to the chamber.



#### MAJOR BECKER'S HOUSE INVADIED BY THE ENEMY.

For a time the roof, which was nailed on with heavy wrought nails as was the ancient custom, baffled all the major's efforts, but it at length yielded, and he sank down almost exhausted. As the shingles fell to the ground, the Indians gathered them up, exclaiming, "*Yok-wah!*" *Thank you!* And added in their dialect "*we can kindle it now.*" A hole being made, water was thrown down, and the spout was extinguished. The enemy soon had it blazing again with additional combustibles, and then remarked, also in their own tongue, "*Chock-wot de wink-wock!*" *It now burns like tobacco!* It was again put out, and again enkindled and again put out, until the spout had burned off above their reach, when they abandoned further attempts to set the house on fire. Supposing their firing would be heard at the Lower fort, some three miles distant, the assailants took French leave of the premi-

ses about nine o'clock, A. M., and buried themselves in the forest ; having been about the Becker house several hours.

The father and mother of the Becker brothers, with a child of Shell, (who was in the stone-house,) who lived just below Major Becker, and where Robert Coats now resides, taking the alarm on the enemy's approach, fled towards the fort along the southern bank of the creek. They were discovered, and fired on by the invaders, and several balls struck a fence near them, before they were out of danger ; but the enemy being so intent on the capture of Maj. Becker, and plunder of his house, did not pursue them and they escaped. Adam Zimmer and John Enders, who fled on the approach of the enemy from the vicinity of Maj. Becker's, carried news of the invasion to the Lower fort, then commanded by Captain Brown ; when a party of Americans under Lieut. Snyder sallied forth, and arrived at the scene of action just after Crysler and his followers had left. The state of the atmosphere was such, that, what is surprising, the firing at Becker's was heard at the Middle Fort, six or seven miles distant and not heard at the Lower fort, less than half as remote.

After the enemy retired from Becker's, the supposed Indian whom Shell had shot, was found to have fallen partly in the water and was not dead. He was taken into the house, and doctor Werth called to examine his wound, who pronounced it mortal ; the ball having passed diagonally through the body at the shoulders. The man was now discovered to be a painted tory instead of an Indian ; and was shortly after recognized to be Erkert, a Scotch cooper, who had made flour-barrels for Maj. Becker before the war. The major, on making the recognition, accused the tory of *ingratitude*. Said he, "when you came to me for work, I employed you, and always paid you well ; and now you come with a band of savages to murder me and my family ; plunder and burn my buildings." The man appeared very penitent as certain death was before him ; expressed his sorrow for the course he had taken, and said "he did not then care which succeeded, King or Congress." He was scalped in the afternoon by a friendly Indian named Yan, (a son of David, who was killed by the car-

alry under Col. Harper, in 1777,) and on the following morning he was summoned to the bar of his Maker, to render an account "for the deeds done in the body." The victims of Crysler's invasion at Foxes creek, were buried in rough boxes with their clothes on.—*Jacob and Wm. Becker, who escaped by flight; Judge Becker and Jacob Zimmer, jr., two of the boys who discovered the enemy near the house; and the manuscript of Judge Hager.*

John Snyder, known after the war as "Schoharie John," and Peter Mann, of Foxes creek, were captured in the morning by Crysler and party, as the former were returning from Beaver-dam; Mann was however liberated in Kneiskern's dorf. The enemy proceeded from the estuary of Cobelskill and the Schoharie, up the former stream.

On the following day in the present town of Cobelskill, George Warner, jun., who was engaged in shifting horses from one field to another, was captured by Crysler and his destructives, who directed their course from thence to the Susquehanna. Warner instantly recognized as one of the master spirits among his captors, the Schoharie chief *Seth's Henry*, who still carried upon his arm the indellible evidence of Sawyer's '*strike for liberty*,' when a captive in his hands. The second day after leaving Cobelskill, the whole party were obliged to subsist on horse flesh without bread or seasoning of any kind. *Warner*, who communicated these facts to the author, said he ate on the way to Niagara, of a deer, a wolf, a rattlesnake, and a hen-hawk, but without bread or salt. The two captives, *Zimmer* and *Warner*, were lightly bound, and generally fared alike while on their journey. They had for some days contemplated making their escape, and complaining that they could not travel on account of their cords, they were a little loosened, which favored their plan. They concluded they ought, in justice, to communicate their intention to their fellow prisoner, although he was not bound, and give him a chance to escape with them, if he chose to embrace it. But a short time after their intention was communicated to a third person, the conspirators for liberty were more firmly bound than ever, and were afterwards continually watched until they arrived at Niagara.

Nights they were pinioned so tight that they could not get their hands together ; and were secured by a rope tied to a tree or pole, upon which rope an Indian always laid down.

On their way, the party passed several rattle-snakes, which the Indians avoided disturbing ; and at *the narrows* on the Chemung, which was barely wide enough for a road, they, with no little difficulty, made a circuit to pass one. The New York Indians had a superstitious notion, that to harm a rattle-snake was ominous of evil, and they never did it, unless to use the reptile for medicinal purposes, or prevent starvation. While on their journey, Snyder, from some cause, had angry words with one of the savages, and the latter several times twirled a tomahawk over his head, and drew a scalping knife round the crown threateningly : but they made up friends and renewed their march. The Schoharie prisoners also passed on their way, another party of Indians, who were killing a prisoner in a singular manner. His captors had tied his wrists together and drawn them over his knees, after which a stick was passed under the knees and over the wrists, and a rope tied to it between them, and thrown over the limb of a tree. His tormenters then drew him up a distance and let him fall by slacking the rope ; continuing their hellish sport until the concussion extinguished the vital spark.

Soon after the party passed the outlet of Seneca lake, Captain Crysler told the prisoners, tauntingly, how soon the *King would conquer the rebels*. Warner listened with impatience for a time, and being unable to restrain his feelings, replied, " I do not believe the King will ever conquer the colonies : in the French war Great Britain and America united were hardly able to compete with France ; and now, since France and America are united, I do not believe it possible for England to conquer them." This conversation took place in the evening, and Warner observed, while speaking, that a frown rested upon the brows of the dusky warriors and their lawless captain. Warner soon after heard the tory give orders in the Indian tongue, which he understood, to have his bands tightened. In the morning, he expostulated with Crysler for so doing ; who was very angry and declared, that

*“for those cursed words he should hang at noon.”* Accordingly a noose was made in a rope, and the rest of it coiled and placed around his neck, which he was compelled to wear. As may be supposed, he traveled the forest with a heavy heart: still he looked upon the gallows with no little indifference, as it would end his bodily torments, and relieve him from the treatment of an unfeeling royalist. About 10 o'clock, A. M., the party halted, as Warner supposed, to anticipate the time of his execution; but, contrary to his expectation, the rope was taken off without any explanation.

Warner and Zimmer, on arriving at the Indian villages in western New York, were subjected to the cruelties their customs inflicted on captives. The first treatment of the kind they received was from a gad in the hands of Molly Brant, (former housekeeper of Sir William Johnson,) who embraced every opportunity during the war to insult and injure captive Americans. Soon after Molly had vented her spleen upon the two bound captives, they arrived at an Indian castle, where they had to run the gantlet. When the lines were formed, an Indian chief called Abraham, who recognized Warner, stepped up to him and asked him, in German, where he was from. He replied, Schoharie. “Do you know George Warner of Cobelskill?” continued the Indian. “He is my father,” replied young Warner. This Indian, as Warner afterwards learned, had often partaken of his father’s hospitality before the war. Said the Indian, “When you start to run, the boys will get before you, but you must run over them or push them one side; they will not hurt you any the more for it, and when you get through, run to a wigwam and you will not again be hurt.” Their fellow prisoner was not compelled to run, and as it happened, Zimmer started first. As the Indian had anticipated, the boys ran before him and he was receiving a severe castigation, when Warner, forcing his way past him, ran down several of the living obstacles, and was near the end of the lines almost untouched: where stood a large boy, who, as he bounded along, dealt him a blow upon the back of his head, which felled him senseless to the ground. Zimmer, who had not heard the

conversation between Warner and the Indian, and feared to harm the boys, followed his companion closely in the path he had opened, and arrived at the goal of delivery, without having sustained any serious injury.

On arriving within half a mile of Niagara, Peter Ball, who had removed at the beginning of the war to Canada, from the vicinity of Schoharie, saw and recognized Warner, and led him away from the squaws and young Indians, who were besetting him at every step with some missile. Zimmer saw on the journey, his brother's scalp, with those of the other similar trophies of Crysler's invasion, stretched upon hoops to dry; and on arriving at Niagara, saw them deposited, with *bushels* of similar *British merchandize*, made up of *the crown scalps of both sexes and all ages*. There were about two hundred prisoners confined at Niagara when Warner and Zimmer were there, many of whom fared hard, and several of whom died for want of food and proper treatment. Among the prisoners confined at Niagara there were nearly one hundred Virginia riflemen, some of whom, to say the least, feared nothing in this world.

Warner, for a considerable time during his captivity, worked for a man living near Niagara, as did also Christian Price, a spirited Virginian. In the latter part of the war, several Indians were found dead at different times, early in the morning, but the author of those *midnight mysteries*, although the prisoners were often accused of them, were never discovered, notwithstanding numbers were sometimes in the secret. Among the victims who were thus sacrificed in revenge of the cruelties and indignities meted to the American prisoners, was a young Indian, sixteen or seventeen years old, known about the fort as *William Johnson*. He was a half-breed, said to have been a son of Sir Wm. Johnson, after whom he was called, by a squaw. This namesake of the Baronet, who was *one* among *numerous* evidences of his *rakish* propensity, was one morning discovered in a barrel of rain water, under the conductor of a house, into which he had *unaccountably* fallen head first and drowned. Several prisoners were suspected of being accessory to the death of this Indian, but *fre*

*masonry* was then at its zenith. The tories on one occasion gave a stump to the prisoners to wrestle. Price, who was a muscular, athletic fellow, accepted the challenge and walked into the ring to wrestle with the acknowledged bully. The prisoner, with ease, threw the braggadocio in a very *feeling* manner, and the sport was soon ended. Warner was retained a prisoner until after peace was proclaimed, and with twenty-three others ran away from Niagara one Sunday night. They halted at Oswego, purchased provisions of the British soldiers, and made the best of their way home through the forest. Zimmer returned home a short time before Warner, on parole. Snyder, on arriving in Canada, enlisted into the British service, as his friends have stated, to afford him an opportunity to desert and return home.

If the American prisoners at Niagara usually fared hard, they occasionally had an hour of merriment, as the following anecdote will show.

*A Tory Wedding.*—Among the tories who removed from Schoharie county to Niagara, in the beginning of the war, was a man named Cockle, who had a pretty daughter called Peggy. On a certain occasion an Irishman named Patrick Tufts, who worked much in Col. Butler's garden, and who was a dissipated, simple fellow, was made the butt of no little pleasantry. The farce was set on foot by a British officer, and the matter principally conducted by him. Tufts was induced to make love to the charming Peggy, who, agreeably to previous arrangements, reciprocated the sentiment, and at an appointed time, agreed to marry him. Christian Price, the Virginian previously mentioned, who in features somewhat resembled the fair *toryess*, was in the secret, and on the evening appointed, changed dresses with her, so that, to use the words of a guest, "Peggy was Price and Price was Peggy." At the hour appointed, the guests, who were numerous, for many of the prisoners were invited, assembled at the house of an influential tory. Stephen Secutt, a sergeant, a shrewd fellow, acted the ministerial part. The couple stood up before Secutt, who, with no little sang-froid, performed the marriage ceremony; at the close of which he received from the happified son

of Erin a *silver dollar*—a rarity in those days—to compensate for his official services.

Ample provision had been made by the officers and soldiers, and when the knot was pronounced tied, wine sparkled in many a cup. After the party had been drinking for some time, and the groom and bride had received many happy salutations, the tones of a violin greeted the ear, and the party prepared for a dance. The bride, who had been sitting a while in the lap of Tuffts, who was at least “half seas over,” arose to dance with a guest as partner—the groom never having visited France, unless it were to—“*lend us your grid-iron.*” In the midst of the dance Mistress Tuffts allowed her partner certain liberties, which the groom, being told by a guest was very improper, arose to resent. Bounding into the figure with a rash oath, he changed it into a reel by knocking down his wife. Mistress Tuffts sprang from the floor and ran out of the room to doff the petticoat and gown; and soon after returned as Christian Price, to bathe a black eye with a glass of wine. Tuffts, poor fellow, was soon to be seen staggering amid the delighted company, inquiring for his wife. At length he inquired of Warner if he had seen her. “You have no wife,” was the answer. “Yes I have—eh,” said Tuffts; “I am lawfully married—eh. Did I not pay a silver dollar to be married—eh?” “Yes, you are married,” said Warner, “to *Christian Price.*” This was a poser, and he could not at first credit the story of his deception; but after being ridiculed by the whole party, and jeered until nearly sober, he withdrew from the scene of merriment made at his expense, to mourn over the result of his precipitate marriage, which had wedded him to a man, and taken from him his only dollar. Had he ever seen the Latin line so often quoted, he would no doubt have exclaimed, on counting over his beads and retiring to rest—*O Tempora! O Mores!!—George Warner.*

About the 1st of September, 1781, a party of twenty or thirty of the enemy, mostly Indians, by whom led I have not been able to learn, entered the lower part of the Cobelskill settlement, which took in that part of the town now known as Cobelskill village,

or *The Churches*. The enemy, on entering the settlement, surprised and killed George Frimire, and captured his brother, John Frimire, with George Fester, Abraham Bouck, a boy, John Nicholas, and Nicholas, Peter, and William Utman, brothers. After plundering and burning the dwellings and out-buildings which had eesaped the enemy's visitation four years previous, they passed in the afternoon near the fort, then feebly garrisoned. As there was but little ammunition in the fort, few shots were fired upon the enemy, who did not incline to attack it. The dwelling of Jacob Shafer was picketed in, and a little distance outside the inclosure stood two large barns owned by him. Two Indians, with fire-brands, approached these barns, whereupon Shafer, declaring "*My property is as dear as my life!*" with gun in hand, left the fort, followed by Christopher King, a young man of spirit. As they advanced towards the *barn-burners* they gave a savage war-whoop, drew up their guns, and fired; and the Indians, abandoning their design, showed their heels in rapid flight. That night the enemy stayed at the house of one Borst, which they burned in the morning, and soon after again passed near the fort, upon which several of them then fired, without, however, doing any injury. The enemy then disappeared, probably pursuing the usual southwestern route to Niagara. The treatment those prisoners received has not come to the knowledge of the writer, but it was undoubtedly of that character usually experienced by captives among the Indians—suffering from exposure, possibly torture, hunger, and the gantlet.—*Capt. George Warner, (this old hero died April 4, 1844, aged 86½ years,) and Mrs. Elizabeth, wife of Tunis Vrooman, before named, who was in the Cobelskill fort when invaded.*

The reader will remember that when Brant desolated the upper part of Cobelskill in 1778, the log house of the elder George Warner was spared from conflagration, as was then supposed, to afford an opportunity to capture a committee man. Feeling too poor to erect a frame dwelling upon the ashes of his former one, he took up his winter residence in his old log dwelling. Seth's Henry, and six other Indians, who had traversed the forest from

Niagara to Cobelskill, at that inclement season, (a distance, by their route, of at least three hundred miles,) for the sole purpose of capturing Warner, who was known to be an influential whig, arrived in the vicinity of his dwelling on Sunday, the 11th day of December, 1782. On the same day Nicholas Warner, his oldest son, went from one of the Schoharie forts to the paternal dwelling in a sleigh, accompanied by Joseph Barner, to get a lumber-sleigh owned by the former, for the winter's use of which the latter had agreed to pay him one dollar—a dollar being as valuable in the then impoverished state of the country as half a dozen would be at the present day. When Warner and Barner were fastening one sled to the other, one of their horses broke loose and ran into the woods, and while they were recovering the animal the enemy arrived. On surprising old Mr. Warner, one or two shots were fired to intimidate him, which, as it snowed very fast, were unheard by his son and companion. Catching the stray horse, they returned and fastened the team to the sleds. As they drove past the house they discovered the Indians, three of whom attempted to take them. In making a little circuit to avoid the enemy, the horses were driven partly into the top of a fallen tree, when the friends attempted to cut loose the back sleigh. At this time two of the Indians fired upon them, the third reserving his fire. The horses ran partly over a log concealed in the snow, and the hindmost sleigh, not running true, struck a sapling and drew the box off, and Warner under it. Barner, having the reins, was drawn over the box, and remained upon the sleigh bottom. When Warner regained his feet, he observed that the Indian who had reserved his fire, had advanced to within some twenty paces of him, with a steady aim upon his person,—and conscious of the danger he must encounter to regain the sleigh, he abandoned the attempt, and told his comrade, still holding his restive steeds, to secure his own flight if he could, and leave him to his fate. He then drove off, and Warner became a prisoner. Soon after, one of the Indians, who knew him, enquired *if he could shoot as good as he once could?* His reply was, *"I can, on a proper occasion."*

Mrs. Warner and a daughter who chanced to be at home, were left unharmed. After plundering the house of such articles as they desired, and securing a quantity of meat and flour to afford them subsistence for several days, the Indians, with their prisoners, some time in the afternoon, set off up the creek, pursuing the most direct route to the Susquehanna. The snow was then nearly knee deep, and receiving copious accessions: the party, therefore, could not travel very rapidly. They proceeded about six miles and encamped, when they boiled a portion of their meat in a stolen teakettle—sad perversion of its use, as the tidy housewife will say—for their supper. When cooked, an Indian cut it as nearly as possible into *nine* equal parts; then a second Indian turned his back, and a third gave owners to each mess; as fishermen and hunters often do, by “touching it off:” which is done by pointing at a portion, unobserved by another individual, with the familiar demand, *who shall have that?*—whose reply gives it a lawful owner.

When captured, the younger Warner had on “Dutch shoes”—brogans. Observing that, the Indian who claimed him as prisoner (who could speak Low Dutch, which he partially understood,) asked him if he would trade a pair of mocasons with him for his shoes—taking them off, and making known by signs what he could not fully communicate in Dutch. Said he to the Indian, “I am your prisoner, and if I freeze my feet and cannot keep up with you, you will kill me: I now look to you for protection as to a father, and will try to love you as such.” The Indian comprehended enough of what his prisoner had said to arrive at his meaning, and made the exchange. Warner then put on the mocasons, which were made with leggins, and buttoned his breeches over them; when the Indians, to use his own words, “*Looked wild at one another.*” He thought they exchanged very significant looks, and fearing they suspected his intention, already conceived, of making his escape, he moved about a little and rubbed his legs, as if the better to adjust his new *disguise*, and then seated himself before the fire, with his hands clenched across his knees. Instead of *allaying*, his last movement had a tendency to *increase* the sus-

picion and vigilance of his dusky captors; observing which, he took off the mocasons, folded them up with care and put them into the bosom of his shirt; which lulled all suspicion. Said Warner, at our interview in 1837, "To relate what took place on the night I was a prisoner with the Indians, now makes the cold chills run over me." The party laid down early to sleep, but the younger Warner, intent upon escaping, did not close his eyes; and about midnight, thinking all were slumbering, he arose and ran off—directing his footsteps homeward. He had hardly started, as his father afterwards informed him, when his escape was discovered, and *four* of the enemy were in pursuit; but as it was still snowing fast, and dark as the rotunda of Gebhard's cavern, they could not catch a glimpse of, much less follow him. He took a circuitous route in his flight, conjecturing that if pursued it would be on the back track, which was in fact the case. The Indians ran but a short distance and abandoned pursuit, fearing they might be troubled to retrace their steps to their own camp. Warner ran several miles with one hand before him, to prevent striking the trees. He crossed the creek *six* times in his flight, which he was as often conscious of, and arrived at Fort Duboise, *nine* miles from his captor's encampment, just at daylight. There was an old body of snow on the ground which was stiff, and the falling snow being damp readily packed upon it, otherwise he must have worn out his stockings and frozen his feet.

The elder Warner did not attempt to escape, but was watched with vigilance night and day. He must have suffered much from cold, but little from hunger; as one of the party was an expert hunter, and usually supplied plenty of food of some kind. Nimrod was however ill a few days and the party did not fare as well; but when others brought in game, he usually took good care to fill his meat basket, and soon recovered. An Englishman prefers going into battle upon a full stomach, and an Indian being sick upon the same allowance. It was considered an honorable affair to capture an influential whig, besides entitling to a very liberal reward; and as Warner was one of the most noted in the Schoharie settlements, his captors were anxious to deliver him in

Canada, and he was treated with greater forbearance and kindness on his way, than was any other captive who went from the Schoharie settlements during the war. The flour taken from Warner's was boiled in the teakettle, and usually eaten by the Indians, who gave the prisoner meat; reversing the usual treatment of captives in their anxiety to deliver him safely in Canada. After the escape of his son, five of the Indians usually kept watch over Warner in the early part of the night and two in the latter part. One of the Indians treated the captive committee man with the kindness of a brother all the way to Niagara. On arriving at the Indian settlements in western New York, this Indian took him by the hand and led him unhurt outside the lines which had been formed for his reception, to the displeasure of those, who had from infancy been taught to delight in tortures and cruelty. A prisoner being led by his captor outside the gantlet lines, was an evidence of protection and exemption from abuse seldom ever violated.

While Mr. Warner was a captive he frequently sung a hymn in German. The young Indians almost invariably would begin to mock him, but if the name of the Deity was introduced, they usually understood it, and if so it never failed to produce their silence; such reverence had those unlettered sons of the forest for the Great Spirit of the Universe. Indeed, the Indians of the Six Nations had no words in their dialect by which they could profane the name of Jehovah, and if they did so, it was in the language of their white neighbors.\* Soon after his arrival in Canada, Mr. Warner was sent to Rebel Island near Montreal, where he was given parole liberty.

After an absence of about *eleven months*, Mr. Warner was exchanged, and *being sworn to secrecy*, returned home by the north eastern route, coming through Hartford, Conn.; and what was unusual, was better clad on his return than at the time of his capture. Had all the captive Americans been treated with the kindness and forbearance of George Warner, sen., the *horrors* of our

\* A fact communicated by Joseph Brant, to a friend of the author.

border wars had been greatly mitigated, and the suffering, which in the aggregate was most astounding, rendered comparatively trifling.\*

Gen. Washington, while at Albany in the summer of 1782, was invited by the citizens to visit Schenectada.† He accepted the invitation, and in company with Gen. Schuyler, rode there in a carriage from Albany on the 30th of June; where he was received with no little formality by the civil and military authorities, and escorted some distance by a numerous procession, in which he walked with his hat under his arm. Abraham Clinch, who came to America as drum-major under Gen. Braddock, then kept a tavern in Schenectada, and at his house a public dinner was given. Having previously heard of his sufferings, one of the first persons Washington enquired after, was Col. Frederick Fisher, who was then residing in the place. He expressed surprise that the colonel had not been invited to meet him, and agreeable to his request a messenger was sent for him. He was a man of real merit, but modest and retiring in his habits. On this occasion, he was found

\* The particulars of the capture of the two Warners, were obtained from *Nicholas Warner* in the fall of 1837: at that time he had a cancer on his mouth, which terminated his existence on the 27th day of July, 1838. He was 91 years old on the 31st day of October preceding his death.

† This ancient town, at a time when England and France were at war, was invaded by 250 French and Indian warriors, who made the journey from Canada in the depth of winter expressly to destroy it. The village, then numbering about 40 good dwellings, was inclosed by pallisades, and approached by two gates. As the visit of an enemy was not anticipated at that inclement season, the gates were both left open, and had been for some weeks. On Saturday night, Feb. 8, 1690, the invaders entered the town by the western gate, and separating into small parties, began an indiscriminate slaughter of the inhabitants. Many of the male citizens were killed in the onset; but of those persons who escaped at the eastern gate, some 20 arrived in Albany, more or less frost-bitten, having fled nearly naked in the snow, a distance of sixteen miles, while others perished by the way. Sixty persons, mostly women and children, were carried into captivity, the town all plundered and burnt, except two dwellings. The commanders ordered the casks of liquor found in the place all stove, to prevent the men from getting drunk. A party of cavalry from Albany, joined by a band of brave Mohawks, were soon on their trail, and overtaking them in a favorable place, fell upon their rear and slew 25 of them. The remainder, after much suffering, arrived in Canada with their scalps and plunder.

at work in his barn, which, under the circumstances, he left with reluctance, but was kindly greeted by the illustrious guest, who paid him marked attention.

At the dinner table were assembled a respectable number of gentlemen, among whom were Gen. Schuyler, Colonels Ab'm Wemple and Fr. Fisher; Majors Ab'm Switz, Myndert Wemple, and Jelles Fonda; Captains Peter Truax and John Mynderon; Henry Glen, Dep. Com. Gen., and Isaac Truax, then the oldest man in the place. Washington assigned the seat next his own to Col. Fisher.—*Isaac De Graff and John J. Schermerhorn.*

This was indeed a proud day for "Old Dorp."\* Some person publicly addressed the visitor on the occasion, and before returning to Albany, he wrote the following reply:

*"To the Magistrates and Military Officers of the town of Schenectady:*

"Gentlemen:—I request you to accept my warmest thanks for your affectionate address.

"In a cause so just and righteous as ours, we have every reason to hope the Divine Providence will still continue to crown our arms with success, and finally compel our enemies to grant us that peace upon equitable terms, which we so ardently desire.

"May you, and the good people of this town, in the mean time, be protected from every insidious and open foe, and may the complicated blessings of peace soon reward your arduous struggles for the establishment of the freedom and independence of our common country.

"GO. WASHINGTON.

*"Schenectady, June 30th, 1782."*

The following anecdote originated at Schenectada during the visit of Gen. Washington. He was walking a public street in company with Brower Banker, a respectable citizen, and blacksmith by trade, when an old negro passing took off his hat and bowed to him: the great commander immediately returned the compliment. Banker expressed surprise that his companion thus noticed this descendant of Ishmael, observing it was not the custom of the country thus to notice slaves. *"I cannot be less civil*

\*This is the Dutch word for town, and when used within a hundred miles of the place is understood to mean Schenectada: the latter is an Indian word, said to signify *Over-the-pines*. Albany and Schenectada were early distinguished by the Dutch words *stadt*, for city, and *dorp*, for town.

*than a poor negro,"* was his manly reply, as they proceeded onward.—*Rynier Gardinier.*

Some of the necessaries of life rose excessively high during the Revolution, besides being extremely difficult to obtain. Individuals went from the westward of Albany to Boston to procure salt. In a letter written by Cornelius Cuyler, of Albany, to Robert Snell, Esq., of Tryon county, dated, "Albany, March 5, 1779," I find the following sentence: "Could you not get wheat from the farmers in exchange for salt, to be delivered at Schenectada on your order? If so, let the farmers deliver the wheat at your mills, and give them a certificate on my brother, John Cuyler, for the quantity they may deliver, and they shall receive salt in proportion of *six skipples of wheat for one of salt.* Cheese was sold from *seventeen to twenty cents* per pound, and *nails* used in the Highlands, *fifty cents* per pound.

Some time in the Revolution, Timothy Murphy had charge of a small scout which went to reconnoitre in the vicinity of Oquago. While there they took three prisoners, one of whom was a Scotch lad of suspicious character, and soon after started on their return to Schoharie. In the night, the boy escaped, taking along Murphy's rifle—an act not very pleasing to the fearless ranger. Some month's after, the boy was retaken by another scout, and with him the stolen fire-lock. When Murphy learned that the boy was taken, and was approaching as a prisoner, his worst passions were aroused, and he declared his intention to kill him, and armed himself with a tomahawk for that purpose. Elerson, and one or two of his companions in arms, reasoned the matter with him. They told him to imagine himself in the boy's situation, and asked him if *he*, similarly situated, would have acted differently from what the boy had? His anger was in a measure appeased; resentment yielded to the force of sober reasoning; and the boy was brought into his presence without receiving any injury. He was afterwards taken to Albany, and sold for the time being. Murphy, speaking of this affair, after the war, expressed his gratitude that he was prevented by his friends from injuring the lad who had stolen his gun.—*Elerson, Nich. Warner, Jacob Becker, and Mrs. Van Slyck.*

A tory, named Jacob Salisbury, was concealed in a house in the present town of Bern, Albany county, in the latter part of the war, for several months. A hole had been cut in the floor, and covered with a trap door, and in a small space dug beneath the floor, the tory concealed himself whenever any of his neighbors, not in the secret of his *burrow*, were at the house. His object, it is believed, was to act the *spy*, but having been discovered, he was arrested and imprisoned.—*Mrs. Eleanor Feeck.*

There is a tradition in Schoharie, currently believed by some, that an attempt was made in the latter part of the Revolution, to capture Timothy Murphy by *stratagem*. It is said that the hero had a cow, on the neck of which he placed a bell, the better to enable him to find her; and that an Indian, to gain an interview, took the bell from the cow's neck and placed it upon his own, when he ginged it about in the woods, where the cow sometimes ran, to afford him and his companions an opportunity either to kill or capture its owner. Murphy knew too well whether a cow or an Indian rattled his bell, and driving her home from another part of the woods, he left the ding-dong warrior to make music for his fellows.—*Mrs. Angelica Vrooman.*

Timothy Murphy, the brave soldier with whom we must soon part company, (whose daring spirit the reader has no doubt been pleased with,) was never wounded in battle, and, I believe, never a prisoner with the enemy. It was his misfortune, like that of many other master spirits of the Revolution, not to have had the advantages of an early education, even such as our common schools now afford. In fact, he possessed not the elements of an education: the art of reading and writing. For this reason, he declined accepting a proffered commission; knowing that he would be subjected to much inconvenience, and be liable to be imposed upon by designing men. Had he been an educated man, he might have made another Wayne or Morgan: but the want of the rudiments of an education compelled him to see others less fitted in other respects than himself, occupying stations of profit and honor. At the close of the war, he became a cultivator of the soil on the farm of his father-in-law, on which his ashes now

repose. He was a citizen much respected in the county. As a father, he was generous and indulgent to a fault, having been known to bring home, from Albany, for a daughter, some five or six dresses at one time.

Although Murphy could neither read nor write, yet, when mounted upon a stump or some eminence, he could harrangue a public audience with great effect, and for many years exerted a powerful influence in the political ranks of Schoharie county. He was very active in bringing his young friend and neighbor, the Hon. Wm. C. Bouck, from retirement into public notice—was zealous in obtaining for him the appointment of sheriff—and indirectly contributed not a little to his subsequent distinction.

On the 15th day of March, 1784, the ice lodged in the river near Middleburgh, overflowed the flats in the neighborhood of Murphy's residence, where they seldom if ever before had been similarly inundated. Many cattle and sheep were swept off in the freshet and perished. In an attempt to save the family of John Adam Brown, a near neighbor, Murphy waded into the water amidst the ice, and succeeded in bearing to a place of safety his two sons ; but Brown, and Lana, his only daughter, then about 12 years old, were unfortunately in the lower part of the house and were drowned. Murphy lost his wife (by whom he had nine children) in 1807 ; and married Mary Robertson five or six years after, by whom he also had several children. He died of a cancer upon his throat June 27th, 1818 ; the foundation of which disease was supposed to have been laid, while attempting to rescue Brown and his family in 1784. The Rev. John Schermerhorn preached the funeral sermon of Murphy and that of two other individuals, George Mattice and a colored woman, on the same day.

The following are the inscriptions upon the tomb-stones of Murphy and his first wife :

“ Timothy Murphy died June 27, 1818 ; aged 67 years.

“ Here too, this warrior sire, with honor rests,  
Who bared in freedom's cause his valiant breast  
Sprang from his half drawn furrow, as the cry  
Of threatened liberty came thrilling by ;  
Look'd to his God, and reared in bulwark round

Breast free from guile, and hands with toil embrown'd,  
And bade a monarch's thousand banners yield—  
Firm at the plough, and glorious in the field,  
Lo! here he rests, who every danger braved,  
Marked and honored, amid the soil he saved."

"Margaret, wife of Timothy Murphy, died Sept. 1, 1807,  
aged 44 years."

Some time in the latter part of the war, possibly when the enemy were in its vicinity, an incident occurred at Fort Duboise, in Cobelskill, which, in its result, was a source of merriment. John King was one night in a sentry box, keeping vigils for the safety of himself and others, when he discovered some object slowly approaching the place where he was stationed. It was light enough for him to obtain a sight of the object, but not with sufficient distinctness to identify its character; and supposing it to be a tory or an Indian visitant, he hailed it with the accustomed "Who comes there?" demanding also the *countersign*. To the interrogatories of the sentinel no reply was given, but the supposed foe continued to advance; and King, already imagining he saw the uplifted tomahawk of a gigantic Indian, leveled his trusty gun and fired. The report echoed upon the midnight air until lost in gentle murmurs among the distant hills, and greatly alarmed the little garrison and several families of citizens, clustered in rude huts within the picketed inclosure for safety. The courageous were quickly armed for an expected onset of a desperate foe. King pointed out, in the uncertain light, to the swollen eyes of his officer and comrades the supposed enemy, evidently weltering in his blood, for his temerity in presuming to approach a post, guarded by so trusty a sentinel. The object soon became still, and the silence of midnight was again restored. The inmates of the fort retired to rest—probably, few to sleep again that night; but all to pray for the return of daylight. That light at length came, and disclosed to the inmates of the fort, whose curiosity was on tiptoe, that the vigilant watchman *had actually killed a large—"bull calf."* The heedless animal, ignorant of the police of a camp, had strayed from a neighboring field, and was slowly grazing toward the wary guard, when he received a bullet which killed him outright.—*Marcus Brown.*