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HISTORY OF THE SETTLEMENT

STEUBEN COUNTY, N. Y

INCLUDING NOTICES OF THE OLD PIONEER SETTLERS  
AND THEIR ADVENTURES.

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BY GUY H. M<sup>c</sup>MASTER.  
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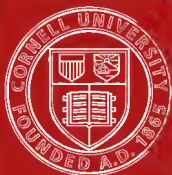


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## P R E F A C E .

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THE collection of the following annals was undertaken at the request of the publishers of this volume. While of course it was not expected that the general public would feel any interest in the subject of the work, it was yet believed that to the citizens of Steuben County a chronicle of its settlement would possess some value. The task was entered upon, not without misgivings that the historic materials to be found in a backwoods county, destitute of colonial and revolutionary reminiscence, and possessing an antiquity of at most seventy years beyond which there was nothing even to be guessed at, would prove rather scanty; and, while it cannot be pretended that the vein has been found richer than it promised, it is nevertheless hoped that something of interest to citizens of the county has been rescued from the forgetfulness into which the annals of the settlement were fast passing.

All the facts set forth in the pages ensuing, except those for which credit is given to other sources, were collected by the Editor of the volume, by personal inquiry in most cases, from the surviving pioneers of the county. He has been unable to enrich his collection by any ancient documentary matter—letters, diaries or memoranda. The early history of the county rested in the memory of the few pioneers who are living, and in the traditions handed down by those who are departed. The appearance of Mr. O. Turner's timely History of "Phelps and Gorham's Purchase," after this work was prepared for the press, has enabled the editor to correct the results of his own inquiries in several important instances.

Those whose memory extends to the period of the settlement, will find this but an unsatisfactory chronicle of the old time. Individuals who merit notice as early settlers of the county have probably been passed over unnoticed; many facts of interest and importance have doubtless escaped the researches of the editor, and serious inaccuracies will undoubtedly be discovered in the statements recorded. A fair degree of diligence in searching for facts, and a sincere desire to preserve honorable among those who shall hereafter inhabit this county, the memory of those plain, hardy and free-hearted men who first broke into its original wilderness and by the work of their own hands began to make it what it now is, are all that can be offered in extenuation of the meagreness of the results of the editor's labors. The collection should have been made twenty years ago. Many pioneers of note—men of adventure, of observation and of rare powers of narration, have gone from among the living since that time. Much of valuable and entertaining reminiscence has perished with them.

It is well enough, perhaps, to add in explanation of vagaries of divers descriptions which may be encountered in the following pages, and for which the reader may be at a loss to account, that this volume was written nearly two years ago, and at a period of life when such a lapse of time happily brings great changes of taste and feeling.

The editor takes pleasure in acknowledging his obligations to citizens in various parts of the county to whom he had occasion to apply in the course of his inquiries, for the readiness with which he has in all cases been assisted in the prosecution of his researches.

*Bath, Dec. 1852.*

## NOTICE OF THE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY OF STEUBEN COUNTY.\*

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STEUBEN COUNTY occupies the summit and eastern slope of that ridge which divides the waters west of Seneca Lake that flow to the Susquehanna, from those that enter the Genesee. The course of this ridge is northeast and southwest; its breadth from base to base is from forty to fifty miles; the elevation of the eastern base is about nine hundred feet, and that of the western base (the valley of the Genesee,) nearly eighteen hundred feet above tide water; while the highest intervening uplands attain an elevation of twenty-five hundred feet above the same level. The summit of the ridge follows the curve of the Genesee at the distance of about ten miles from that river. The streams flowing down the brief western slope are, therefore, but inconsiderable creeks, while the waters collected from the other side supply the channels of three rivers, the Tioga, the Canisteo and the Conhocton, which uniting form the Chemung, and add essentially to the power of the noble Susquehanna. The region composing this dividing range is an intricate hill country, consisting of rolling and irregular uplands, intersected by deep river valleys, by the beds of several lakes, and by the crooked ra-

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\* Gathered chiefly from the State Geological Reports.

vines worn by innumerable creeks. Few rocks are presented at the surface of the ground, and the whole land was originally covered with a dense forest—as well the almost perpendicular hill sides, as the valleys and uplands. The river valleys are bounded by abrupt walls from two hundred to eight hundred feet high, which sometimes confine the streams within gorges of a few rods in width, sometimes grant a mile, and sometimes at the meeting of transverse valleys enclose a plain of several miles in circuit.

The dividing ridge curves from the western along the northern boundary of the county. The waters of the principal northern towns run to the Conhocton, while those of the counties adjoining, flowing in an opposite direction, feed the central lakes of New York and find ultimately Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence and the foggy bays of Newfoundland. But that the abrupt gulf of Crooked Lake pierces deep into the hills from the north, and carries off the meagre brooks of two towns seated upon its western bluffs, our county would contain within itself a complete system of waters. The streams would pour down on all sides from a circle of hills and escape only by the narrow gate of the Chemung, at a depth of sixteen hundred feet below the springs upon the bounding summits. A wall would enclose a complete province, and the scientific citizen hovering in a balloon above the single gateway in the south would behold, fifty miles to the northward, blue ranges sweeping in a splendid curve to the Seneca, then bending southward to complete the perfect ring of highlands. The Crooked Lake is an intruder and sadly mars this scheme of uniformity. Breaking through the barrier which separates the northwestern tributaries of the Susquehanna from those nomadic waters that wander to Canada and the ocean of icebergs, it lies in a dark and deep bed sixteen miles within the



county, while the southern extension of its valley pierces through to the Conhocton and forms, by its junction with the channel of that river, the broad and pleasant valley of Bath. But few streams, however, have been carried captive by this great robber to the shivering seas of Labrador. Two or three unfortunate brooks are compelled to send thither their unwilling waters; and, aside from these resources, it subsists upon secret springs and the rains that fall upon the bluffs and pour into the lake by a thousand short ravines or gutters.

The hills of Steuben county are irregular blocks cut out of a plateau of clay, rock and gravel, by the action of the elements. Of the forces and elements by the action of which this original plateau was created, and of the later forces which afterwards hewed it into its present form—forms like those of a block of ice shattered by the blow of a hammer—we have a singular account from men of science.

That the regions we now occupy, and indeed this whole western region, even to the Cordilleras (or rather the foundations upon which they are built,) were, in time past, at the bottom of a vast ocean; that certain continents which in the earliest ages sat in the East, were broken up violently by convulsions of nature, or were gradually dissolved by forces milder than the arms of those rude slaves dwelling under the earth which are of old reported by Geologists to have overturned mountains, and cloven in twain fast anchored islands, and that the currents of the ocean flowing like steady rivers towards the setting sun, were laden with the dust of continents thus destroyed, and strewed it over the submerged plains of the West; that after these rivers of the ocean had labored silently and without ceasing for many ages, the whole bed of the Western deep was covered to the depth of many thousand feet with the materials of which the ancient East-

ern world was built, till at length peaks, then islands, then a new continent, appeared upon the face of the globe, while the waters by many channels ran down into the vast hollow of the uprooted continent to form a new ocean:—all these things State Geologists seem to believe established—or at least they feel at liberty to surmise substantially to this effect.

Further than this, we are invited to see the builders at their secret labors. Sluggish rivers of mud roll through the deep like enormous serpents, and waste themselves before they reach the valley of the Mississippi. Brighter torrents of sand following spread a gay carpet over the brackish trail of the mud-snake: then streams of pebble and shattered rock and of all the powders of an abraded world deposit, now Niagara Groups, now Chemung Groups, or when stirred by tempests and water-spouts settle into coarse conglomerate. We are shown, also, periods of a wonderful life. Millions of those brilliant “shells and crinoideans and crustaceans,” whose fantastic images are stamped upon the rocks, dwelt in numberless nations among the waters, while those hideous monsters whose names were only less formidable than themselves, prowled through the depths below, or floundered in elephantine antics among the billows above. Once a part of the floor of the ocean, which seems to have been the roof of a cavern occupied by certain “secret black and midnight” powers, sinks downward, arouses the horrible Pluto of Mud from his slumbers in bottomless volcanoes, who, rising in towering anger through the rafters of his broken house, overwhelms coral forests, the empires of the gorgeous fossil tribes, and all the beautiful mansions of the deep with a tremendous flood of mire. Other atrocious giants come forth from the volcanic furnaces into which the waters have fallen, and heat the ocean

with spouts of steam, while certain angry chemists, drenched in their subterranean laboratories by the sudden inundation of brine, let loose their most poisonous gasses, and catching the unfortunate nymphs, dose them with deadly physic. All creatures perish. Even the gigantic and roaring monsters, choked with mud and suffocated by the poisons that rise from the reservoirs of death below, flounder in dying agonies. Their carcasses are drifted to and fro for a time, and thousands of years afterwards, men digging in mines lay bare their huge white jaws and their mighty shanks, and fasten up their skeletons with wire in National Museums. All these, and many other strange things, showing how at last the region we inhabit was built, we see, from the happily settled times of the present, into the troubled times far away—times truly of “agitation and fanaticism.”

Let us now leave greater speculations, and look homeward. That tract of land now occupied by the five western counties of New York in the southern tier, appeared above the waters in the form of a regular plateau with a mean elevation of two thousand feet above the level of the present ocean, overlooking the sea which covered the northern counties, the Canadas, and the Great Western Valley. The detritus from which this plateau was constructed, had ripened into a series of shales, flagstones and sandstones, which from the difference of the organic remains of the upper and lower ledges, have been divided by geologists into two groups,—the upper or Chemung group, and the lower or Portage group. The maps represent these as first appearing near Chenango County in this State, thence running westwards through the southern counties, with a breadth of some fifty miles, and a thickness of about 2500 feet, thence continuing along the shore of Lake Erie, and toward the western extremity of that

lake, making a bold curve southward. Their course, however, appears not to have been carefully followed in their wanderings toward the far west; for we hear of them as being "probably" in Indiana, in reduced circumstances, with a thickness of less than 400 feet.

But this matters not at present. We are shown then at the period of our deliverance from the deep, a fine plateau, extending from Lake Erie far toward the east, and from the foot of the Pennsylvanian mountains northward about sixty miles, to a great bay of the ocean. How did this become a labyrinth of hills? The waters that fell from the clouds, or that issued from the grounds wandered this way and that, under the guidance of their restless instincts seeking the ocean. Many combining, formed rivers, and furrowed for themselves deep and curving valleys; the creeks conquered crooked but triumphant passages through ledges of sand stone, and beds of shale, wearing their channels by industrious labor through many centuries; while the brooks, the runnels, the spring torrents, and all those lesser hydraulic tribes, slashed the fair table land in all directions with gorges and ravines.

Work like this would have hewn the plateau into abrupt blocks. It would have left a multitude of isolated and inaccessible tables, islands divided by perpendicular gulfs. Neither man nor beast could have ascended to the uplands. The river valleys would have been broad halls enclosed by walls of rock: and the lumberman roving up the beds of the tributary streams, would find himself involved in hopeless defiles, with precipices jutting forth on either side, while hundreds of feet above his head the pine and the fir swayed their princely plumes in derision, like savage kings jeering the Spaniard from inaccessible cliffs.

But observe how the judicious elements, with rude and ungeometrical but kindly labor, prepared the new made region to be a habitation for man. The frosts with powerful wedges cracked the precipitous bluffs, or with mighty hammers, as it would seem, shivered to atoms rocky pyramids. The rains rounded the edges of the cliffs, here pushing off great masses of earth, there sweeping loosened ledges into the ravines, while the invisible powers of the air working many centuries with those more boisterous slaves, which hollowed the water courses and broke up the rocks, wrought at length the rolling ridges, the broad knobs, the blunt promontories, and all the curiously designed mountain-figures that now cover the land. The work was thus made perfect. Forests cover the hills, and republicans coming after many days with plows and axes, find a land made ready for them. After many days, too, civil-engineers, with their glasses and brazen instruments, appear at the foot of the ridge dividing the Susquehanna from the Genesee, and find that the rivers and industrious brooks have been laboring at this gravel rampart for many thousand years, guided, indeed, by very rude trigonometry, hired by no pledge of public stocks and undisturbed by loans or rumors of loans, but have yet done the labor of myriads of miners, and have pierced the ridge with such admirable cuts, that the locomotive, instead of dragging its weary wheels up an abrupt ascent of fifteen hundred feet, winds swiftly through mountain halls, (at the risk, it is true, after the equinoctial rains, of encountering in certain places, a sliding hill-top or an avalanche of cobblestones, which is quite alpine but unpleasant,) ever finding a gorge cloven through the broad bulwarks that seem to bar the valley; ever finding some crooked but deep defile through the bristling promontories that crowd together as if expressly for the discouragement of railroad directors.

It will be remembered that at the deliverance of Steuben county, with its four western neighbors, from the water, a large tract of land in the North, which is now high and dry, was lying under the sea. This sea lost life rapidly, and bled to death as it were through many wounds. Until its level sank below the level of the upper valley of the Canistes, the channel of that river was one of the passages through which it was drained. The torrent that ran roaring through the hills when supplied from such a reservoir was a powerful one; but since that has failed, the river has shrunk to very moderate dimensions, and now subsists upon the scanty charities of the mountain springs. Similar rivers probably flowed through many of the southwardly inclining valleys and covered them with "northern drift."

In descending to details, the prospect is quite disheartening. We are mortified to confess that our county is destitute of volcanoes. We have not so much as a Geyser. Of scoriæ and moonstones there is an utter deficiency; and as for trap-rock there is not an ounce of it between Tyrone and Troupsburgh. The true patriot will, however, hear with pride, that *fucoïdes* are tolerably abundant, and his ecstasy will with difficulty be suppressed when he learns not only that here was once the abode of the *Holoptychus* and the *Goniatites Acostatus*, but that here we find the relics of the *Astrypa Hystrix* and the *Ungulina Suborbicularis*, and of other eccentric aborigines which nibbled sea-weed on our native hills in ages past, when Saturn was but Crown Prince. It is consoling also to remember that the tooth of a mammoth was once found under the bed of one of our central mill-ponds; reasoning from which fact, he is a bold man who will dare to deny that the broad-horned mastodon once belled through these gorges, and that here the gigantic ante-

diluvian transfixed the monster with his iron javelin! It must be confessed, however, that the State Geologists are silent with regard to antediluvian sportsmen. It will be with intense satisfaction that the sincere patriot meets upon the hills of Troupsburgh and Greenwood the airiest localities in the country, being 2,500 feet above the sea, that venerable and most worthy patriarch among the rocks of the earth, Old Red Sandstone. "Here the rock consists of a thin layer of argillaceous sandstone, highly ferruginous in character, and bearing a general resemblance to the iron ore of the Clinton Group. Its decomposition stains the soil a bright red color, and from these indications it has been supposed that valuable beds of ore would be found. It is extremely doubtful, however, whether this stratum will ever prove of any importance as an iron ore."—(*State Geol. Rep.*)

Rocks of the Portage Group "appear in all the deep ravines and along the water courses in the northern part of the county, while the high grounds are occupied with those of the next group. \* \* \* \* \*

At Hammondsport, in the ravine above Mallory's Mill, we find about three hundred feet of rock exposed belonging to the Portage Group; they are well characterized by the *forcoides graphica*. The mass exposed consists in the lower part principally of shale and thin layers of sandstone, and at a higher point numerous layers of sandstone from four to ten inches thick. The edges of all the layers exposed are covered with crystals of selenite or crystallized gypsum. About one mile from the mouth of this ravine an excavation for coal has been made in the black shale which alternates with the sandstone and olive shale. The indications of coal at this point were a few fragments of vegetables, iron pyrites, and the odor of bitumen arising from the shale. The work is at present aban-

done until some new excitement, or reported exhibition of burning gas shall induce others to engage in the enterprise. \* \* \* \* \*

One mile north of Bath there is a stratum of very tough argillo-calcareous rock three feet thick: This furnishes some of the finest building and foundation stone, and should be of such a quality as to receive a fine polish, it will be a valuable acquisition to the mineral wealth of the county. \* \*

The rocks of the Chemung group continue along the valley of the Conhocton to Painted Post and as far the Tioga as the south line of the State, the tops of the high hills excepted, which are capped by conglomerate in a few places. The valley of the Canistes is bounded on both sides by almost unbroken ranges of rock of the same group. The same rocks are seen along the valley of the Five Mill Creek which appears to have been formerly a continuation of the Canandaigua Lake Valley. \* \* \* \* \*

The valley of Loon Lake is the continuation of Hemlock Lake and Springwater Valleys. In the neighborhood of the lake large accumulations of drift, arise in rounded hills fifty or sixty feet above the general level, and skirt the valley on either side. \* \* \* \* \*

The country known as Howard Flats is formed of drift hills and ridges, but little elevated above the general level. I could not ascertain the depth of the drift, but the deepest wells do not reach its termination. \* \* \* \*

Sandstone proper for grindstones are found along Bennett's and Rigg's creeks. \* \* \* \* \*

This place is about four hundred and five hundred feet above the Canistes and fifteen hundred feet above tide water. The source of Bennet's creek is about eight hundred feet above the Canistes. Grindstones are obtained in Canistes on the



land of Mr. Carter; in Woodhull, on the land of Wm. Stroud, Esq., and elsewhere in Jasper, on the land of Col. Towsley. And sandstone is quarried on the land of Mr. Marshall, near Lagrange, which is used for hearthstones, tombstones, etc. On the land of Mr. Davis, at Lagrange, a salt spring rises in the green shale. Several years since salt was made at this place and previously by the Indians. \* \* There are numerous beds of lake marl and tufa in this county. Near Arkport there is a bed of this kind which furnishes a considerable quantity of lime. In the town of Troupsburgh there is a bed of this marl. There is an extensive deposit on the Canesaraga, south of Danville, from which lime is burned. The summit level between this creek and the Canisteo presents an extensive muck swamp, and some beds of marl but their extent has not been ascertained." (*State Geol. Rep.*)

We add the elevations of a few points above tide water: Seneca Lake, 447 feet; Mud Lake, 1,111 feet; summit between these lakes, 1,644 feet; Village of Bath, 1,090 feet; summit between Mud Lake and Bath, 1,579; Arkport, 1,194; summit between Bath and Arkport, 1,840; summit between Arkport and Angelica, 2,062; Troupsburgh Hills, 2,500; Corning, 925; Hornellsville, 1,150; Crooked Lake, 718.

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NOTE.—The Mastodon's tooth alluded to above was dug from a bed of blue clay near the steam saw-mill of Mr. George Mitchell, in the Gulf Road between Bath and Wheeler. It is eight or ten inches in length. A large bone was disinterred at the same place which crumbled on exposure to the air. Further examination will doubtless disclose other grinders of this huge beast and perhaps a pair of those broad tusks, curving outwardly at the points, somewhat like scythes, which adorn the heads of its brethren found elsewhere, and with which one good able bodied fellow, sweeping his head to and fro in wrath, might mow down an army of antagonists like meadow grass.

The bed of clay in which the tooth was found is of unusual depth and tenacity, and it is guessed that the animal of which the said bone was an appurtenance while rambling through the gulf, indiscreetly hounced into the mire and was unable to disengage his ponderous feet. It is further surmised that the bears may have pulled his skull around after death but that the frame of his body remains where he mired.

# HISTORY OF THE SETTLEMENT OF STEUBEN COUNTY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### PRELIMINARY HISTORY AND PURCHASE.

THE early History of Steuben County cannot be a record of events which are called great. The chopping of forests, the building of cabins, the founding of settlements, and the gradual subjugation of a most stubborn wilderness, are the only matters which can engage the attention of the chronicler. The events to be recounted are neither tragic nor terrible; the troubles to be told are far from overwhelming; the mysteries are not mysterious, the disasters are not disastrous. No battle has ever been fought within these boundaries. These hills have not, within the memory of man, spouted fire or been shaken by an earthquake. No carved stones or rusty weapons have been found in the vallies which would indicate that this county was in past ages aught more than an abiding place of wild beasts and a hunting ground for barbarians. And yet, notwithstanding the dearth of noisy heroism in our

county's annals, it may be avered that its citizens have accomplished, in the last sixty years, that which they may honestly be proud of, and that the work which they have done in the woods has proved them to be stout-hearted, and strong-handed men.

The record of events, previous to the settlement of the valley of the Chemung by American backwoodsmen, must be but brief and unsatisfactory. Beginning our investigations at the earliest times when Eastern nations are believed to have caught glimpses of a Western world, no evidence can be found to warrant a belief that those ancient rovers, who are declared by the learned to have visited the American shores before Columbus, ever strayed to that rugged region over which the supervisors of Steuben county now wave their democratic sceptres. The Phoenicians undoubtedly lived and died in ignorance of Loon Lake. No more traces are to be found of Madoc the Welshman than of Esau the Edomite. Biorn, the Northman, it is to be feared, never planted his Scandinavian heel upon our river-flats, and no rams-horns have been found in the clefts of the rocks which by possibility may have been blown by the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel.

Of those interesting relics of the ancient empires of the continent, which are digged from the earth of the northern counties of our state, this county is utterly destitute. Mounds which may have been the tombs of kings coeval with Agamemnon; battlements upon which princes greater than Cyrus, and captains mightier than Hannibal, may have stalked; javelins of stranger fashion than the harpoons of the Argonauts;

graven images, suspected to have been cousins to Dagon of the Philistines; swords and truncheons of gigantic cavaliers; and other strange relics of exterminated nations which Oswego, Onondaga and Genesee give up to the chronicler, are not found here. The farmer, it is true, may sometimes lay open with his plow the trench where lie the mouldering bones and the rust-eaten hatchet of one of those red consuls whose whooping legionaries fired the wigwams of the Catawbas in the far South, or saluted from Illinois bluffs the Father of Waters: but as for antediluvians or giants, whose skeletons occasionally turn up in the fortunate counties of the North, not one of those venerable pioneers to our knowledge, reposes on these Southern river-sides.

Relinquishing, then, all hope of enriching these pages with extracts from the ledgers of Phœnician traders, the tax rolls of Israelitish colonists, the diaries of Welsh wanderers, or the log-books of Danish Pirates; and refraining from all discussion of the quality of the tenancy of those ancient settlers whose titles, if any they ever had, were long since extinguished, and who are not likely to set up claims against the grantees of Phelps and Gorham, all matters that transpired, or that may have transpired before the voyage of Columbus, may be dismissed without comment or conjecture. From the time of that event down to the period of the actual invasion of our country by the backwoodsmen, near the close of the last century, a faint light, hardly more satisfactory than the total darkness of previous time, rested upon our forests, but in searching for tan-

gible facts, the Historian meets only chagrin and disappointment.

At the time of the discovery, this region, with a large and indefinite territory, now comprising portions of several states, constituted the domain of the Five Nations, a fierce and crafty people, eloquent sometimes, and of proud bearing, the "Romans of the West," as some call them. For many years after the anchors of the discoverers first sank in the bays of the new found continent, these wild warriors dwelt in their Long-House unmolested by the Europeans who sought the Western world. The councillors of their dreaded league met for conference at Genesee or Onondaga castles; their armies marched from the Mohawk to the Miami, and there was none to dispute their supremacy over the magnificent forests of which their arms had made them the masters. But in a century and a half new commotions began to agitate the wilderness. Enemies more formidable than the Huron or the Algonquin, encamped on the borders of the domain of the Iroquois. The drums of England were heard in the South, and the bugles of France in the North. Britons stood girt for battle behind the windmills of Manhattan and the palisades of Albany, while Gauls from the ramparts of Quebec, looked off over broad forests and wonderful valleys towards the Gulf of Mexico, and awaited the beginning of a contest which was to determine the destiny of a continent.

The silence, which had for centuries pervaded the wilderness, was broken, and the chronicler may be reasonably required to gather from the battles, plots and

treaties which ensued upon the meeting of these antagonists, some thing which may be fairly claimed as part of the history of these ancient valleys. In the varied triumphs and disasters which diversified the long protracted struggle of French, English, and Iroquois, it may rightfully demand of the annalist that he find some event in the history of these hemlock ravines over which rhetoric may rave, research puzzle, or poetry whimper.

But the conscientious chronicler will be compelled to disappoint public expectation. As the clouds will sometimes roll up black and thunderous in the West, so that cattle fly from the fields, and prudent townsmen inspect their lightning rods, and after all the storm drifts towards the North, and rains floods, and flings thunderbolts in our very sight: so did the great political tempest of colonial times rain itself dry along the shores of Ontario and the St. Lawrence, while our own ill-starred mountains parched. From the day when Champlain, the voyager, fired under the bluffs of Ticonderoga the first musket volley that disturbed the forests of the Six Nations, down through a period of one hundred and sixty years, more than a half dozen armies, of a wild and picturesque composition, invaded, encamped, fought, and besieged, almost within sight of the Northern townships of this county, but had not the charity to fire so much as a pistol over its borders. Montcalm's bugles and Bradstreet's drums sounded through the neighboring groves. Provincial rangers and Britons, French chevaliers and feathered sachems filed along the Ontario trails. There were

treaties, alliances, plots and conventions. There was also occasional oratory—as for example, the speech of Garanguala to De La Barre, the Canadian Governor, a masterpiece of daring and picturesque irony. Cannonading at Niagara, at Oswego, at Frontenac, startled the wilderness. Yet, though all this fine tumult disturbed the secluded courts of the Long House, not even rumors of wars agitated the valleys of the Conhocton and Tioga. It may be said that during the long contest for the rich plains and noble lakes of Western New York, our old hills sat quietly apart, like the camels of a captured caravan, while two hostile bands of robbers quarrelled for the booty.

We gain, however, a single glimpse of the ancient time, which is of some interest, as revealing to our view the first communication of this country with the civilized world. Two centuries ago the still streams and the outlets of our lakes were alive with beaver. Many a harmonious phalanx of these sagacious little socialists revelled in undisturbed ponds, where they had lived generation after generation since the flood, and busied themselves with the building of dams and other industrial pursuits, with none to molest or make afraid. At length, however, remorseless Dutch traders established themselves at Albany, and combining with French merchants in the forts of Canada, laid foul plots against these tranquil republics, tempting the barbarians with bells and bright knives to begin the work of destruction. So presently the red huntsmen might have been seen skulking through the willows that overhung the creeks, and setting snares for



the feet of the honest and unsuspecting beaver. Hundreds of these poor creatures suddenly found themselves bereft of their fur, and long-limbed savages, laden with ill-got plunder, hurried through the forests to the forts of the rapacious traders. Thus the first demand of the aristocracy of Europe upon our county was for the hides of its citizens—a very singular request, and one which the indignant republican will remember in connection with the tribute paid at this day to the Royalty of Hanover.

A little more than a century after the massacre of the beaver, the Revolutionary war was raging through the land. Here again the Historic Muse displayed her ungraciousness, and refused to refresh our parching chronicles with a single skirmish. While the whole neighborhood in the North, East, and South, was alive with rangers and Indians, and rang daily with conflicts, scalpings, and burnings, silence of the grave reigned in our slumbering forests. The utmost that can be said for our county in setting up a revolutionary claim for it is, that it was sometimes a place of preparation for the ferocious allies of Great Britain before their attacks on the frontiers, and a place of retreat after the slaughter. The utmost border settlements of our countrymen at that time in the States of New York and Pennsylvania were in the upper valley of the Mohawk, on the head waters of the Susquehanna, west of the Catskills, in the Wyoming country, and on the west Branch of the Susquehanna. Down the valleys of the Conhocton, Canisteo, and Chemung, and up the valley of the Tioga, ran the

trails by which sometimes the Tories and Indians stole upon the settlements in Pennsylvania from Fort Niagara, and by which again their bands, like hounds returning from the hunt, hurried to that notorious old kennel to be fed by their keepers.

Hardly a fact, however, with regard to the movements of our county's primitive citizens during the war is preserved for us. An intrepid imagination might do much toward filling this unfortunate blank in our annals, but till such a one assumes the task, each one must be content to make a Revolutionary History for himself out of such hints as may lawfully be suggested. Each must imagine as he can the wolfish fraternity of Tories and Indians traversing the war-trails of our wilderness. Hiakattoo, Little Beard, Brant, and the Great Captains of the Six Nations holding council under elm-trees by the Chemung—the British officer, conspicuous with his sash and pistols, conferring by moonlight with savage chieftains that lean on their rifles, without the encampment, on the river bank, where the wild warriors are sleeping—the occasional squadron of canoes gliding down the swift stream toward the farms below on the Susquehanna.

Now a file of barbarians descends the Canisteco trail from the north, turns up the Tioga and disappears. Soon their hatchets glitter afar off on the Laurel Ridge. Next is heard at midnight the ringing of rifles on the West Branch, and the shouting of the borderers as the blaze of their cabins lights up the wooded cliffs around. Strange processions sometimes straggle up the vallies. Now the mongrel hounds of

old Fort Niagara return from encounters with the for-esters of Pennsylvania, shattered and discomfited; but again the marauders return with scalps dangling at their belts, hurrying along captives, women and children who grow weary and are tomahawked, and also stout and weary woodsmen who must be bound and watched lest they rise in the night and beat out the brains of their captors.

In the midst of the war the first lumbermen of the Canisteo may be seen on its upper waters hewing down pine trees, and shaping them by fire and steel into canoes. One would in vain search for the peers of that savage gang among the boisterous raftmen who, in modern day build their fleet in the eddies of that quiet stream. When the work is done and the little galleys are launched, what a lovely crew embarks! The Butlers with their merciless renegades, the chosen chiefs of the Six Nations, the fiercest soldiers of the forest, all with their war trapping and weapons ride in the slender canoes down the stream—down through the silent gorges, over the brawling rifts—then emerging from island-groves of elm descend the strong Tioga, then bending their long file into the Chemung, disappear beyond our borders in that blue notch chosen for the river's course in the hills below. This was the Armada that bore the destroyers of Wyoming.\*

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\* The canoes which carried a large party of Tories and Indians to Wyoming in 1778, were made on the Canisteo. At the settlement of the upper valley of that river the trunks of trees, which proving unfit for use had been abandoned after having been partially wrought, with other traces of work, and some tools and weapons, were found

Sullivan's two hundred barges move from Otsego and Wilkesbarre to Newtown. His five thousand men march northward through the wilderness, barely brushing the edge of our county. We hear a great crackling of villages on fire, of burning corn-stacks, and a lively crashing of orchards and skirmishing of scouts, but a few miles from our northern towns. That singular fatality however which marks our earliest history forbids a scout to be tortured, a corporal to be scalped, or even a pack-horse to be beheaded within the bailiwick of our own Sheriff. A few adventurous boatmen, however moved up the Chemung to see what land might lie on the upper branches of that unknown river.\*

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on the farm of Col. J. R. Stephens near Hornelsville. The settlers had this fact also from the Indians.

\* Gen. Sullivan, invaded the territory of the Six Nations in 1779, penetrated the midst of their forests, destroyed many of their villages, cut down their orchards, laid waste their cornfields, and inflicted on these impracticable savages a portion of the miseries which the frontiers had suffered from their hands during the previous years of the war. The destruction of life, however, was but inconsiderable. The Indians and Tories made a stand at Newtown, but were summarily routed. The residue of the fighting in the campaign was adjusted by scouting parties.

The traditions held by some that detachments of this army penetrated Steuben county, are probably without foundation. The oldest settlers consulted in the preparation of this sketch (Capt. Woolcott and Judge Knox of the town of Corning,) did not hear of the rumored skirmish at the brook called "Bloody Run" in the old town of Painted Post. At the time of the settlement, however, there were painted trees near that stream where the Indians were said (or guessed) to have tortured prisoners. Sullivan moved from Newtown, (Elmira) to the head of the Seneca by the Horseheads (where he

It appears, therefore, that Steuben County, from the earliest ages to the close of the Revolutionary War, was but a jungle of barbarism, without name and without history. Invading whirlwinds sometimes crushed the hemlocks of the hills in their courses, insurgent floods sometimes poured through the defiles with a tumult like the roar of a multitude, and the rival houses of wolf and bear, enlivened the wilderness with civil strife; but concerning human onslaughts and insurrections, the chroniclers of the Six Nations are silent, and the hope of recovering the memory of them must be forever dismissed. It remains, then, only to consider how the race which broke into these solitudes after the Revolution acquired their title to the same, and how they accomplished the great work which this day beholds performed.

The freeholders of Steuben County generally derive their titles from Sir William Pulteney, of England, and his heirs. Sir William acquired his title from Robert Morris, Morris from Phelps and Gorham, the latter from the State of Massachusetts, and that commonwealth held under the Royal Charter of James I, King of Great Britain. How King James became the proprietor of this tract of land, it would not be easy to say, unless we adopt the presumption which the law sometimes establishes in cases of unaccountable pos-

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killed a large number of pack-horses,) thence between the lakes to the outlet, thence to the Genesee, and returned by the same route. There is nothing in the official report of the General, or in the published journals of officers accompanying the expedition, to support the traditions alluded to.

session of chattels, and aver that he "casually found it."

The grants of the colonies of Massachusetts and Connecticut, comprised vast tracts of land extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, including large portions of the present States of New York and Pennsylvania. The latter provinces loudly denied the validity of the royal grants, so far as they affected the territory within their boundaries, as at present settled, and the controversy arising from the claims of their sister provinces, was a fruitful source of correspondence and worse, between the rival claimants. In Pennsylvania it proceeded to blows. Colonists from Connecticut established themselves in the famous valley of Wyoming, and resisted with arms the edicts of the Assembly and the officers of the high courts of the latter commonwealth. Heads were bruised, bones broken, crops destroyed, settlements plundered, and even lives lost, and the peace of the Susquehanna Valley was destroyed by a feud worthy of the middle ages. In 1774, for example, an army of 700 Pennsylvanians moved up the river to conquer the intruders, but at the defile of Nanticoke, their boats being stopped by an ice-jam, and themselves confronted by a fortification, hostilities were terminated by a rousing volley *from* the bushes, and a rousing volley *into* the bushes, the latter killing one man.\*

The controversy between New York and Massachusetts never reached such deplorable virulence as that

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\*Life of Major Van Campen.

between the other two provinces. In the war of Revolution, private quarrels were by common consent suspended, and not long after that contest, the difficulty was adjusted. On the 16th day of December, 1786, by a compact entered into between the States of New York and Massachusetts, it was agreed that the latter State should release to the former all claim of sovereignty over lands lying within the present boundaries of the former, and that the State of New York should release and confirm to the State of Massachusetts the right of pre-emption of the soil from the Indians, of the greater part of New York lying west of Seneca Lake.

On the 21st day of November, 1788, the State of Massachusetts, for the consideration of three hundred thousand pounds in the consolidated securities of that State, (\$100,000,) conveyed to Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham, all its right, title, and interest to lands in Western New York, which now constitute the counties of Steuben, Yates, Ontario, part of Wayne, most of Monroe, a small part of Genesee and Livingston, and about one half of Allegany; containing about 2,600,000 acres. The Indian title to this tract had been purchased by Messrs. Phelps & Gorham by treaty, at a convention held at Buffalo, in July, 1788. ✓

The purchasers speedily caused their lands to be surveyed and divided into seven ranges, numbered from east to west by lines running north and south. The ranges, which were six miles in width, were subdivided into townships designed to be six miles square, and the townships were farther sub-divided into lots.

That portion of the purchase which now constitutes Steuben County, was surveyed for Phelps & Gorham by Frederick Saxton, Augustus Porter, now of Niagara Falls, Thomas Davis and Robert James, (or by the two first named,) in the summer of 1789. Judge Porter, in his narrative, published in Turner's History of the Holland Purchase, says, with regard to this survey, "While engaged in it, we made our head-quarters at Painted Post, on the Conhocton River, at the house of old Mr. Harris and his son William. These two men, Mr. Goodhue, who lived near by, and Mr. Mead, who lived at the mouth of Mead's Creek, were the only persons then on the territory we were surveying."

Mr. Phelps opened an office for the sale of land at Canandaigua. The fame of the Genesee Country had been spread through all the East. Sullivan's soldiers brought from the wilderness glowing accounts of vast meadows and luxuriant orchards hidden amongst the forests of the Six Nations, and the adventurous men of New England and Pennsylvania were not backward to seek new homes in the fastnesses of their old enemies. Before the middle of November, in 1790, about 50 townships had been sold, the most of which were purchased by the township or half township, by individuals or companies of farmers.\*

The settlement of Steuben County was commenced under grants from Messrs. Phelps and Gorham, but for convenience the whole history of the title to the county may be here stated.

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\*Turner's Holland Purchase.



Messrs. Phelps and Gorham, by deed dated the 18th day of November, 1790, conveyed to Robert Morris of Philadelphia, (the patriotic merchant of Revolutionary memory) the residue of their lands remaining unsold, amounting to about a million and a quarter acres.

Robert Morris, by deed dated the 11th day of April, 1792, conveyed to Charles Williamson about one million two hundred thousand acres of the Phelps and Gorham tract, which has been since known as the Pulteney estate. Mr. Williamson held this estate in secret trust for Sir William Pulteney, an English Baronet, and others. In March, 1801, Mr. Williamson conveyed the estate formally to Sir William Pulteney, an act having been passed by the Legislature of New York in 1798, authorizing conveyances to aliens for the term of three years. This conveyance was made three days before the expiration of the act by its own limitation.

Sir William Pulteney was the son of Sir James Johnstone. He assumed the name of Pulteney on his marriage with Mrs. Pulteney, niece of the Earl of Bath, and daughter of General Pulteney. He died in 1805, leaving Henrietta Laura Pulteney, Countess of Bath, his only heir. Lady Bath died in 1808, intestate. The Pulteney estate descended to Sir John Lowther Johnstone, of Scotland, her cousin and heir-at-law. Sir John Lowther Johnstone died in 1811, and devised the estate in fee to Ernest Augustus Duke of Cumberland, (since King of Hanover,) Charles Herbert Pierrepont, Masterton Ure and David Cathcart (Lord

Alloway,) in trust, nevertheless, to sell the same as speedily as possible, and to pay and discharge the incumbrances on his estates in England and Scotland, and to purchase copyhold estates adjacent to his estates in Scotland. John Gordon was afterwards appointed a trustee of the estate, in the place of Pierrepont (the Earl of Manvers,) who in 1819 relinquished his trust. The present trustees (since the death of the King of Hanover) are Masterton Ure and John Gordon.

The policy of the proprietors and trustees has been to sell the lands as rapidly as possible to actual settlers. In sixty years, as might be expected, by far the greatest and most valuable portion of the State has been disposed of, but considerable tracts of wild land yet remain unsold.

The validity of the title to the Pulteney estate has never been the subject of judicial construction in the highest court of the State. A cause now before the Court of Appeals, (decided in favor of the proprietors in the Supreme Court,) will probably set at rest the question of title.

## CHAPTER II.

STEBEN COUNTY IMMEDIATELY BEFORE ITS SETTLEMENT—A JOURNEY SIXTY-FIVE YEARS AGO—THE FOREST—THE RIVERS, &c.—SKETCH OF BENJAMIN PATTERSON, THE HUNTER—SKIRMISH AT FREELAND'S FORT—SCUFFLE WITH "THE INTERPRETER"—THE WILD OX OF GENESEE FLATS.

On the morning of Christmas-day, in the year 1787, a backwoodsman and an Indian issued from the door of a log cabin which stood half buried in snow on the point of land lying between the Cowenisque Creek and the Tioga River, at the junction of those streams, and set forth on the ice of the river for a journey to the settlements below. They were clad according to the rude fashions of the frontiers and the forest, in garments partly obtained by barter from outpost traders, and partly stripped by robbery from the beasts of the forest. Tomahawks and knives were stuck in their belts, snow shoes were bound to their feet, and knapsacks of provisions were lashed to their backs. Such was the equipment deemed necessary for travellers in Steuben County not a century ago.

The snow lay upon the ground four full feet in depth. It was brought from the north in one of those might storms which in former days often swept down

from Canadian regions and poured the treasures of the snowy zone on our colonial forests—storms which seldom visit us in modern days—as if the passage of tariff bills, which have cramped the operations of many heavy British-American firms, had made it impracticable for Polar capitalists to introduce their fabrics into the Commonwealth of New York with the profusion which was encouraged in the times of the English governors.

The pioneer and his savage comrade pursued their journey on the ice. The Tioga was then a wild and free river. From its source, far up in the “Magnolia hills” of the old provincial maps, down to its union with the equally wild and free Conhocton, no device of civilized man fretted its noble torrent. A single habitation of human beings stood upon its banks, the log cabin at the mouth of the Cowenisque; and that was the westernmost cabin of New York.\* But it bore now upon its frozen surface the forerunner of an unresting race of lumbermen and farmers, who in a few years invaded its peaceful solitudes, dammed its wild flood, and hewed down the lordly forests through which it flowed. The travellers kept on their course beyond the mouth of the Canisteo to the Painted Post. Here they expected to find the cabin of one Harris, a trader, where they might have lodgings for the night, and, if necessary for the comfort of the savage breast, a draught from “the cup which cheers (and also) inebriates.” On their arrival at the head of the Chemung,

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\* In strict truth, the cabin stood in Pennsylvania, a few rods from the New York line.

however, they found that the cabin had been destroyed by fire. The trader had either been murdered by the Indians, or devoured by wild beasts, or else he had left the country, and Steuben County was in consequence depopulated.

Disappointed in this hope, the two travellers continued their journey on the ice as far as Big Flats. Here night overtook them. They kindled a fire on the bank of the river, and laid them down to sleep. The air was intensely cold. It was one of those clear, still, bitter nights, when the moon seems an iceberg, and the stars are bright and sharp like hatchets. The savage rolled himself up in his blanket, lay with his back to the fire, and did not so much as stir till the morning; but his companion, though framed of that stout stuff out of which backwoodsmen are built, could not sleep for the intensity of the cold. At midnight a pack of wolves chased a deer from the woods to the river, seized the wretched animal on the ice, tore it to pieces and devoured it within ten rods of the encampment. Early in the morning the travellers arose and went their way to the settlements below, the first of which was Newtown, on the sight of the present village of Elmira.

Such is one of the earliest glimpses of our county granted us. Journies are performed in rather a different manner now! The incidents of the trip sound oddly enough to the ear of the modern traveller—the excursion on snow shoes—the possible destruction of the village of Painted Post by the Indians—the encampment and night fire under the trees by the river

bank, on a stinging Christmas night, while frost-bitten wolves regaled the ears of the travellers with dismal howling! The backwoodsman was Samuel Baker, a New Englander, afterwards well known to our citizens as Judge Baker, of Pleasant Valley.

This is a winter scene. The Descriptive and Historical "Citizen" gives in his sketch\* a summer picture,—“a picture of our county as it was a few summers before the irruption of the backwoodsmen; for this, the figure of our rugged home arrayed in its ancient and barbarous yet picturesque and noble garb, is one which the reflecting citizen will sometime contemplate in imagination, with pleasure, and not without some degree of wonder.

“On a summer’s day, shortly after the close of the War of Revolution, let the observing citizen stand with me on an exceedingly high mountain and survey the land. It is a vast solitude, with scarce a sound to break the reigning silence but the splashing of the brooks in their defiles, and the brawling of the rivers at the rifts, or perhaps the creaking of sulky old hemlocks as the light wind stirs their branches or sways their tottering trunks slowly to and fro. What a noble forest is this, covering the valleys and the high, rounded hills, and the steep sides of the winding gulfs, and the crests of the successive ranges that rise above each other till the outline of a blue and curving barrier is traced against the sky. For ages upon ages has this land been a wilderness. Savages have hunted in it.

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\* “Descriptive and Historical Sketch of Steuben County,”—(M.S.) politely placed at the disposal of the Editor of this volume.

Storms have passed over it, and its history would present but a record of wild beasts slain, of trees uprooted, and of the passage of terrible whirlwinds which broke wide lanes through the forest and overthrew the timbers of whole hill-sides. See how the three rivers flow through groves of elm and willow, while the white sycamores, standing on unmolested islands, raise aloft their long branches where the cranes rest with the plunder of the shallows. Free rivers are these, flowing joyously through the channels provided for them of old, shackled by no dams, insulted by no bridges, tormented by no saw-mills. They bear with gladness the occasional canoe of the people that gave them their sounding names; they give drink to the heated deer, to the panther, and the wallowing bear,—disgusted by no base-born beasts of the yoke wading their stony fords, nor by geese swimming in their clear waters, nor by swine lounging in the warm mud of the eddies. See, also, the lakes sleeping in the hollows prepared for them anciently, their bluffs and beaches occupied even to the water's edge with forest trees, while solitary loons and fleets of wild fowl cruise on their waters, scared by neither the wheels of the passing steamer, nor by the whistling bullets of fowlers. Behold too the creeks, the brooks, the torrents, leaping down from the highlands like hearty young mountaineers; while in the ravines through which they brawl the great pines stand as if dreaming, unconscious that their gigantic trunks contain spars and saw-logs.

“But the forest is not destitute of an active populace. Bears sit growling at the windows of their tow-

ers in the hollow trees; painted catamounts lurk in the glens; panthers crouch on the low branches of the oaks; elk and many thousand deer are standing in the ponds or browsing in the thickets; while hungry gangs of wolves rove at dusk through the groves with dismal howling. And these are not the only citizens of the wood. There we see the myriads of squirrels, the wood-fowls whistling and drumming in the thickets, the old and clumsy sons of the she-bear tumbling in the leaves in their awkward play, the comical raccoons frolicking in the tree-tops, while the wise and sober woodchuck goes forth alone, and the otter cruises in the still waters of the streams.

“All these things, let the observing citizen mark,—these far rolling forests, these silent lakes and wild rivers, these savage creeks and torrents, these gorges and wooded glens, these deep-worn valleys and the abrupt ranges that bound them, and the promontories that jut from the everchanging outlines of the ranges,—all as they were in the ancient time before I begin the story of their conquest,—a half melancholy story; for who can think how these solitudes were broken up and these fine forests mangled without a half-regretful thought?

“The wilderness is doomed. Even now as we stand on the mountain the men who will invade it are astir. Down on the Susquehanna uneasy farmers are already working their way upward in broad barges; uneasy New Englanders are already launching canoes on the Unadilla, which will find their way hither. Even now Scotchmen, Irishmen, and Englishmen are tossing on



the seas who in a few years will live in these valleys, farmers and tradesmen, and even supervisors, Justices of the Peace, and Judges. Barbarism, drawing its fantastic blanket over its shoulders, and clutching its curiously-wrought tomahawk, must withdraw to other solitudes, jingling its brazen ornaments and whooping as it goes."

Such was our County as seen by the "Citizen" before the year 1787. There are a few additional facts which escaped his notice on the "exceedingly high mountain," which may with propriety be mentioned before proceeding to the narration of events connected with the settlement.

This whole region,—especially that part of it occupied by the valleys of the Conhocton and Canisteo,—was of old one of the best hunting grounds belonging to the Six Nations, and was visited in the winter and autumn by large parties of Seneca Indians, who came from their villages on the Genesee for the destruction of game. It was a royal park indeed—and yet of course not such a park as the elegant deer-folds of Europe thus named—but rather like those rugged and unkempt Asiatic parks, where the Nimrods and Cyruses of old, with their peers and captains, made war upon lions and tigers, and boars; only here were unfortunately neither boars, nor tigers, nor lions, and, to speak truly, but shabby substitutes for such noble game. It was only when the wild huntsman grappled with the wounded panther or scuffled with the angry bear, or dodged the horns of the furious stag, that the perils of the chase deserved record with the exploits of

those worthies of old, who pricked lions in the jungles with their Assyrian pikes. Still, of very rude and ugly beasts there was no scarcity. Of bears and panthers there were quite as many as the County could support even under a system of direct taxation for that purpose, and when we take into account beside these, the large and happy communities of rattlesnakes and catamounts which flourished in eligible localities, there is no reason why the patriotic citizen should feel mortified at our county's ancient census returns.

There are certain facts with regard to the rivers which do not appear in the Citizen's "Sketch." Before the settlement of the county, the rivers were much deeper, stronger, and steadier, than they are at the present day. In modern times they are notoriously unreliable servants of the people—sometimes reducing the saw-mills to half-rations, and confining the eels to limited elbow-room; anon rising above their banks, flooding the flats, sweeping away piles of lumber, and testing the labors of the commissioners of highways and bridges, as is the undoubted right of every river in this republican land. The destruction of the forests has caused the drying up of multitudes of little springs which formerly, by their penny contributions to the great sinking-fund, swelled appreciably the treasures of the streams. Freshets can be had on shorter notice now than then, but they are of shorter duration. Then, the snow melting in the woods slowly, caused the March and April floods to be deliberate and of long continuance. Now, the snow falling upon bare hills and open farms, melts rapidly at sunshine and shower,

rushes into the ravines and swells the creeks with violent and short-lived freshets. Many channels which were formerly the beds of petty, but perennial brooks, are now "dry runs," except after rains, when they are filled with powerful torrents. The State Geologist apprehends serious inconvenience from the failure of water, if the destruction of the forest is continued in the future as extravagantly as during the last fifty years.

Our ancient rivers, in addition to their superiority in depth and power to the shallow streams which today wind through our valleys, were far more correct in their habits and firm in their principles than the modern waters—not being so easily persuaded to indulge in irregularities, and not taking advantage of every winter-thaw, to rise up, and go off on a "bender," as it were, with the creeks and runnels, like a crew of light-headed youngsters. And yet it is not to be supposed that they refrained entirely from such extravagances. Early settlers well remember how the lower valley of the Tioga was flooded from hill to hill fully a mile, deep enough, almost, at the shallowist, to swim a horse; and how men, near Painted Post, paddled their canoes in the roads for miles. This was about forty-five years ago.

The rivers were furthermore grievously afflicted with flood-wood. They bore down with their strongest waters annual tribute to the Susquehanna, of trees, broken trunks, and enormous roots—the bullion of the forest—like savage chiefs of the mountain, bearing gifts to the prince of the plains, of rough ores, un-

wrought gems, and the feathers of strange birds. In modern days we continue this tribute, but in a different form, as evidence of our improved state—coining the uncooth bullion into boards or huge ingots of timber. Notwithstanding the great quantities of flood-wood from which the rivers freed themselves by the occasional floods, there were yet large masses of this raft which the freshet did not loosen, or at most, shifted from point to point. The two lesser rivers were fairly strangled by these dams. Navigation, for any craft heavier than the birch canoe of the pagan, was utterly impracticable. After the settlement of the county, these collections of flood-wood were chopped and burned away at a considerable public expense. Something has been done, too, toward straightening the navigable streams. Upon the whole, it would appear that our county contained in old times, a very heedless and lawless family of waters. The rivers were badly snarled. It is one of the most pleasing results of a judicious civilization that these tangled torrents have been combed out smoothly, and that the mountain creeks, which then like wild colts came leaping through the ravines, have at last been caught in huge timber traps so ingeniously contrived with bulkheads and fooms, that there was really no chance of escape for these lively streams, and have been given to understand that all this capering through the glens, and leaping over the rocks, might be excused when the poor Indian who knew nothing about hydraulics held the land, but that they must now come into the harness and carry saw-logs and turn under-shot wheels.

Considering all these things—the forests, the hills, the shaded islands, the wild beasts, and the untamed rivers—our county appears to have been truly a fastness of barbarism. Its ancient tenants did not yield it without a long battle, fought inch by inch with fire and steel. Mountains and rivers formed a league. The mountains displayed the fortitude of martyrs. When beset by merciless farmers, they resolutely refused to give up their treasures. Dumb and obstinate they were stripped of their raiment, they were flayed, they were torn with plows and harrows, they were scorched with fire—like Jews in the castles of the old barons—and only surrendered their hidden wealth after the most dreadful tortures. The rivers, with equal fidelity, resisted the inroads of the back-woodsmen. The “Citizen” says, “If the rivers of this county were anciently populated with any tribe of Indian bogles, or water-imps, (and there is no good reason for supposing that they were not,) I should say that these invisible citizens mustered for a last stand, in defence of their homes. They built barricades of flood-wood, they piled up battlements of great roots, they pulled down mighty sycamores to fortify the rifts. But they were overpowered like the insurgents of Paris. Their barricades were broken with axes or destroyed by fire, and the fleets of the pioneers pushed their way up the rivers by degrees, driving before them these unlucky little aborigines.”

There were many patches of land on the river flats, which were free from timber. At the north of the Canisteo there was an “open flat” of some two hun-

dred acres. In the upper valley of that river there was a much larger one. There were open flats near the Painted Post and up the Tioga, and a single one on the Conhocton—the fine meadows south of the village of Bath.

There was at this time a man living near Northumberland, in Pennsylvania, who afterwards became a noted citizen of this county; and although his connection with it did not begin till after the first settlements were made, yet, for convenience, a brief sketch of him may be introduced.

#### BENJAMIN PATTERSON, THE HUNTER.

Of great renown, towards the close of the last century, throughout all the hill-country of the West, was Ben Patterson, the hunter. From the mid-branches of the Susquehanna to the most north-western waters of that river, there was not one of greater fame. Courageous and energetic of spirit, and powerful of frame, he explored the forests of Pennsylvania, roved over the ridges and through the ravines of the Alleghanies, navigated untried rivers, discovered mines and hidden valleys, gave names to creeks and mountains, and guided adventures through the wilderness.

Sometimes he was a hunter; sometimes an Indian fighter; sometimes a spy; sometimes a Moses to despairing emigrants; sometimes forrester to backwoods barons. He had been associated with all the noted characters of the frontier: with Gurty, the renegade; with Murphy, the runner; with Van Campen, the

ranger ; with Hammond, the fighter. He knew the farmers of Wyoming, the riflemen of the West Branch, and the warriors of Niagara. To bears, panthers, and wolves, to elk, deer, and beaver, he was an Alaric. The number of these beasts that fell before his rifle almost passes account. In the latter years of his life, when an old man, living on his farm by the Tioga, and game began to become scarce, he thought it necessary to put a narrow limit to his annual destruction of deer, and in each year thereafter laid up his rifle when he had killed an hundred. He was not a mere destroyer of wild beasts, but a man of keen observation, of remarkable powers of memory, of intelligence, of judgment, and withal of strict integrity. He possessed great powers of narration. Not only children and rough men of the frontier, but men of learning, listened hour after hour to his thousand tales. The late Chief Justice Spencer, when Circuit Judge, once met him at the Mud Creek tavern, in this county, and was so interested with his graphic descriptions of wild scenery and wood life, that he sat up all night with him engaged in conversation ; and always after, when holding court at Bath, sent for the hunter, provided for him at the hotel, and passed in his company a great part of his time off the bench.

Mr. Patterson was born in London county, in the State of Virginia, in the year 1759, and died in 1830, at Painted Post, having been for the last thirty-five years of his life a citizen of this county. His mother was a cousin of Daniel Boone, the first of the Kentuckians. Early in life he removed with the family of

his step-father to Pennsylvania, and passed the greater part of his youth in that State, though living for a time again in Virginia. It was on the Susquehanna frontiers that his hunting tastes were formed and developed.

During the Revolutionary war he served in a rifle-corps, organized for the defence of the borders, and in this perilous service met with many adventures. At the skirmish of Freeling's Fort, in 1779, he and his younger brother Robert (who afterwards was also a citizen of this county) fought in the party of Captain Hawkins Boone, and narrowly escaped with their lives. Freeling's Fort, on the West Branch of the Susquehanna, had been taken by a party of Tories and Indians, the former under the command of McDonald, a noted loyalist of Tryon county, in New York, and the latter led by Hiakattoo (the husband of Mary Jemison "the white woman.") Captain Boone's party of thirty-two volunteered to scout in the neighborhood of the captured fort, and to attack the enemy if it could be advantageously done. They advanced cautiously, and succeeded in concealing themselves in a cluster of bushes overlooking the camp of the enemy. Both tories and Indians were engaged in cooking or eating, while a single sentinel, a fine tall savage, with a blanket drawn over his head, walked slowly to and fro. Boone's men commenced firing by platoons of six. The sentry sprang into the air with a whoop and fell dead. The enemy yelling frightfully ran to arms and opened a furious but random fire at their unseen foes. Their bullets



rattled through the bushes where Boone's men lay hid, but did no mischief. The slaughter of Indians and Tories was dreadful. The thirty-two rangers firing coolly and rapidly by sixes, with the unerring aim of frontiersmen, shot down one hundred and fifty (so the story runs) before the enemy broke and fled. Boone's men, with strange indiscretion, rushed from their covert in pursuit, and immediately exposed their weakness of numbers. Hiakatoo with his Indians made a circuit, and attacked them in the rear, while McDonald turned upon their front. They were surrounded. "Save yourselves men as you can," cried Captain Boone. The enemy closed with tomahawks and spears. This part of the fight occurred in the midst of the woods. The rangers broke through their foes, and fled with such success that many escaped, but their captain and more than half of his men were killed. Robert Patterson, who was very swift of foot, was followed several miles to the clearings of another fort by three or four fleet Indians. Seeing that he would escape from them, his pursuers reserved their fire till he should clamber over the fence which enclosed the clearing, when they might aim at him with greater certainty than while he was running through the woods. He however sprang to the top rail at a bound and escaped. The bullets struck the wood just under his feet. Benjamin Patterson, in the meantime, had hidden himself under a log overgrown with vines or briars. The Indians ransacked the woods all around, and passed so near his hiding place that he could touch their moccasins with his ramrod. Many times he

thought himself discovered, and was on the point of springing forth to die fighting, but the Indians gradually wandered away from his vicinity. The last straggler returning from the pursuit carried the dripping scalp of the only red-haired man in the party, which he was twirling around his finger with great delight. "I was strongly tempted to shoot that fellow," said Patterson, but on reflecting that the main body of the Indians was not distant, he thought it prudent to deny himself that pleasure. At night he escaped to Boone's Fort.

The enemy re-took the prisoners of Freeling's Fort, and carried away many captives to Niagara. Patterson, in a company of rangers, pursued. They believed that the Indians had a great many wounded with them, for at the deserted encampments bushels of slippery-elm bark were found, which had been pounded in preparing draughts and dressings.\* The enemy struck over from Pine Creek to the Tioga, and passed up the valley of the Conhocton to Niagara.

Patterson was engaged throughout the war in the perilous frontier-services; sometimes scouting with the wary and fearless captains of the borders; sometimes skirmishing in the forests; sometimes devising plots

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\* Captain Montour, the chief who was buried at the Painted Post, was in McDonald's band, and died from wounds received at Freeling's or Freeland's Fort. He was said to be a son of Queen Catherine of Seneca Lake. There is no detailed account of this skirmish in any accessible book with which to compare Patterson's story. It is briefly alluded to in the biographies of Brant and Van Campen, the only authorities at hand.

and counter plots against the secret and wise foes who hid in the dark places of the wilderness, and came and went like the lightning. At the close of the war he was at liberty to give himself up to his roving and hunting propensities. He explored the region north of the West Branch, passed up through the Genesee country, spied out the land, and guided emigrants, travellers and adventurers through the woods; shooting always wherever he went. He was the guide of Talleyrand in an excursion through the wild country, and at a later period piloted another French gentleman for many weeks around the wilderness. The latter was agent for a company of French emigrants, then residing at Philadelphia, who desired to make a settlement in some choice place on the outside of civilization. The Frenchman was a merry companion, and took to wild life with a good grace. With a negro servant he followed the hunter over a great extent of country, learning to swim and shoot, bathing in the lakes, sleeping on the ground, and learning backwoods science with much zeal. The emigrants, it is said, were sadly taken in by the land speculators who sold them at a great price, an armful of mountains not worth eighteen pence.

The hunter's home was for many years on the West Branch, near Northumberland. After the war, the region thereabout began to be overrun to a destructive rate with farmers, who laid waste the homes of the bear and the wolf with the most sickening barbarity. The forests were again and again decimated, till his old hunting grounds, disfigured with wheat fields, corn

fields and potato fields, presented a melancholy scene of devastation. The wild beasts quite lost heart, and began to retire to deeper solitudes, and the hunter determined to remove his household elsewhere, into a land as yet unmolested by plowmen and wood-choppers. In the year 1796, he boated his goods up the river to Painted Post, and kept for seven years the old tavern at Knoxville. At the end of that time, he moved up on the farm now occupied by one of his sons, two miles above the village of Painted Post, on the Tioga. It was quite a productive farm, yielding a crop of twenty-two wolves, nine panthers, bears a few, besides deer, shad and salmon uncounted.

He was of medium stature, and squarely built. When in his prime, he possessed great strength and activity, and was famed as "a very smart man." He never encountered a man who got the better of him in a scuffle. His acquaintance with the famous interpreter, Horatio Jones,\* commenced in true frontier chivalry. A party of Indians, with a few white men, had gathered around a camp-fire near the Genesee, when for some reason, the savages began to insult and abuse an individual who was standing by. At length they threw him into the fire. The man scrambled out. The Indians again seized him and threw him into the fire. Patterson, who stood near, a perfect stranger to the company, sprang forward, saying to the tormentors "Don't burn the man alive!" and dragged him off the

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\* A Pennsylvanian. Taken prisoner by the Indians when eighteen years of age; he became, for his courage, strength and spirit, a favorite with his captors, and gained great influence over them.

burning logs. Two or three of this genial party, displeased at the interruption of their diversions, immediately assaulted the hunter, but relinquished the honor of whipping him to Jones, who stepped forward to settle the affair in person. Jones was also famed as a "smart man," being powerful, well skilled in athletic sports, and able to maintain his authority over the Indians by strength of arm. Before the fight had lasted many minutes, the savages standing around began to whisper in their own language, "He has got his match this time," with perhaps some little satisfaction, for the Interpreter used a rod of iron, and sometimes banded his people about without ceremony. Jones was badly beaten, and kept his wigwam for several days. At the trial of the Indians, Sundown and Curly-eye, at Bath, in 1825, (or about that time,) Jones, who was present as interpreter, laughed heartily over the matter, and sent his compliments to the old hunter.

He was of course a crack shot, and carried a rifle which killed where vulgar guns smoked in vain. In one of his excursions with Capt. Williamson, he found a wild ox roving over the vast Genesee Flats, which, by his sagacity and swiftness, baffled all the efforts of the Indians to destroy him. This beast was the last of several domestic oxen, which at times strayed to these marvellous meadows, and became wild as buffaloes. They lived like the cattle of Eden in the luxurious pasture of the flats during the summer, and in the winter by thrusting their noses through the snow, ate the frozen grass below, and sustained life quite

comfortably. All had been slain but the one which was now grazing in that great field, and his faculties had been so sharpened by the relapse to barbarism, that it was quite impossible for even the craft of the Indians to circumvent him. His scent was almost as keen as the elk's ; his eyesight was so quick and suspicious, that before the red men could skulk within gunshot of him, he shook his great white horns and raced off through the high grass like an antelope. Capt. Williamson charged Patterson to lay low the head of this famous beast. The hunter crept along carefully while the ox was grazing, and when it raised its head and stared around the plain to discern an enemy, lay flat in the grass. Either his patience or his skill was greater than that of the Indians, for he completely out-generalled the wary animal, got within fair shooting range of it, fired and brought it down. The savages set up a great whooping, and crowded around the fallen ox as though it were a horned horse, or a sea-elephant. One of his noble horns, suitably carved and ornamented, afterwards hung at the hunter's side as a powder-horn.

He preserved in his old age all the characteristics of the hunter, and always found his chief pleasures in the vigorous pursuits to which his youth had been devoted. When attending court at Bath, as a juryman, he was in the habit of going out in the morning, before any body was stirring, to the little lake, east of the village, and shooting a deer before breakfast. It is to be regretted that the reminiscences we have collected of this far-known character, and recorded in this and

in succeeding chapters of this volume, are so scanty. More of the thousand tales, which he told of the "old times" to boys and neighbors and travellers, might doubtless be gathered even yet; but had they been taken from his own lips in his lifetime, they would have formed a volume of reminiscence and adventure of rare interest. There would have been, besides, a gain in accuracy; for what we have collected were told twenty or thirty years ago to youngsters. Whatever was told by the old hunter himself was to be relied upon, for he was carefully and strictly truthful.

## CHAPTER III.

THE SETTLEMENTS MADE UNDER THE PURCHASE BY  
PHELPS AND GORHAM—PAINTED POST—THE FIRST  
SETTLER—THE SETTLEMENT OF THE UPPER VALLEY  
OF THE CANISTEO—THE CANISTEO FLATS—LIFE  
IN THE VALLEY—A WRESTLING MATCH—CAPTAIN  
JOHN—OLD ENEMIES—MAJOR VAN CAMPEN AND  
MOHAWK—A DISCOMFITED SAVAGE—CAPTURE OF A  
SAW-MILL—THE LOWER CANISTEO VALLEY—COL.  
LINDLY—A DEER-SLAYER IMMORTALIZED.

### THE OLD TOWN OF PAINTED POST.

IN the summer of 1779, a numerous party of Tories and Indians, under the command of a Loyalist named McDonald and Hiakatoo, a renowned Seneca war-chief, returned to the north by way of Pine creek, the Tioga, and the Conhocton, from an incursion among the settlements on the west branch of the Susquehanna. They had suffered a severe loss in a conflict with the borderers, and brought with them many wounded. Their march was also encumbered by many prisoners, men, women and children, taken at Freeling's Fort. A party of rangers followed them a few days, journeying into the wilderness, and found at their abandoned encampment abundant proof of the manfulness with which



the knives and rifles of the frontier had been used in repelling its foes, in the heaps of bark and roots which had been pounded or steeped in preparing draughts and dressings for the wounded warriors. Under the elms of the confluence of the Tioga and Conhocton, Captain Montour, a half-breed, a fine young chief, a gallant warrior and a favorite with his tribe, died of his wounds. He was a son of the famous Queen Catharine. His comrades buried him by the river side, and planted above his grave a post on which was painted various symbols and rude devices. This monument was known throughout the Genesee Forest as the Painted Post. It was a landmark well known to all the Six Nations, and was often visited by their braves and chieftains.\*

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\* This account of the origin of the Painted Post was given to Benjamin Patterson, the Hunter, by a man named Taggart, who was carried to Fort Niagara a prisoner by McDonald's party, and was a witness of the burial of Captain Montour, or at least was in the encampment at the mouth of the Tioga at the time of his death. Col. Harper, of Harpersfield, the well known officer of the frontier militia of New York in the Revolution, informed Judge Knox, of Knoxville in this county, that the Painted Post was erected over the grave of a chief who was wounded at the battle of the Hog-back, and brought in a canoe to the head of the Chemung, where he died. At all events it was well understood by the early settlers, that this monument was erected in memory of some distinguished warrior who had been wounded in one of the border battles of the Revolution, and afterwards died at this place. The post stood for many years after the settlement of the county, and the story goes that it rotted down at the butt, and was preserved in the bar-room of a tavern till about the year 1810, and then disappeared unaccountably. It is also said to have been swept away in a freshet.

At the Painted Post, the first habitation of civilized man erected in Steuben county, was built by William Harris, an Indian Trader. Harris was a Pennsylvanian, and not long after the close of the Revolutionary war pushed up the Chemung with a cargo of Indian goods, to open a traffic with the hunting parties of the Six Nations, which resorted at certain seasons to the northwestern branches of the Susquehanna. A canoe or a pack-horse sufficed at that time to transport the yearly merchandise of the citizens of our county. Sixty-five years afterwards, an armada of canal boats and a caravan of cars hardly performed this labor. The precise date of Harris's arrival is unknown. Judge Baker, late of Pleasant Valley, found the trader established at his post in the spring of 1787. On Christmas night following, he went down to the Painted Post, and finding the cabin burned and the trader missing, he inferred that the latter had perhaps been killed by his customers—a disaster by no means unlikely to befall a merchant in a region where the position of debtor was much more pleasant and independent than that of creditor, especially if the creditor had the misfortune to be white and civilized. Harris, however, had met with no calamity. On the contrary, his intercourse with the Indians was of a very friendly and confidential character. They rendered him much valuable assistance in setting up business, not of course by endorsing his paper, or advancing funds on personal security; but by helping him to erect his warehouse, and patronising him in the handsomest manner afterwards. They even carried the logs out of which the cabin was

built, on their shoulders, to the proposed site of the edifice, which was after all, to speak with strict etymology, a species of endorsement.

The savages manifested much zeal in promoting the establishment of a trading post at the head of the Chemung, and indeed it was a matter of as much consequence at that time as the building of a Railroad Depot is in modern days. Before that, the citizens of the county were obliged to go to Tioga Point, nearly fifty miles below, to buy their gunpowder, liquors, knives, bells, brads, and jews-harps; and the proposal of Harris to erect a bazaar at the Painted Post, for the sale of these articles, was as vital concern to the interests of the county as at the present day an offer of the government to establish a university in Tyrone or an observatory in Troupsburg would be. It was a great day for the county when the trader's cabin was finished, and his wares unpacked. Then the sachem might buy scalping knives and hatchets on the bank of his own river; the ladies of the wilderness could go shopping without paddling their canoes to the Susquehanna, and the terrible warriors of the Six Nations, as they sat of an evening under their own elm trees, smoking pipes bought at the "People's Store," hard by, forgot their cunning; when some renowned Captain Shiverscull, a grim and truculent giant, steeped to his elbows in the blood of farmers, and scarred with bullets and tomahawks like a target, sat upon a log, soothing his savage breast with the melodies of a jews-harp, or winding around that bloody finger, which had so often been twisted in the flaxen scalp-locks of Penn-

sylvanian children, a string of beads, bought for his own ugly little cub, that lay asleep in the wigwam of Genesee.

At the time of Judge Baker's visit, Harris was only temporarily absent. He afterwards returned to Painted Post with his son, and lived there a few years, when he again removed to Pennsylvania. One or two others are sometimes pointed out as the first settlers of the county; but evidence, which must be regarded as reliable and decisive, proves that the first civilized resident was William Harris. It is possible, indeed, that before his advent some straggling adventurer may have wandered hither, built him a lodge, perhaps planted corn on the open flats, and afterwards strayed to parts unknown, leaving no trace of his existence. There have always been, on the frontiers, eccentric geniuses, to whom such a line of conduct was no strange thing. There have always been, on the frontiers, a few vagabonds, who should have been born wolves, who forsake civilized homes and join the Indians, and are only hindered from living with the bears in their hollow trees, by the refusal of these sensible monsters to fraternize with such loafers. Hermits, hunters and vagabonds find their way into strange places, and it is by no means impossible that some pleasant island or open flat may have harbored one of these outlaws before any other wanderer, laying claim to civilization, smote our forests with the all-conquering axe. No such Robinson Crusoe, however, presents himself as a candidate for historical honors, and it is, upon the whole, improbable that any such preceded the trader, or if he

did, that he enjoyed his solitude a great while unmolested. The "Man Friday" he would have been likely to catch here would most probably have caught *him*, and whisked his scalp off without winking.

Harris was a trader, and did not cultivate the soil. Frederick Calkins, a Vermonter, was the first farmer of Steuben. He made his settlement near the head of the Chimney Narrows, in 1788. After living there alone for a time, he returned to the east for his family. During this absence, Phelps and Gorham's surveyors made head-quarters at Painted Post, which accounts for the omission of his name in Judge Porter's narrative, quoted in the last chapter. George Goodhue followed Mr. Calkins in a year or two.

Township number two in the second range, was purchased of Phelps and Gorham, in 1790, by six proprietors, Frederick Calkins, Justus Wolcott, of Eastern New York, Ephraim Patterson, of Connecticut, Silas Wood, Caleb Gardener and Peleg Gorton. The price paid for the township was eight cents per acre.

The old town of Painted Post comprised the present towns of Hornby, Campbell, Erwin, Painted Post, Cation and Lindley. The earliest settlers along the Chemung and Conhocton were the six proprietors (excepting Silas Wood), Eli and Eldad Mead, (1790,) David and Jonathan Cook, of New Jersey, (1790,) Judge Knox, of Eastern New York, (1793,) Benjamin Eaton, Elias Williams, Henry McCormick, Hezekiah Thurber, Bradford Eggleston, Samuel Colegrove, John Berry and others. John Winters, a famous hunter, set-

tled there at an early day, and families named Rowan, Waters, Van Wye, Turner, McCullick, &c.

Mr. Eli Mead was the first Supervisor of the town, and went on foot to Canandaigua, to attend the meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Ontario county.

Gen. McClure, speaking of the early settlers of that neighborhood, mentions "a man by the name of Fuller, who kept the old Painted Post Hotel. That ancient house of entertainment, or tavern (as such were then called) was composed of round logs, one story high, and if I mistake not was divided into two apartments. This house was well patronized by its neighbors as by travellers from afar. All necessarily stopped here for refreshment, as well for themselves as for their horses. Fuller, the landlord, was a good natured, slow and easy kind of a man, but his better half, Nelly, was a thorough-going, smart, good-looking woman, and was much admired by gentlemen generally. To the wearied traveller, nothing can be more agreeable than a pleasant, obliging landlady. There were other respectable families settled at Painted Post, not many years after, (1794,) Thomas McBurney, Esq., Capt. Samuel Erwin, Frank and Arthur, his brothers, Capt. Howell Bull, John E. Evans, an Englishman, and others."

A mill was built on the Post Creek, near the Narrows, by Mr. Payne and Col. Henderson, as early as 1793 or 1794. This mill is described by the few who remember it, as having been mainly built of logs "so that you could drive a pig through it."

The first establishment, for the sale of goods to ci-

vilized men, was kept by Benjamin Eaton. He went for his first stock to Wattles' Ferry (now Unadilla village) in a canoe, with a man and a boy, (Mr. Samuel Cook, of Campbelltown.) At that place he purchased another canoe, loaded his fleet with goods and returned to Painted Post.

Col. Arthur Erwin, the ancestor of a large family bearing his name, emigrated from Ireland before the Revolution. During the war he served in the American army. He resided in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and became the proprietor of a large landed estate. He was shot dead through the window of a log house at Tioga Point, in 1792, by an ejected squatter, who escaped.

Hon. William Steele, a well known and highly respected citizen of Painted Post, removed from New Jersey in 1819. He served in the war of the Revolution, and was severely wounded and made prisoner at sea in 1780. In 1785 he was appointed clerk in the old Board of Treasury, and in 1794 he commanded a troop of horse and aided in suppressing the insurrection near Pittsburgh. He died in 1851. (*Obituary notice in Corning Journal.*)

#### THE SETTLEMENT OF THE UPPER VALLEY OF THE CANISTEO.

A party of boatmen attached to General Sullivan's army in the invasion of the Genesee in 1779, while awaiting in the Chemung River the return of their commander and his column from the north, pushed up

the river as far as the Painted Post, out of curiosity to know how the land lay on the northwestern branches of the Susquehanna. Among the soldiers of Sullivan was Uriah Stephens, Jr., a Pennsylvanian. He believing, from the report of the boatmen, that some fertile flat might lie among those northern hills where frontiersmen, not bountifully provided for in the lower valleys, might found settlements and thrive for a time on venison and hominy, determined after the war to seek such a place and to emigrate thither.

Mr. Stephens belonged to a numerous family of New England descent, which had settled at an early day in the Wyoming region; and they, with other families which afterwards joined them in the settlement of the Upper Canisteo, suffered in the attack of the Indians and Tories on that ill-fated district in 1778. One of the oldest surviving members of the family was carried in the arms of a neighbor (James Hadley, also a settler of Canisteo,) from the farm to the fort, and though almost an infant at the time retains distinctly the impression made by the night alarm, the terror, the flight and the confusion. The wife of Col. John Stephens, a late well-known citizen, was once captured by a party of savages, and in the skirmish and rescue which ensued upon the pursuit of her captors by the border-men (one account says at the battle of the Hog-back) was wounded by a rifle ball fired by one of her friends. The Stephens', after several removals from Wysox, Queen Esther's Flats, and other localities, were living, in the fourth or fifth year after the close of the Revolutionary War, at Newtown.



Several families, relatives and acquaintance, were found willing to engage in the enterprise of further emigration. In 1788, Solomon Bennet, Capt. John Jameson, Uriah Stephens, and Richard Crosby, started upon an exploration. Passing up the Chemung to Painted Post, they found there a few cabins, a half a dozen settlers, and Saxton and Porter, the surveyors of Phelps and Gorham. Penetrating further into the north by way of the Conhocton Valley, they found no lands which satisfied their expectations. On their return they struck across the hills from the upper waters of the Conhocton, and after toiling through the dense forests which crowded the shattered region to the westward of that river, they came suddenly upon the brink of a deep and fine valley through which the Canisteo rambled, in a crooked channel marked by the elms and willows which overhung it. The prospect was singularly beautiful. The huge barriers of the valley laden with that noble timber which raftsmen for half a century have been floating through the cataracts of the Susquehanna, ran in precipitous parallels at a generous distance for several miles and then closing in, granted the river for its passage but a narrow gorge made dark by hemlocks. A heavy forest covered the floor of the valley. Groves of gigantic pine stood with their deep green tops in the midst of the maples, the elms, and the white sycamores. So even was the surface of the vale, so abrupt and darkly-shaded the ranges that enclosed it, that the explorers, looking down upon the tree tops that covered the ground from hill to hill, seemed to be standing above a lake of timber. At the

lower part of the valley there was an open flat, of several hundred acres, overgrown with wild grass so high that a horse and rider could pass through the meadow almost unseen. It was like a little prairie, beautiful indeed, but strangely out of place in that rugged region,—as if some great Indian prophet had stolen a choice fragment from the hunting grounds of the Missouri and hidden it in the midst of mountains bristling with gloomy hemlocks.

The explorers decided to purchase the two townships on the river, which included the open flats. Eight other men joined in the purchase: Col. Arthur Urwin, Joel Thomas, Uriah Stephens, (father of Uriah Stephens, Jr.,) John Stephens, his son, William Winecoop, James Hadley, Elisha Brown and Christian Kress.

In the summer of 1789, a company of men were sent to the flats, who cut and stacked a sufficient quantity of wild grass to winter the cattle that were to be driven on. In the autumn of the same year, Uriah Stephens, the elder, and Richard Crosby, with portions of their families, started from Newtown to begin the proposed settlement. The provisions, baggage and families were carried up in seven-ton boats, while four sons of Mr. Stephens, Elias, Elijah, Benjamin and William, drove along the shore the cattle belonging to the two families in the boats, and to four other families which were to join them in the spring. From the mouth of the Canisteo to the upper flats, the movement was tedious and toilsome. Frequent rifts were to be ascended, and the channel was often to be cleared of ob-

structions, the trunks of trees and dams of drift-wood. On one day, they made but six miles. However, as the destinies, after forty centuries of hesitation, had decided that Upper Canisteo must be civilized, all obstacles were steadily surmounted. At the rifts, where the nose of the unwieldy boat, plowing under the water, at last wheeled about in spite of setting poles and swearing, and went down again to the foot of the rapids, every human thing that could pull, went on shore, took hold of a long rope, and hauled the barge up by main force. Thus for some three days the pioneers of Canisteo toiled up the hostile current, probably not without some little noise, as the shouting of boatmen, or the bawling of the youths on shore at the stragglng cattle, which sometimes got entangled in the willow thickets by the little river, sometimes scrambled up the hill sides, sometimes stopped, shaking their horns in affright, when the wolf or fox bounded across the trail, or came racing back in paroxysms of terror, making the gorge to resound with strange bel-lowings, when they suddenly met the ugly and growling bear, sitting like a foot-pad upon his haunches in the middle of the path, and so near to their unsuspecting nostrils, that he might cuff the face of the forward bul-lock with his paw, before the startled cattle became aware that they had ventured into the lurking-place of the shaggy brigand.

At length the persevering voyagers landed on the upper flats. The astonished cattle found themselves almost smothered in the herbage of the meadows. The first thing to be devised was, of course, a habitation.

The bark hut of the savage was the only structure which the wilderness had yet beheld, and was undoubtedly a sufficient house for cannibals or philosophers ; but the pioneers, who were neither the former nor the latter, went straightway into the woods, cut down certain trees, and built a luxurious castle of logs, 26 feet long by 24 wide. There was but one room below. Four fire-places were excavated in the four corners, and they who know what caverns fire-places were in old times, can imagine the brilliant appearance of this Canisteo Castle at night, through the winter, when the blaze of burning logs in all the furnaces filled the cabin with light, and glimmering through the crevices, was seen by the Indian as he walked by on the crackling crust of the snow toward his lodge in the woods. In the following spring a family was encamped before each of the fire-places, and occupied each its own territory with as much good humour as if divided from the others by stone walls and gates of brass.

The two families passed here the first winter very comfortably. In the spring of 1790 they were joined by Solomon Bennet, Uriah Stephens, Jr., and Colonel John Stephens his brother, with their families. As soon as the weather permitted, they set about preparing the ground for seed. Although the flat was free from timber, this was no trifling task. The roots of the gigantic wild grass, braided and tangled together below the surface, protected the earth against the plow with a net so tight and stout, that ordinary means of breaking the soil failed entirely. Four yoke of oxen

forced the coulter through this well-woven netting, and the snapping and tearing of the roots as they gave way before the strength of eight healthy beeves was heard to a considerable distance, like the ripping of a mat. The settlers never learned the origin of these meadows. "Captain John the Indian" said that he knew nothing of their origin; they were cleared "before the time of his people." After the frosts, when the herbage had become dry and crisp, the grass was set on fire, and a very pretty miniature of a prairie-on-fire it made. The flames flashed over the flats almost as over a floor strewn with gunpowder. A swift horse could not keep before them. The wild grass, by successive mowings and burning, became less rank and more nutritious. In time it gradually changed to "tame grass," and at the present day there are meadows on the Canisteo which have never been broken by the plow.

After the sowing of Spring wheat and the planting of the corn, the settlers constructed a log fence on a scale as magnificent, considering their numbers, as that of the Chinese wall. This ponderous battlement enclosed nearly four hundred acres of land. The flats were divided among the proprietors. From the present site of Bennetsville down to the next township, a distance of about six miles, twelve lots were laid out from hill to hill across the valley, and assigned by lot to the several proprietors. The lot upon which the first house was built is known as the "Bennet" or "Pumpelly farm." That part of it upon which the house stood is upon the farm of Mr. Jacob Doty. In

the course of the same spring (1790) Jedediah Stephens, John Redford, and Andrew Bennet settled in the neighborhood. Jedediah Stephens, afterwards well known to the citizens of the county, was a faithful and respected preacher of the Baptist denomination. His house was for many years the resort of missionaries and religious travellers who passed through the valley, and indeed was said to be one of the few places where pilgrims of a serious disposition, and not inclined to join the boisterous company of the neighborhood, could find lodgings entirely to their satisfaction.

The harvest abundantly attested the fertility of the valley. Seventy or seventy-five bushels of corn were yielded to the acre. Indeed, the timbered flats have been known to yield seventy-five bushels of corn, planted with the hoe after logging. They sent their grain in canoes to Shepherd's Mill, on the Susquehanna, a short distance above Tioga Point, and nearly one hundred miles distant from Canisteeo.

A few random notes of the settlement of this neighborhood may be added. Solomon Bennet was one of its leading spirits. He was a hunter of renown, and bequeathed his skill and good fortune to his sons, who became well known citizens of the county, and were famous for readiness with the knife and rifle, and for "perhaps some shallow spirit of judgment" (or better) touching traps. Mr. Bennet built, in 1793, the first grist mill on the Canisteeo. It stood (and also a saw-mill we are told) on Bennet's creek, about half a mile from its mouth. It stood but a year or two when it was, unfortunately, burned to the ground. This mill

was resorted to sometimes by the citizens of Bath. Early settlers remember how the pioneer boys came over the hills, through the unbroken woods, with their ox-drays, and retain vividly the image of a distinguished settler who came over from the Pine Plains with "his little brown mare and a sheepskin to ride upon" after a bag of corn-meal to keep off starvation. Flour was sometimes sent by canoes down the Canisteo and up the Conhocton. After the burning of the mill, the settlers were again compelled to send their grain in canoes to Shepherd's Mill. Mr. Bennet went to New York to purchase machinery for a new mill, but became engaged in other business, and failed to minister to the urgent necessity of his neighbors. George Hornell (afterwards well known as Judge Hornell) settled in Canisteo in 1793. He was induced to build a mill on the site now occupied by the present Hornellsville Mills. So impatient were the settlers for the erection of the building, that they turned out and prepared the timber for it voluntarily.

The first goods were sold by Solomon Bennet. Judge Hornell and William Dunn visited the neighborhood at an early day for trade with the Indians. James McBurney, of Ireland, first came to Canisteo as a pedler. He bought Great Lot, No. 12, in the lower township of Bennet, and other lands; went to Ireland, and upon his return settled some of his countrymen on his lands.

Christopher Hulburt and Nathaniel Cary settled in 1795 at Arkport. The former ran, in 1800 or about that time, the first ark laden with wheat that descend-

ed the Canisteo, and about the same time John Morrison ran the first raft. The honor of piloting the first craft of the kind out of the Canisteo, however, is also claimed for Benjamin Patterson.

Dr. Nathan Hallett, Jeremiah Baker, Daniel Purdy, Oliver Harding, Thomas Butler, J. Russelman, the Upsons, the Stearns, and the Dykes also were among the earliest settlers on the upper Canisteo.

The first taverns were kept in the year 1800, or about that time, by Judge Hornell, at his mills, and by Jedediah Stephens below Bennet's Creek. The first house in Hornellsville stood upon the site of Mr Hugh Magee's Hotel.

Under the old organization of the County of Ontario, the settlement of Canisteo was in the town of Williamson, which comprised a large part of what is now Western Steuben County, Allegany County, and how much more we know not. Jedediah Stephens was the first Supervisor of that town, and attended the meeting of the Board at Canandaigua. Town meeting was held at the house of Uriah Stephens, and seven votes were cast.

Solomon Bennet is said by the settlers of Canisteo to have been the Captain. John Stephens, the lieutenant, and Richard Crosby the ensign of the first military company organized in Steuben County.

A large proportion of the first settlers of Canisteo were from Pennsylvania, and had within them a goodly infusion of that boisterous spirit and love of rough play for which the free and manly sons of the backwoods are everywhere famous. On the Susquehannh



frontier, before the Revolution, had arisen an athletic scuffling wrestling race, lovers of hard blows, sharpshooters and runners, who delighted in nothing more than in those ancient sports by which the backs and limbs of all stout-hearted youth have been tested since the days of Hercules. The eating of bears, the drinking of grog, the devouring of hominy, venison, and all the invigorating diet of the frontiers; the hewing down of forests, the paddling of canoes, the fighting of savages, all combined to form a generation of yeomen and foresters, daring, rude and free. Canisteo was a sprout from this stout stock, and on the generous river-flats flourished with amazing vigor.

Life there was decidedly Olympic. The old Pythian games were revived with an energy that would have almost put a soul into the bones of Pindar; and although many of the details of those classic festivals upon which the schoolmasters dwell with especial delight were wanting—the odes, the crowns of oak, the music, and so on—nevertheless, one cannot help thinking that for the primitive boxers and sportsmen of the old school, men who wore lions' hides and carried clubs, the horse-play of Canisteo would have been quite as entertaining as the flutes and doggerel of Delphi. Every thing that could eat, drink and wrestle, was welcome; Turk or Tuscarora, Anak, or Anthropophagus, Blue Beard or Blunderbore. A "back-hold" with a Ghoul would not have been declined, nor a drinking match with a Berserkir. Since the Centaurs never has there been better specimen of a "half-horse" tribe. To many of the settlers

in other parts of the county who emigrated from the decorous civilization of the east and south, these boisterous foresters were objects of astonishment. When "Canisteer" went abroad, the public soon found it out. On the Conhocton they were known to some as the *Six-Nations*, and to the amusement and wonder of young Europeans, would sometimes visit at Bath, being of a social disposition, and sit all day, "singing, telling stories and drinking grog, and never get drunk nayther." To the staid and devout they were Arabs,—cannibals. Intercourse between the scattered settlements of the county was of course limited mainly to visits of necessity; but rumor took the fair fame of Canisteo in hand, and gave the settlement a notoriety through all the land, which few "rising villages" even of the present day enjoy. It was pretty well understood over all the country that beyond the mountains of Steuben, in the midst of the most rugged district of the wilderness, lay a corn-growing valley which had been taken possession of by some vociferous tribe, whether of Mamelukes or Tartars no one could precisely say; whose whooping and obstreperous laughter was heard far and wide, surprising the solitudes.

The "Romans of the West" were not long in finding out these cousins, and many a rare riot they had with them. The uproars of these festivals beggar description. The valley seemed a den of maniacs. The savages came down four or five times in each year from Squakie Hill for horse and foot-racing, and to play all manner of rude sports. In wrestling, or in "rough-and-tumble" they were not matches for the

settlers, many of whom were proficient in the Susquehanna sciences, and had been regularly trained in all the wisdom of the ancients. The Indians were powerful of frame and of good stature. The settlers agree that "they were quick as cats, but the poor critters had no system." When fairly grappled, the Indians generally came off second best. They were slippery and "limber like snakes," oiling themselves freely, and were so adroit in squirming out of the clinch of the farmers, that it was by no means the most trifling part of the contest to keep the red antagonist in the hug.

In these wrestling matches, Elias Stephens was the champion. He was called the "smartest Stephens on the river," and was in addition claimed by his friends as the "smartest" man in the country at large. No Indian in the Six Nations could lay him on his back. A powerful young chief was once brought by his tribe from Tonewanta to test the strength of the Canisteo Champion. He had been carefully trained and exercised, and after "sleeping in oiled blankets" for several nights, was brought into the ring. Stephens grappled with him. At the first round the chief was hurled to the ground with a thigh-bone broken. His backers were very angry, and, drawing their knives, threatened to kill the victor. He and his friend Daniel Upson, took each a sled-stake and standing back to back defied them. The matter was finally made up, and the unlucky chief was borne away on a deer-skin, stretched between two poles.\* In addition to this, Stephens

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\* Stephens was trained by a wrestler of some note living on the

once maintained the credit of the Canisteo by signally discomfiting a famous wrestler from the Hog-back.

Foot races, long and short, for rods or miles, were favorite diversions. In these the Indians met with better success than in wrestling; but even in racing they did not maintain the credit of their nation to their entire satisfaction, for there was now and then a long-winded youth among the settlers who beat the barbarians at their own game. So for horse-racing, this ancient and heroic pastime was carried on with a zeal that would shame Newmarket. The Indians came down on these occasions with all their households, women, children, dogs and horses. The settlers found no occasion to complain of their savage guests. They conducted themselves with civility, generally, and even formed in some instances, warm friendships with their hosts.

Infant Canisteo of course followed in the footsteps of senior Canisteo. When fathers and big brothers

Chemung named McCormick, who afterward was for many years a citizen of this county. McCormick was a British soldier, and reputed to be the most powerful and expert pugilist in the army. He deserted during the Revolutionary war and went with Arnold to Quebec. After the failure of the desperate assault on that town, McCormick, with a party of American soldiers, were standing on the ice of the St. Lawrence when the British approached to make them prisoners. Knowing that the deserter would be hanged, if taken, his comrades gathered around him in a huddle, pretending to prepare resistance. The British parlied. In the mean time McCormick pulled off his shoes, for "the ice was as smooth as a bottle," and ran. A shower of bullets rattled around him, but he was so fortunate as to escape unhurt. Captain Silas Wheeler, late of the town of Wheeler, was in that crowd, and gives McCormick the credit of extraordinary briskness.

found delight in scuffling with barbarians, and in racing with Indian ponies, it would have been strange if infant Canisteo had taken of its own accord to Belles Lettres, and Arithmetic. The strange boy found himself in a den of young bears. He was promptly required to fight, and after such an introduction to the delights of the valley, was admitted to freedom of trap and fishery in all the streams and forests of the commonwealth. And for infant Canisteo, considering that passion for wild life which plays the mischief with boys everywhere, even in the very ovens of refinement, a more congenial region could not have been found. The rivers and brooks alive with fish, the hills stocked with deer, the groves populous with squirrels, the partridges drumming in the bushes, the raccoons scrambling in the tree-tops, removed every temptation to run away in search of a solitary island and a man Friday; while their little ill-tempered Iroquois playfellows, with their arrow-practice, their occasional skirmishes, and their mimic war-paths, satisfied those desires to escape from school to the Rocky Mountains and the society of grizzly bears and Camanches, which so often turn the heads of youngsters nurtured in the politest of academies.

This backwoods mode of education, though by no means so exquisite as our modern systems, has proved nevertheless quite efficient for practical purposes. The boys who in early times played with the heathen and persecuted raccoons, instead of learning their grammars have, astonishing to see, become neither pagans nor idiots. Some have become farmers, some lumber-

men, some supervisors, and some justices of the peace; and whether in the field or in the saw-mill, whether in the county's august parliament, or in the chair of the magistrate, the duties of all those stations seem to have been performed substantially as well as needs be. For the Robin Hoods of Canisteo could plow, mow, and fell trees, if need be, as well as the best, and did not hold laziness in higher respect than did the other pioneers of the county.

The Indians made their appearance shortly after the landing of the settlers—the Canisteo Valley having long been a favorite hunting field. The men of Wyoming found among them many of their old antagonists. Tories never were forgiven, but the proffered friendship of the Indians was accepted: old enmities were forgotten, and the settlers and savages lived together on the most amicable terms. Shortly after their arrival, an old Indian, afterwards well known as “Captain John,” made his appearance, and on seeing the elder Stephens, went into a violent fit of merriment. Language failed to express the cause of his amusement, which seemed to be some absurd reminiscence suddenly suggested by the sight of the settler, and the old “Roman” resorted to pantomime. He imitated the gestures of a man smoking—putting his hand to his mouth to withdraw an imaginary pipe, then turning up his mouth and blowing an imaginary cloud of smoke, then stooping to tie an imaginary shoe, then taking an imaginary boy in his arms and running away, and returning with violent peals of laughter. One of the sons of Mr. Stephens, a hot and athletic youth, supposing that the

Indian was "making fun" of his father, snatched up a pounder to knock him on the head. Captain John was driven from the ideal to the real, and made good his retreat. He afterwards became a fast friend of the settlers, and explained the cause of his merriment.

When Mr. Stephens lived near Wyoming, he was one day going from his farm to the fort, with two oxen and a horse, which were attached to some kind of vehicle. His boy, Phineas, was riding on the horse. Mr. Stephens was an inveterate smoker, and walked by the side of the oxen, puffing after the manner imitated by Captain John. While passing through the woods near a fork of the roads, his shoe stuck in the mud, and was drawn off his foot. Just as he stooped to recover it, a rifle was fired from the bushes, which killed the nigh ox, by the side of which he had been walking. The alarm of "*Indians!*" was sounded from the other branch of the road, where some of his neighbors were killed. Mr. Stephens started and ran, but his boy crying out, "Don't leave me, father!" he returned and took him in his arms, and fled to the fort. The ambushed rifleman was none other than Captain John, and he, recognizing the smoker fifteen years after the adventure, was quite overpowered at the recollection of the joke.

Another meeting of two old enemies took place on the banks of the Canisteo not long afterwards. Major Moses Van Campen, (late of Dansville, Livingston County,) well known to the Six Nations as a powerful, daring and sagacious ranger in the border wars of Pennsylvania, moved up the river with a colony des-

tined for Allegany County, and offered to land at the settlement on Canisteo Flats. Van Campen was especially obnoxious to the Indians for the part he had taken as a leader of a bold and destructive attack, made in the night, by himself and two others, prisoners, (Pence and Pike by name,) upon the party by which they had been captured in an incursion against the settlements, in which Van Campen's father and young brother had been killed before his own eyes. There were ten Indians in the party. One evening, while encamped at Wyalusing Flats, on their way to Niagara, Van Campen resolved to put in execution a long meditated plan of escape. He managed to conceal under his foot a knife which had been dropped by an Indian, and with this, at midnight, the prisoners cut themselves loose. They stole the guns from their sleeping enemies, and placed them against a tree. Pike's heart failed him, and he laid down just as the two allotted to him for execution awoke and were arising. Van Campen, seeing that "their heads were turned up fair," killed them with a tomahawk, and three besides. Pence killed four with the guns. Van Campen struck his hatchet into the neck of the only remaining Indian, a chief named Mohawk, who turned and grappled with him. A desperate and doubtful struggle followed, one being sometimes uppermost and sometimes the other. Van Campen was half blinded by the blood of his wounded antagonist, who felt, as often as he got opportunity, for the knife in his belt. This would have soon settled the contest, and Van Campen finally stuck his



toes into the Indian's belt and hoisted him off. The latter bounded into the woods and escaped.

The savages recognized Van Campen on his arrival at Canisteo as "the man that lent John Mohawk the hatchet." Captain Mohawk himself was there, and had a special cause of grievance to exhibit in a neck set slightly awry from the blow of the tomahawk. The settlers rallied for the defence of Van Campen. There was every prospect of a bloody fight; but after much wrangling it was agreed that the two parties should divide while Van Campen and Mohawk advanced between them to hold a "talk." This was done, and in a conference of considerable length between the two old antagonists, the causes of difficulty were discussed, and it was finally decided that each was doing his duty *then*, but that now war being ended, they ought to forget past injuries. Mohawk offered his hand. The threatened fight became a feast. A keg of spirits was broken and the hills rang with riot.\*

The Indians sometimes entertained the men of Canisteo with a display of their military circumstance, and marched forth on the flats, to the number of three hundred warriors, in full costume, to dance the grand war-dance. They made a fire about eight rods long

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\* Mohawk was a noble warrior,—a Roman indeed. See Stone's *Life of Brant* (somewhere in the second volume) for an incident which occurred in the captivity of the gallant Capt. Alexander Harper. The "single voice" which responded with "the *death yell*" was Mohawk's without doubt. "The name of this high-souled warrior" is not lost, as Col. Stone feared. The biographer of Van Campen makes out a satisfactory case for Captain Mohawk.

and paraded around it with hideous chants and a great clattering of little deer-skin drums. On one of these grand field-days, the whole tribe, arrayed most fantastically, was marching around the fire, and with the flourishing of knives, the battering of drums, and the howling of war songs, had worked themselves up into a brilliant state of excitement. The settlers, boys and men, were standing near watching the performance, when a high-heeled young savage stepped out of the line and inquired of one of the bystanders—

“What’s your name?”

The settler informed him.

“D——d liar! d——d hog!” said the Indian.

Elias Stephens, who was a prompt and high tempered youth, said, “Daniel, I wish he would just ask me that question.”

The Indian instantly turned and said,

“What’s your name?”

“Elias Stephens.”

“D——d liar! d——d ——”

The sentence remains unfinished up to the present date. A well-planted blow of the fist knocked the barbarian headlong over the fire, senseless. The sensation for a moment was great. The dance was stopped, the drums became dumb; tomahawks and knives were brandished no longer, and the savages stood aloof in such angry astonishment, that the bystanders trembled for their skulls. The Chief however came forward, and striking Stephens approvingly on the shoulders, said, “Good enough for Indian.” He expected his warriors to behave themselves like gentlemen, and

when copper-colored gentlemen so far forgot themselves as to use indelicate or personal language, he would thank pale-faced gentlemen to knock them *over* the fire, or *through* the fire, or *into* the fire, as it might be most convenient. The dance went on with renewed vigor, but the punished pagan descended from his high horse and sat aside in silence, volunteering during the rest of the entertainment no more flourishes not promised "on the bills."

Sometimes the Indians treated the settlers to a display of their tactics. Hiding behind a rampart of roots or lying in ambush among the bushes, at a signal given the whole party fired their rifles at certain imaginary foes. The chief sprang up and raised the war-whoop, and then the three hundred joined in that frightful cry of the Six Nations, which, to use the favorite phrase of the pioneers, "was enough to take the hair off a man's head." Then, rushing out, they tomahawked the pumpkins and scalped the turnips, then dodged back to their covert and lay still as snakes.

Elias Stephens, for his prowess and resolution, became an object of respect to the red gentry. Fourteen men were working in Bennett's millyard when sixteen "Romans" came down whooping furiously, and drove the lumbermen from their work, took possession of the mill, and converted it into a dancing saloon. It was told to Stephens. "What!" said he, "you fourteen let sixteen of those critters drive you out of the yard! Lord! I can whip a hundred Indians." And taking the swingle of a flail ran to the mill. The Indians were capering about in high glee, brandishing

their knives and shrieking very like Mark Antony and fifteen other Romans, and indulging in all those antics with which the barbarians of the Log-House were wont to divert themselves.

“Put up those knives, damn you, and march,” said Stephens. The diversions came to a sudden pause. “Put up those knives, damn you, and be off, or I’ll beat all your brains out!” The Romans said never a word, but stuck their knives into their belts and departed.

#### SETTLEMENT OF THE LOWER CANISTEO VALLEY.

Our notes of the settlement of the lower valley of the Canistee are very brief. None of the original settlers of Addison are now living in the county. We can present nothing more than the names of these pioneers. The settlement of Addison was commenced probably in 1790, or shortly after. The first settlers were Reuben and Lemuel Searles; John, Isaac, and James Martin; Jonathan Tracy; William Benham; Martin Young, and Isaac Morey.

The first name of the settlement was Tuscarora. This was afterwards changed to Middletown, and again to Addison.

The first tavern was kept by Reuben Searles, on Lockerby’s stand.

George Goodhue built a saw-mill there as early as 1793.

The first generation of settlers, as we are informed, has become extinct. Messrs. William Wombaugh,

William B. Jones, John and Stephen Towsley, and Rev. Tarathmel Powers, though early settlers, came in a few years after the first settlement.

The pioneers of the town of Cameron were Joseph Warren, John Helmer, Samuel Baker, and Andrew Helmer.

This meagre notice of the settlement of the valley below the present town of Canisteo is the most complete that could be obtained from the best authorities to whom the writer was referred.

#### THE SETTLEMENT OF THE TIOGA VALLEY.

The first settlements in the Tioga Valley were made just over the Pennsylvania line, in the neighborhood of Lawrenceville. Samuel Baker, afterwards of Pleasant Valley, in this county, settled upon the open flat, at the mouth of the Cowenisque Creek, in 1787, and not long afterwards a few other settlers, the Stones, the Barneys and the Daniels, who also afterwards removed to Pleasant Valley, erected cabins in the wild grass and hazel bushes of the vicinity.

Col. Eleazer Lindley, a native of New Jersey, and an active officer of the "Jersey Blues" during the Revolutionary War, rode through the Genesee country previous to the year 1790, to find a tract of land where he might establish himself, and gather his children around him. The sickliness of the regions around Seneca and Canandagua Lakes deterred him from locating his township in the rich northern plains, and he purchased township number one of the second range,

a rugged and most unpromising tract for agricultural purposes, but intersected by the fine valley of the Tioga. The healthy hills, the pure springs, and the clear beautiful river, descending from the ravines of the Alleghenies, promised, if not wealth, at least freedom from those fevers, agues, cramps and distempers, which prostrated the frames and wrenched the joints of the unfortunate settlers in the northern marches.

In the spring of 1790, Col. Lindley started from New Jersey with a colony of about forty persons, who, with their goods, were transported in wagons to the Susquehanna. At Wilkesbarre the families and baggage were transferred to seven-ton boats and poled up the river, according to the practice of emigrants penetrating Ontario county by that valley; while the horses and cattle, of which there were thirty or forty, were driven along the trails, or rude roads, on the bank. On the 7th day of June, 1790, the colony reached the place of destination.

Two sons of Col. Lindley, Samuel and Eleazer, and five sons-in-law, Dr. Mulford, Ebenezer Backus, Capt. John Seely, Dr. Hopkins and David Payne, started with the colony from New Jersey. Dr. Hopkins remained at Tioga Point to practice his profession. The others settled near Col. Lindley.

The river-flats were "open," and overgrown with strong wild grass and bushes. Ploughs were made by the settlers after their arrival, and as soon as these were finished, the flats were immediately broken, as on the Canisteo, with four oxen to each plough. The season was so far advanced, that the crop of corn was

destroyed by frost, but a great harvest of buckwheat was secured. With buckwheat, milk and game, life was stayed during the first winter. History, looking sharply into the dim vale of ancient Tioga, smiles to see the image of "Old Pomp," a negro pounding buckwheat in a samp-mortar, from the first ice in November till the breaking up of the rivers in March, when canoes can find a passage to Shepard's Mill, on the Susquehanna. History also, in this connection, will embrace the opportunity to rescue Old Pomp from oblivion for the notable exploit of killing four bucks at a shot, and has the pleasure, therefore, of handing the said Pompey down to future generations as a fit subject for as much admiration as an intelligent and progressive race may think due to the man who laid low, with a musket at one shot, four fine bucks, as they were standing in the water.

Colonel and Mrs. Lindley were members of the Presbyterian Church, at Morristown, in New Jersey. In his settlement the Sabbath was strictly observed. Travelling missionaries were always welcomed, and when none such were present, the settlers were collected to hear a sermon read by Col. Lindley himself. In 1793, Col. Lindley was elected a member of the Legislature, and while attending the session of that body died in New York. Numerous descendants of Col. L. live in the neighborhood settled by him. His son, Hon. Eleazer Lindley, was, for several years, a Judge of the County Court. He died in 1825.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE GREAT AIR CASTLE—THE CITY BUILDERS—CAPTAIN WILLIAMSON—NORTHUMBERLAND THE GERMAN COLONY—THE PASSAGE OF THE GERMANS THROUGH THE WILDERNESS.

WHILE our foremost pioneers were reaping their first harvests in the valleys of the Canisteo and Chemung, great schemes were on foot in the Capital of the British Empire for the invasion of the Genesee wilderness. An officer of the royal army had conceived a splendid project for the foundation of a city in the midst of the forest, and, sustained by men of wealth in London, was about to penetrate its inmost thickets to raise up a Babylon amongst the habitations of the owl and the dragon.

The first purchasers of the Indian territory between the Genesee River and Seneca Lake had sold an immense estate to Robert Morris, the merchant. Morris had offered his lands for sale in the principal cities of Europe. The representations of his agents gained much attention from men of capital, and three gentlemen of London, Sir William Pulteney, John Hornby, and Patrick Colquhoun, purchased that noble estate which has since borne the name of the English Baronet. Their agent, Captain Charles Williamson, visited



America, and excited by the reports transmitted by him, the associates indulged in brilliant dreams of the destiny of the wilderness which had fallen into their hands.

It was plain to see that the noblest forest of the Six Nations was soon to pass from the hands of those unfortunate tribes. This magnificent woodland, enclosed on three sides by Lakes Erie and Ontario, and that chain of rivers and slender lakes which divides our State into Central and Western New York, was already invaded by the forerunners of civilization. Traders had established themselves on the great trails. Explorers had marked cascades for the mill-wheel, and council groves for the axe. Tribe after tribe had first wavered and then fallen before the seductions of the merchant and the commissioner, and it was easy to see, that against the temptations of rifles and red rags and silver dollars, the expostulations of the native orators, who besought the clans to hold forever their ancient inheritance, would be powerless. Uneasy emigration was already pressing the borders of the whole western country, and, like water about to flood the land, was leaking through the barriers of the wilderness at every crevice. Wyoming rifles were already cracking among the hills of Canisteo. New England axes were already ringing in the woods of Onondaga and Genesee, and most fatal of all signs, a land-ogre from Massachusetts sat in his den at Canadarque, carving the princely domain of the Senecas into gores and townships, while the wild men could but stand aside, some in simple

wonder, others with Roman indignation, to see the partition of their inheritance.

It is not difficult to see what will be the end of this, thought the British castle builders. In half a century the wild huntsmen will be driven to the solitudes of the Ohio. This wonderful forest will have fallen, and men of Celtic blood and Saxon sinews will have possessed themselves of a land of surpassing richness. A city of mills will stand by the cataracts of Genesee. A city of warehouses at the foot of Lake Erie will receive at her docks the barges of traders from the illimitable western wilderness. Fields of fabulous fertility will bask in the sunlight where now the whooping pagan charges the bear in his thicket. Numberless villages by the rivers and secluded lakes will raise their steeples above the tree tops, while immeasurable farms will stretch from the shore of Ontario to the abutment of the Alleghenies, and even thrust their meadows far within the southern ravines and hemlock gorges like tongues of the sea thrust far inland. It will be a region of exceeding beauty and of unbounded wealth.

They further considered the avenues by which this western Canaan might communicate with the world without, and through which her products might pass to the sea-board. The maps revealed four natural avenues for commerce. One, in the north, led to Newfoundland fogs and the icebergs of Labrador. The second, opening in the hills of Cattaraugus, conducted to Mississippi marshes and the Gulf of Mexico. The third offered itself in the north-east, where by tedious beating and portages, one might get into the Mohawk

and float slowly down to New York Bay. But in the south-west, the Susquehanna thrust a branch almost to the centre of the Genesee country—a small but navigable river, the beginning of swift waters which might bear ponderous cargoes in five days to the head of Chesapeake Bay. Men of judgment and experience, the statesmen and commercial prophets of the time, pointed to this river as the destined highway of the west. According to the best of human calculation, the products of the Genesee, instead of being entrusted to the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, or the perplexing channels of the Oswego and Mohawk, would inevitably seek this convenient valley, to be stowed in the rough river-craft, which, gliding down the swift waters of the Conhocton and Chemung, might enter on the second day the Susquehanna, and riding safely over the foaming rapids, plow in a week, the tide water of the ocean. Furthermore, if in the course of centuries, civilized men penetrate those vast and wonderful wilds beyond the lakes, by what other road than this, is the surplus of Michigan and the north-west to reach the Atlantic? The belief was not without foundation. Looking at the maps, even at this day, and observing how the north-western branch of the Susquehanna penetrates western New York, it would seem that but for the disastrous interference of the Erie canal and the unfortunate invention of railroads, the Conhocton valley might have been the highway of an immense commerce, and the roads leading to the port at the head of her navigable waters might have been trampled by tremendous caravans.

The imagination of the castle-builders was fired at this prospect. Such a flood, they argued, like the Abyssinian waters that swell the Nile, must enrich the valley through which it flows. In the midst of this valley must be a city—Alcairo of the West. Thither will all people flow. Caravans such as the deserts have never seen, will meet in its suburbs. Its market places will present all that picturesque variety of garb and manner which interest the traveller in an oriental sea-port. There will be seen the Canadian and his pony from the beaver dams of the upper province, the Esquimaux with his pack of furs from Labrador, the buffalo-hunter from the illimitable plains of Illinois, the warrior from Maumee, and the trapper from the Grand Sault, while merchants from the old Atlantic cities will throng the buzzing bazaars, and the European traveller will look with amazement on the great north-western caravan as it rolls like an annual inundation through the city gates. The river, now narrow, crooked and choked with flood-wood, will become, by an artful distribution of the mountain waters, a deep and safe current, and will bear to the Susquehanna arks and rafts in number like the galleys of Tyre of old. Warehouses and mills will stand in interminable files upon its banks. Steeples, monuments, pyramids, and man knows not what beside, will rise in its noble squares.

This was the vision that greeted the eyes of the British adventurers ; and to found the promised metropolis their agent, a Scottish officer, crossed the Atlantic and went up into the wilderness clothed with plenary pow-

ers, and with unlimited authority over the Baronet's banker. Castles of ivory and towers of glass glimmered in his eyes far away among the pines. A more brilliant bubble never floated in the sunshine. A more stupendous air castle never shone before human eyes. Would the glorious bubble submit to be anchored to hills, or would it rise like a balloon and float away through the air? Could the grand wavering air castle be made stone, and was it possible to change the vapors, the fogs, the moonshine, the red clouds and rainbows, out of which such atmospherical structures are made into brick and marble? If any man was fit to attempt such a chemical exploit, it was the one entrusted by the associates with its execution.

Charles Williamson, the first agent of the Pulteney Estate, was a native of Scotland. He entered the British army in youth, and during the Revolutionary war held the commission of Captain in the twenty-fifth regiment of foot. His regiment was ordered to America, but on the passage Captain Williamson was captured by a French privateer. He remained a prisoner at Boston till the close of the war. On his return to Europe, he made the acquaintance of the most distinguished public men of England, and was often consulted concerning American affairs. On the organization of the association of Sir William Pulteney and the others, he was appointed its agent, and entered zealously into the schemes for colonizing the Genesee Forest. Captain Williamson was a man of talent, hope, energy and versatility, generous and brave of spirit, swift and impetuous in action, of questionable

discretion in business, a lover of sport and excitement, and well calculated by his temperament and genius to lead the proposed enterprise. His spirit was so tempered with imagination, that he went up to the wilderness, not with the dry and dogged resolution of one expecting a labor of a lifetime in subduing the savage soil, but in a kind of chivalrous dashing style, to head an onslaught amongst the pines, and to live a Baron of the Backwoods in his Conhocton Castle, ruling over forests and rivers, after the manner of the old Norman nobles in England.

Having landed in Baltimore in 1791, and taken the steps required by our naturalization laws, he received in his own name, from Robert Morris, a conveyance of the Pulteney estate, and begun immediately his preparations for the colonization of the estate. Of these preliminary movements, there is but little to be said. It appears that he corresponded extensively with men whom he sought to engage in his enterprise, that he opened communication with many planters of Virginia and Maryland, proposing a transfer of themselves and their households from the worn-out plantations of the South, to the fresh woods of the Genesee; that he travelled much through the country and made active exertions by personal application and by advertisement to induce farmers and emigrants of the better sort from Great Britain to settle upon his Northern lands.

He established his centre of organization and correspondence at the village of Northumberland, situated on the Susquehanna, at the mouth of the West Branch of that river, then a place of much consequence, and

one which at this day, though somewhat decayed, retains an ancient and old fashioned respectability of appearance not to be seen in the dashing young town of New York, west of the Mohawk. To this old town we owe at least civility. For a time, during the infancy of our county, it was one great reliance against starvation and nakedness. It supplied us with flour when we had no grain, with pork when we had no meat, with clothes when we were unclad, with shoes when we were unshod. It sent us our mails, it fitted out caravans of emigrants, it received with hearty cheer our gentlemen when weary of riding over the desolate Lycoming road. Many impudent villages of the north, which now like high-headed youngsters keep their fast telegraphs, smoke anthracite coal, and drive their two-minute locomotives, as if they inherited estates from their ancestors, were, if the truth must be told, once shabby and famished settlements, and when faint and perishing were saved from actual starvation by this portly old Susquehanna farmer, who sent out his hired men with baskets of corn, and huge shoulders of pork, with orders to see to it that not a squatter went hungry. By extraordinary good luck these lean squatters became suddenly rich, and now arrayed in very flashy style, with Gothic steeples and Moorish pavilions, and all such trumpery, driving their fine chariots, and smoking their sheet-iron funnels, they laugh most impertinently, and we may say ungratefully at the old Quaker who had compassion on them, when they lay starving in the underbrush. These things, let the lumberman remember, when from his raft he

sees the white steeple of Northumberland relieved against the dark precipice beyond; the west branch meanwhile pouring its flood into the lordly Susquehanna, and renowned Shemokinn Dam, the Charybdis of pilots, roaring below.

In the winter after his arrival in America, Captain Williamson made a visit to the Genesee by way of Albany and the Mohawk. In the upper valley of the Mohawk he passed the last of the old settlements. From these old German farms the road was but a lane opened in the woods, passable only on horseback, or in a sledge. A few cabins, surrounded by scanty clearings, were the only indications of civilization which met his eye, till he stood amongst a group of cabins at the foot of Seneca Lake. The famed Genesee estate was before him. Surely few city builders of ancient or modern times have gazed upon districts which offered less encouragement to them than did the wild Iroquois forest to the hopeful Scot. A little settlement had been commenced at Canandaigua. The Wadsworths were at Big Tree. The disciples of Jemima Wilkinson, the prophetess, had established their new Jerusalem on the outlet of Crooked Lake, and, scattered through the vast woods, a few hundred pioneers were driving their axes to the hearts of the tall trees, and waging war with the wolves and panthers. Beyond the meadows of the Genesee Flats was a forest as yet unknown to the axe, which harbored tribes of savages wavering betwixt war and peace. British garrisons, surly from discomfiture, occupied the forts at Oswego and Niagara; colonies of Tories, including in their



numbers men of infamous renown, dwelt on the frontiers of Canada, on lands allotted to them by the crown, and there were not wanting those amongst the military and political agents of the provincial government who incited the jealous barbarians to the general slaughter of the backwoodsmen.

Wilderness upon wilderness was before him. Wilderness surrounded the white ice-bound lakes above Erie, and spread over plains and mountains to the fabulous prairies of which the Indians told tales too wonderful for belief. The British troops and a few French settlers near Detroit, with a few traders and agents amongst the Ohio tribes, were the only civilized occupants of the far west. In the southern districts of the estate there were small settlements on the Chemung and the Canisteo, accessible only from below by the rivers. There were settlements on the upper Susquehanna and at Tioga Point.

In the following summer Captain Williamson determined to open a high road from Northumberland to the Genesee. The only road leading to the north from the mouth of the West Branch followed the valley of the Susquehanna, which at this point, to one going above, begins a long and unnecessary ramble to the east. A direct road to the Genesee would cross a ridge of the Alleghanies. An Indian trail, often trod during the Revolution by parties from the fastnesses of the Six Nations, ran over the mountains; but to open a road through the shattered wilderness, which would be passable for wagons, was deemed impossible. After a laborious exploration, however, by the agent and a

party of Pennsylvanian Hunters, a road was located from "Ross Farm" (now Williamsport) to the mouth of Canascraga Creek, on the Genesee, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles. This road was opened in the ensuing autumn by a party of German emigrants.

The fortunes of this German colony formed quite a perplexing episode in Captain Williamson's history. "The time when Ben Patterson brought the Germans through" is yet remembered by a few of our aged citizens. The simplicity, the sufferings and the terrors of these Teutonic pioneers were sources of much amusement to the rough backwoodsmen, and their passage through the wilderness and over the wild Laurel Mountains, was in early times an event so momentous, that although the matter has strictly but little reference to the history of this county, it may nevertheless be permitted to recount their frights and tribulations.

It seems that Mr. Colquhoun, who conducted the business affairs of the Association, became acquainted in London with a certain Dr. Berezy, a German of education and address, who engaged to collect a colony of his countrymen, and conduct them to the Genesee lands under the auspices of the associates. Captain Williamson seems not to have favored the scheme, but while living at Northumberland in 1792, the colony arrived, and it fell upon him to devise some plan of disposing of this very raw material to the best advantage. There were about two hundred of them, men women and children. Though stout and healthy enough, they were an ignorant and inexperienced peo-

ple, accustomed to dig with the spade in the little gardens of the Fatherland, and as unfit for forest work and the rough life of the frontiers as babes. Captain Williamson, with his high and hopeful spirits, did not lay the matter deeply at heart, but encouraged the honest folk, and filled their heads with fine tales, till they saw almost as many balloons hanging afar off over the wilderness as the enthusiastic Briton himself beheld.

It was determined to send them over the mountains to the Tioga, thence by the valleys of that river and of the Conhoeton, to Williamsburgh, on the Genesee. It was necessary to give the emigrants in charge to some reliable and energetic guide, who would see to it that they did not fall into the rivers, or break their necks over the rocks, or be crushed by falling trees, or be devoured of bears, or frightened out of their wits by owls and buzzards. Benjamin Patterson, the hunter, who was well acquainted with the German language, and in whose judgment and resolution Captain Williamson had entire confidence, was employed in this capacity. He was abundantly provided with money and means. Seven stout young Pennsylvanians, well skilled in the use of the axe and the rifle, were chosen by him as assistant woodsmen, and these and the Germans were to open the road, while the guide, in addition to his duties as commander of the column, undertook to supply the camp with game.

It was in the month of September when the emigrants appeared at the mouth of Lycoming Creek, ready for the march to the Northern Paradise. The figure of the Guide, girt for the wilderness, with his

hunting shirt, belt, knife and tomahawk, appeared to the simple Germans rather an odd one for a shepherd who was to lead them over Delectable Mountains to meadows and pleasant brooks. It seemed rather like the figure of some hard-headed Mr. Great-Heart, arrayed with a view to such bruises as one must expect in a jaunt through the land of Giant Grim and other unamiable aborigines; and when the seven stalwart young frontiersmen stood forth, girt in like manner, for warfare or the wilderness, visions of cannibals and congars, of bears and alligators, of the bellowing unicorn and the snorting hippopotamus, were vividly paraded before the eyes of the startled pilgrims.

A little way up the creek they commenced hewing the road. Here the Germans took their first lessons in wood-craft. They were not ready apprentices, and never carried the art to great perfection. We hear of them in after years *sawing* trees down.\* The heavy frontier axe, (nine-pounder\* often,) was to them a very grievous thing. They became weary and lame; the discomforts of the woods were beyond endurance, and their complaints grew longer and more doleful at each sunset. But in a few weeks they found themselves deep in the wilderness. The roaring of torrents, the murmur of huge trees, the echoes of the glens, the precipices, at the feet of which ran the creeks, the forests waving on the mountains, and crowding the ravines like armies, were sounds and sights unknown

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\* "An old gentleman, who came over the road in an early day, says the trees looked as if they had been gnawed down by beaver."—*Turner's Phelps and Gorham's Purchase.*

to the pleasant plains of Germany. When it was night, and the awful howling of the wolves all around scared the children, or when the crash of great trees, overturned by the high and whirling winds of autumn, woke the wives from dreams of home, or when the alarmed men, aroused in the mid-watches by strange uproars, looked out into the darkness to see enormous black clouds sailing over head, and the obscure cliffs looming around, while goblins squeaked and whistled in the air, and kicked the tents over, then they all gave way to dismal lamentations. The equinoctial storms came on in due time, and it was sufficiently disheartening to see the dreary rains pour down hour after hour, while the gorges were filled with fog, and vapours steamed up from the swollen torrents, and the mountains disguised themselves in masks of mist, or seemed, like Laplanders, to muffle themselves in huge hairy clouds, and to pull fur-caps over their faces. No retreat could be hoped for. Behind them were the clamorous creeks which they had forded, and which, like anacondas, would have swallowed the whole colony but for the Guide, who was wiser than ten serpents, and outwitted them: behind them were bears, were owls exceeding cruel, were wild men and giants, which were only held in check by the hunter's rifle. The Guide was merciless. The tall Pennsylvanians hewed the trees, and roared out all manner of boisterous jokes, as if it were as pleasant a thing to flounder through the wilderness as to sit smoking in the quiet orchards of the Rhine.

They arrived at the Laurel Ridge of the Alleghanies,

which divided the Lycoming from the head waters of the Tioga. Over this, a distance of fifteen miles, the road was to be opened—no great matter in itself, surely, but it could hardly have been a more serious thing to the emigrants had they been required to make a turnpike over Chimborazo. When, therefore, they toiled over these long hills, sometimes looking off into deep gulfs, sometimes descending into wild hollows, sometimes filing along the edges of precipices, their sufferings were indescribable. The Guide was in his element. He scoured the ravines, clambered over the rocks, and ever and anon the Germans, from the tops of the hills, heard the crack of his rifle in groves far below, where the elk was browsing, or where the painted catamount, with her whelps, lurked in the tree tops. Not for wild beasts alone did the hunter's eye search. He could mark with pleasure valleys and mill streams, and ridges of timber: he could watch the labors of those invisible artists of autumn, which came down in the October nights and decorated the forests with their frosty bushes, so that the morning sun found the valleys arrayed in all the glory of Solomon, and the dark robe of laurels that covered the ranges, spotted with many colors, wherever a beech, or a maple, or an oak thrust its solitary head through the crowded evergreens: he could smile to see how the "little people" that came through the air from the North Pole were pinching the butternuts that hung over the creeks, and the walnuts which the squirrels spared, and how the brisk and impertinent agents of that huge monopoly, the Great Northern Ice Associa-

tion, came down with their coopers and headed up the pools in the forest, and nailed bright hoops around the rims of the mountain ponds. The Indian Summer, so brief and beautiful, set in—doubly beautiful there in the hills. But the poor emigrants were too disconsolate to observe how the thin haze blurred the rolling ranges, and the quiet mist rested upon the many-colored valleys, or to listen to the strange silence of mountains and forests, broken only by the splashing of creeks far down on the rocky floors of the ravines. Certain birds of omen became very obstreperous, and the clamors of these were perhaps the only phenomena of the season noticed by the pilgrims. Quails whistled, crows cawed, jays scolded, and those seedy buccaneers, the hawks, sailed over head, screaming in the most piratical manner—omens all of starvation and death. Starvation, however, was not to be dreaded immediately; for the hunter, roving like a hound from hill to hill, supplied the camp abundantly with game.

The men wept, and cursed Captain Williamson bitterly, saying that he had sent them there to die. They became mutinous. "I could compare my situation," said the Guide, "to nothing but that of Moses with the children of Israel. I would march them along a few miles, and then they would rise up and *rebel*." Mutiny effected as little with the inflexible commander as grief. He cheered up the downhearted and frightened the mutinous. They had fairly to be driven. Once, when some of the men were very clamorous, and even offered violence, Patterson stood with his back to a tree, and brandishing his tomahawk furiously, said

“If you resist me, I will KILL you—every one of you.” Thereupon discipline was restored.

They worked along slowly enough. At favorable places for encampment they built block-houses, or *Plocks*, as the Germans called them, and opened the road for some distance in advance before moving the families further. These block-houses stood for many years landmarks in the wilderness. September and October passed, and it was far in November before they completed the passage of the mountains. The frosts were keen; the northwesterners whirled around the hills, and blustered through the valleys alarmingly. Then a new disaster befell them. To sit of evenings around the fire smoking, and drinking of coffee, and talking of the Fatherland, had been a great comfort in the midst of their sorrows; but at length the supply of coffee was exhausted. The distress was wild at this calamity. Even the men went about wailing and exclaimed, “Ach Kaffee! Kaffee! mein lieber Kaffee!” (*Oh! Coffee! Coffee! my dear Coffee!*) However no loss of life followed the sudden failure of Coffee, and the column toiled onwards.

At the place now occupied by the village of Blossburgh, they made a camp, which, from their baker who there built an oven, they called “Peter’s Camp.” Paterson, while hunting in this neighborhood, found a few pieces of coal which he cut from the ground with his tomahawk. The Germans pronounced it to be of good quality. A half century from that day, the hill which the guide smote with his hatchet, was “punched full of holes,” miners were tearing out its jewels with



pickaxes and gunpowder, and locomotives were carrying them northward by tons.

Pushing onward seven miles further they made the "Canoe Camp," a few miles below the present village of Mansfield. When they reached this place, their supply of provisions was exhausted. The West Branch youths cleared two acres of ground; Patterson killed an abundant supply of game, and went down with some of his young men to Painted Post, thirty miles or more below. He ordered provisions to be boated up to this place from Tioga Point, and returned to the camp with several canoes.\* He found his poor people in utter despair. They lay in their tents bewailing their misfortunes, and said that the Englishman had sent them there to die. He had sent a ship to Hamburg, he had enticed them from their homes, he had brought them over the ocean on purpose that he might send them out into the wilderness to starve. They refused to stir, and begged Patterson to let them die. But he was even yet merciless. He blustered about without ceremony, cut down the tent-pole with his tomahawk, roused the dying to life, and at length drove the whole colony to the river bank.

Worse and worse! When the Germans saw the slender canoes, they screamed with terror, and loudly refused to entrust themselves to such shells. The woodsmen, however, put the women, the children and

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\* Some of the canoes were made at the camp and some were pushed up from Painted Post. Capt. Charles Wolcott, now residing near Corning, went up with a canoe and brought down twenty-four Germans.

the sick, into the canoes almost by main force, and launched forth into the river, while the men followed by land. Patterson told them to keep the Indian trail, but as this sometimes went back into the hills, and out of sight of the river, they dared not follow it for fear of being lost. So they scrambled along the shore as best they could, keeping their eyes fixed on the flotilla as if their lives depended upon it. They tumbled over the banks; they tripped up over the roots; where the shores were rocky, they waded in the cold water below. But the canoes gliding merrily downward wheeled at last into the Chemung, and the men also, accomplishing their tedious travels along the shore, emerged from the wilderness, and beheld with joy the little cabins clustered around the Painted Post.

Here their troubles ended. Flour and coffee, from Tioga Point, were waiting for them, and when Peter the Baker turned out warm loaves from his oven, and *der lieber Kaffee* steamed from the kettles with grateful fragrance, men and women crowded around the guide, hailed him as their deliverer from wild beasts and perilous forests, and begged his pardon for their bad behaviour.

It was now December. They had been three months in the wilderness, and were not in a condition to move onward to the Genesee. Patterson, with thirty of the most hardy men, kept on, however, and opened the road up the Conhocton to Danville and the place of destination. The others remained through the winter of 1793 at Painted Post. "They were the simplest creatures I ever saw," said an old lady; "they had

a cow with them, and they loved it as if it was a child. When flour was scarcest, they used to feed her with bread.”

The whole colony was conducted to the Genesee in the spring. There was, at this time, a single settler in the valley of the Conhocton, above the settlements near Painted Post. The fate of the first potato crop of the Upper Conhocton is worthy of record. This settler had cultivated a little patch of potatoes in the previous summer, and of the fruits of his labor a few pecks yet remained, buried in a hole. The Germans snuffed the precious vegetables and determined to have them. Finding that they could be no more restrained from the plunder of the potato hole than Indians from massacre, Patterson told them to go on, and if the owner swore at them to say, “*thank’ee, thank’ee,*” as if receiving a present. This they did, and the settler lost his treasures to the last potato. The Guide paid him five times their value, and bade him go to Tioga Point for seed.

Once they came unexpectedly upon a single Indian, in the woods, boiling a mess of *succotash* in a little kettle ; and so intent was he upon his cookery that he did not observe the approach of the emigrants. “*Ist das ein wilder mann ?*” (is this a wild man ?) said the Germans, (it was the first savage they had seen,) and crowded around him with eager curiosity. He did not once look up—perhaps for a display of Indian imperturbability ; but Patterson said that the poor barbarian was so frightened at finding himself suddenly surround-

ed by a crowd of strangers, "jabbering Dutch," that he dared not lift his eyes.

After manifold tribulations, the Germans were at last deposited at the Genesee, with the loss of but one man, who was killed in the mountains by a falling tree. The subsequent fortunes of this ill-starred colony can be told in few words.\*

At Williamsburgh, they were abundantly provided for. Each family received a house and fifty acres of land, with a stock of provisions for present use, and household and farming utensils. Cattle and sheep were distributed amongst them, and nothing remained for them to do but to fall to work and cultivate their farms. Hardly a settlement in Western New York had such a munificent endowment as the German settlement on the Genesee. But it soon became apparent that the leader of the colony had failed to regard the instructions of Mr. Colquhoun. Instead of recruiting his numbers from the sturdy and industrious Saxon population, as directed, he had collected an indiscriminate rabble from the streets of Hamburgh, not a few of whom were vagabonds of the first water. They were lazy, shiftless, and of the most appalling stupidity. Breeding cattle were barbacued. Seeds, instead of being planted in their fields, vanished in their kettles; and when provisions were exhausted, Captain Williamson was called upon to despatch a file of pack-horses to their relief. The emigrants were greatly disappointed in the land which received them, and complained with bitterness of the treachery that enticed

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\* Turner's Hist. of Phelps & Gorham's Purchase.

them from the blessed gutters of Hamburgh, first to starve in frightful mountains, and then to toil in hungry forests.

At length they broke out into open and outrageous rebellion. Captain Williamson, who was on the ground, was assailed by Berezy and the rabble, and as he himself says, "nothing could equal my situation but some of the Parisian scenes. For an hour and a half I was in this situation, (in a corner of a store, between two writing desks,) every instant expecting to be torn to pieces." However, with the assistance of a few friends he kept the mob at bay, till Berezy at length quelled the tumult. The colonists then drove away or killed all the cattle on the premises, and held a grand carousal. The mutiny lasted several days, till the Sheriff of Ontario mustered a posse of sufficient strength, and descended upon them by forced marches, and made prisoner the ringleader. Berezy, in the meantime, had gone to the East, where he made arrangements for the removal of his colonists to Canada. This transfer was at last effected, greatly to the relief of the London Association and their agent, to whom the colony had been, from the beginning, nothing but a source of expense and vexation.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE SETTLEMENTS OF BATH—GEN. M'CLURE'S NARRATIVE.

HAVING conducted his Germans, at last, through the wilderness, and deposited them in a Canaan where the copper-colored Amalekites, and Jebusites, and Hivites, had consented to an extinguishment of title, and were behaving themselves with marked civility, although a few battalions of discomfited Philistians hovered sulkily on the Canadian frontiers and glowered from the bastions of Niagara and Oswego.\* Captain Williamson prepared to go up to the forest in person and lay the foundation of a new Babylon on the banks of the Conhocton. The enemies of the gallant Captain have intimated that instead of making the illustrious city of the Euphrates his model, he studied to attain the virtues of Sodom and the graces of Gomorrah, which will be shown to be a malicious slander.

Sixteen miles above the mouth of the Conhocton, the valley of the Crooked Lake, uniting nearly at right angles with the river valley, opens in the hills a deep and beautiful basin, which presents, when viewed from an elevation, a rim of ten or fifteen miles in cir-

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\* The British did not evacuate those posts till 1796.

cuit. The British officer, standing on the almost perpendicular, yet densely wooded heights above the river, south of the old church of Bath (handsomely called in an early Gazetteer, "a tremendous and dismal hill,") looked down upon a valley covered with a pine forest, except where the alluvial flats, close at the foot of the dark hemlocks of the southern range, supported their noble groves of elm and sycamore, and where a little round lake shone in the sunlight below the eastern heights. A ring of abrupt highlands, unbroken as it seemed, except by a blue gorge in the North—the gateway of the gulf of Crooked Lake—imprisoned the valley, and these surrounding hills, to which several hundred additional feet of altitude were given by the view from the southern wall, rose sometimes to the dignity of mountains. The prospect is wonderfully beautiful at the present day, from that place, where to view his valley the Scottish Captain may have (at any rate, ought to have) lain a bed of moss above the rocks, which just at the summit jut over the tops of the huge rough trees that cling to the side of the hill even to the foot of the precipice which surmounts it. But wilder and more beautiful was the picture spread out before the Captain's eye. Description would recall the scene but feebly. Let each patriotic citizen, however, imagine as he can how all the ranges and ridges, the knobs and promontories, were covered with the richness of the forest, and consider that pleasant little lake just below the rising sun, how it glittered among the deep-green pines, and the little river also; how it wrangled with the huge sycamores that lay

across its channel like drunken giants, and how it was distressed with enormous, frightful roots which clung to its breast with their long claws like nightmares, but came forth, nevertheless, from these tribulations with a bright face, and sparkled delightfully among the elms and willows.

In this valley the gallant city-builder determined to found his metropolis. Here should all the caravans of the West meet; here should rise mills and stupendous granaries; here should stand the Tyre of the West, sending forth yearly fleets of arks, more in number than the galleys of the ancient city, to make glad the waters of Chesapeake. Whatever fallacy in his Political Economy may have enticed the Scot hither, there is certainly no place where the Demon of Business, had he seen fit to build him a den in these regions, could have been more *pleasantly* situated, if such a consideration were worthy of the notice of his dusty and bustling genius. To the propitiation of this Divinity, the wealth of the Pulteneys and the labors of their minister were devoted for the next two years. Every device that ingenuity could suggest, every force that fortune could employ, every experiment that energy dared attempt, were tried by the bold and efficient Cadmus of the Conhocton to divest the commerce of the West from the Mohawk and the Hudson, and to guide it down the Northwestern Branch of the Susquehanna.

Western commerce has unfortunately leaked through another tunnel. The Demon which we worshipped, seemed, for a time, about to yield



to our entreaties, and snuffed the incense that smoked on our altar with every appearance of satisfaction. As a wary bear walks seven times around the trap with suspicious eyes, hesitating to bite the tempting bait, yet is sometimes on the point of thrusting his nose, at a venture, within the dangerous jaws of steel, but finally turns away with a growl, so this wary Caliban, after long debating with himself, at last refused to set foot on the pretty trap of Captain Williamson, and dug himself dens in the north where he might wallow in the mire of canals and marshes, and duck his head in the Genesee cataract. [ The political economist, looking at this day from the Rollway Hills, beholds a melancholy spectacle. Below him is a valley of farms on which a single column of the primitive pines remain like that square of the Old Guard which stood for a moment after the route at Waterloo. A dark and almost unbroken forest covers the hill sides, and he looks down upon the streets and steeples of an idle and shady shire town, surrounded by pastures or meadows and groves, which has nothing to do but to entertain the county's rogues and to supply the citizens with law and merchandise. Neither the whistle of the locomotive nor the horn of the canal pilot is heard there; the wolf has hardly deserted its environs—hounds yet follow the deer in the woods around it—logs are yet tumbled down the rollways above it. No warehouses line the river banks—no long ranks of grist-mills grumble that deep harmony so charming to our ears. The gallant Captain's city somehow failed to become a city. The wealth that was of right ours

took to itself wings and flew to the east. Albany and New York, being stout and remorseless robbers, plundered us by force. Syracuse and Utica, being no older than we, stole our riches secretly, thieves that they are—(thieves from infancy and by instinct, for they stole their very names from a couple of decrepit and toothless old cities of the other hemisphere, as some young vagabonds have just conscience enough to pick the pockets of blind beggars in the street)—and to this day those cities stand in the face of all the world bedecked with their ill-got finery. The beautiful air-castle which shone before the eyes of the Baronet, after promising a great many times to become marble, at last bade defiance to chemistry, rolled itself up into a shapeless fog, and returned to the oxygen from which it came. This is no secret, and to have reserved the announcement of it till in the regular course of this history it was due would have been unnecessary. No body for whom the story is told would have been in suspense—no body would have been stunned had the fact been reserved as a kind of perorating thunder-bolt. It is so well known to our citizens generally that their shire town is a very imperfect type of any of those ancient cities heretofore alluded to, and a very modest rival of those overgrown and raw-boned young giants suckled by the Demon, our enemy aforementioned, along the lakes and canals, that one without miraculous ingenuity will despair of working up its downfall into any kind of historical clap-trap, to astound or terrify. The plot for the subversion of the city of New York failed—failed so utterly

that but comparatively few living men know that it was ever dreamed of. Sixty years after the Scottish Captain looked down with great hopes upon the valley of his choice, a Senator of the United States, addressing the Legislature of this State, guests of the city of New York, in one of the great hotels of that metropolis, told them of a traveller's prediction at the beginning of this century, that the valley of the Conhocton would contain the great commercial city of the west.\* The announcement was received with laughter by all, and with astonishment by many. The laughter of the Legislature of 1851 was fortunately a thing which seldom occasioned distress to the object of it, and the citizens of Steuben County were not in consequence so benumbed as to make it necessary for them to discontinue for a time their ordinary avocations.

Founders of cities should always look out for omens, and of all ominous creatures they should especially keep a sharp look-out for snakes, which are above all things prized by soothsayers. If it be true that there is more in serpents than is "dreamed of in our philosophy," Capt. Williamson was favored with omens to a degree unusual even with founders of cities. The Pine Plains, (as the valley of Bath was afterwards known,) were infested with multitudes of rattlesnakes. Probably there was at that time no district in the Western country where these dragons met with greater toleration. But, in truth, toleration had little to do with the matter. They had taken possession of the

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\*See Chap. 9, for the Speech of Mr. Senator Seward.

valley, and held it by tooth and nail. In length, circumference, ugliness and wisdom, it is safe to say that the rattlesnakes of the Pine Plains challenged competition. There was no one to bruise their heads but the occasional Indian, and their hideous tribes increased and multiplied to a degree truly discouraging to mice and moles. From the little fiery serpent with ne'er a rattle in his tail, up to the monstrous black and deadly sluggard, coiled under the bush and ringing alarms with his twenty rattles, the whole plain was given up to them. When Patterson, the hunter, first visited this Paradise, he was startled at their multitude. Gliding from bush to bush, slipping under logs, retreating with angry colors before his path,—now coiled up under a tree, when hard pressed, and wagging their heads in defiance, now rattling a tail full of warnings beneath the shrubs, this snakish populace inspired the hunter with dread. Fairly afraid to go farther by land, he took the river and waded three or four miles, till he believed himself fully beyond the boundaries of this habitation of dragons. Tradition says, that when the plot of the village of Bath was surveyed, the number of rattlesnakes killed by the surveyors passed account. Tradition, however, has failed to preserve details, and many rare "snake-stories" are probably lost for ever. These rattlesnakes have eluded extermination like the Seminoles. Driven from the plains they betook themselves to the mountains, like the illustrious persecuted in all ages. The steep, bold and sandy mountain, from the summit of which the rising summer sun first shines, is the last retreat of these once numerous tribes.

Here a few wise veterans yet hide in the rocks, and raise infant families under circumstances of great discouragement.

In 1793 Col. Williamson commenced the settlement of his village, called Bath, from Lady Bath of England, a member of the Pulteney family. "Before the end of the season," he says, "not less than fifteen families were resident in the village. Early in the season a saw-mill had been finished, and previous to the setting in of the winter a grist-mill with a saw-mill nearer the town were in great forwardness." The first mentioned saw-mill stood on or near the site of the "Glass-mill," on the Kennedyville road. The grist-mill stood near the bridge. On New Year's Day of 1794, a few months after the settlement, Mr. Harry McElwee, a young man from the north of Ireland, made his entry into the new-made village, and gives his first impression substantially as follows:—"I found a few shanties standing in the woods. Williamson had his house where Will Woods has since lived, and the Metcalfes kept a log-tavern above the Presbyterian Church. I went to the tavern and asked for supper and lodging. They said they could give me neither, for their house was full. I could get nothing to eat. An old Dutchman was sitting there, and he said to me: 'Young man if you will go with me you shall have some mush and milk for your supper, and a deer-skin to lie on with your feet to the fire, and another to cover yourself with.' I told him that I thanked him kindly, and would go along. We went up through the woods to where St. Patrick's square now is, and there the

Dutchman had a little log-house. There was no floor to it. I made a supper of mush and milk, and laid down with my feet to the fire and slept soundly. The Dutchman was travelling through to the Genesee, but his children were taken sick and he stopped there till they got well." Mr. McElwee, now residing on the Mud Creek, is the sole survivor of the young men who were with Capt. Williamson in the first years of the settlement, now living in the town of Bath. Mr. Thomas Metcalfe, of Ellicóville, and Charles Cameron, Esq., of Greene, with perhaps a few others, survive of the "stout lads" who came up with their Captain in '94.

The trees had, at this time, been cut away only to admit of the erection of cabins for the accommodation of the few citizens, and to open a road through the forest. In the spring of 1794 Mr. McElwee, under the direction of Captain Williamson, made the first clearings, being the Pulteney Square and four acres behind the agent's house for a garden, for the cultivation of which he afterwards imported a gardener from England. The trees on the square were chopped carefully and close to the ground. A single pine was left standing in front of the agency house for a Liberty Tree. It was trimmed so as to leave a tuft at the top, and stood nodding defiance at despotism for several years, when it was blown down in a storm. The chopper of the Pulteney Square denies the popular tradition, that to get rid of the stumps they were undermined and buried. Many strange expedients were resorted to in those days by persons not trained from their infancy

to wood craft, to free the earth from the pitch-pine stumps and the oak stools which seemed to be more enduring than "brass and pyramids," but the tradition of the preposterous burial, just alluded to, is without foundation.

For notices of early citizens, and the early operations of Capt. Williamson, we refer to the following narrative :

NARRATIVE, BY GEN. GEORGE M<sup>C</sup>CLURE, LATE OF  
ELGIN, ILLINOIS.

Some sixty years since Western New York was a howling wilderness, inhabited by Indians and wild

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[NOTE.—The following reminiscences were prepared in the summer of 1850, at the request of the publishers, by Gen. McClure, who resided at that time in Elgin, Illinois, at the age of 80 years, and were submitted by him, with unlimited license to alter and amend. They might perhaps be disposed more advantageously to the order of history if broken up and used in extracts as occasion required, but the narrative will probably be more acceptable as here presented than in any other shape. A few extracts have been inserted in other places. With these exceptions the narrative is almost unaltered. Gen. McClure is necessarily the hero of his own story, and in his private instructions to the publishers desired it to be so altered that every appearance of sounding his own trumpet might be avoided. The editor was unwilling to make any changes except in a few passages which have been condensed. The language is fresh and graphic, and the narrative gives a lively picture of the early business of the county. Passages, declaratory of Gen. M.'s opinions on politics, it was deemed absolutely indispensable to omit. It is proper, however, to say that he avowed himself to be a staunch free-soiler, a radical temperance man, and a firm believer in the future glory of the United States. These reminiscences are given from memory. Gen. M. lost his papers by fire.]

beasts. Where the City of Utica now stands was considered in those days the extreme western frontier; all west of that place had been but partially explored by civilized man. It was considered imprudent and dangerous to attempt a journey into that wild region. "After Oliver Phelps had purchased of Massachusetts the pre-emptive right to a large tract of land in Western New York, he made preparations to visit and explore that wild region; his neighbors called upon him to take a last farewell, as they never expected to see his face again."

Much has been written, since those days of the far famed west. \* \* \* \* But it may now be asked what has become of it. Has it eloped or absconded like the wandering savage tribes that once possessed that goodly land? Yes, truly it is gone, and now like the Children of Israel of old, it has reached the promised land, not a land flowing with milk and honey only, but also with gold, silver, and precious stones. The great Pacific Ocean is its boundary. Here I take my leave of the Far West, and return to old Steuben, to give some account of the hardy and enterprising pioneers who were the first settlers in that wild and uncultivated region.

Rev. James H. Hotchkin in his "History of the Presbyterian Church in Western New York," makes some severe strictures on the character of Capt. Williamson and his settlers. He says, "They were principally from Europe or the States of Maryland and Virginia, with a *sprinkling of Yankees*, who came to make money." "The state of society" he remarks,



“ was very dissolute. The Sabbath was disregarded. Drinking, gambling, carousing, horse-racing, attending the theatre, with other concomitant vices were very general, and numbers of those who moved in the high circle were exceedingly depraved.” I do not know from what source such information was obtained ; but this I know, that the Sabbath was not desecrated in the village of Bath in the manner that he represents. We had but two public houses in that village for many years. One was kept by the Metcalfe family, and the other by old Mr. Cruger, and after him by Mr. Bull. Neither of these houses suffered gambling and carousing on the Sabbath. Nor did I ever hear of a horse-race on the Sabbath in Bath, nor of theatrical amusements on that day. There were not more than four or five families from Maryland and Virginia that settled in Bath ;\* the other part of our population were at least one half Yankees, and the other half foreigners and Pennsylvanians. Now I would say that instead of a “ *sprinkling of Yankees,*” we had a heavy shower of them. I do not believe, however, that they were a fair sample of the sons of the Pilgrims, for a good many of them, to say the least, were no better than they should be. I trust that nothing in my remarks will be considered invidious. I do not intimate by any means that Rev. Mr. Hotchkin would knowingly state an untruth, but that he has not been correctly informed in

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\* Major Presley Thornton, who was the first occupant of the great *Springfield House*, a mile and a half below Bath, and Capt. William Helen, two Virginians, were the principal Southern men who located at Bath.

relation to the character of a large proportion of the early settlers. I admit that many were very loose in their morals, "lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God." In the year 1807, we employed the Rev. John Niles to preach for us half his time, and the other half in Prattsburgh. I believe he was a good man, but not well qualified to reform so *dissolute and heathenish* a body of men as composed Capt. Williamson's first settlers (according to the popular account of us).

Among the number of the most respectable Scotch emigrants were Charles Cameron and Dugald, his brother. These two young men were first-rate specimens of the Scotch character for intelligence and integrity, as well as for other amiable qualities. Charles Cameron was a merchant, and the first to open a store in Bath. He was also the first post-master by appointment of Capt. Williamson, who paid all expenses of transporting the mail once a week to and from Northumberland.\* Some fifteen or twenty years after he obtained the appointment of sub-agent of the Hornby estate from John Greig, Esq., of Canandaigua, the chief agent. He moved to the village of Greene, in Chenango County, where he still resides. Few men possessed stronger intellectual powers than Dugald Cameron. He was highly respected by all classes of his neighbors and acquaintances. He was a clerk in the Land Office for some time, until he and Gen. Haight were appointed sub-agents by Col. Troup.

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\* An old Frenchman lived at the "Blockhouse," on Laurel Ridge, 65 miles distant from Bath. Thomas Corbit, the mail rider in '94, went thither weekly for the Steuben County bag.

He was a great favorite of the people of Steuben. In 1828 they elected him as their representative in the Legislature of the State, which appointment with some reluctance he accepted. While at Albany attending to the duties of his station, he was seized with a violent complaint, and after a short and painful struggle departed this life, leaving a wife and a numerous family of children, most of whom have since died. His death was lamented by all his relations, friends, and acquaintances.

Andrew Smith, a trustworthy Scotchman, had the charge of the farming operations of Capt. Williamson; such as the clearing of the land for cultivation; and all other kinds of labor were committed to his charge. He had generally from thirty to fifty men, and sometimes more, in his employ, and I had nearly as many in the house-building department. *Muckle Andrew* (as we called him, being a large man,) and myself were great cronies. We were both single men, and kept bachelors' hall. We generally met on Saturday evenings, alternately, in each others' apartments. We had, in those days, plenty of the *joyful*, but we seldom carried matters so far as to get decently tipsy. We violated no pledge, for even ministers of the gospel and deacons, in those days, kept on their side-boards a full supply of the best Cogniac, wine and old whiskey; and when they got out of those articles, they would make very decent and \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* But I must return for a moment to my good friend Muckle Andrew, and relate how we used to spend the evenings of our social meetings.

The first topic of conversation was the business of the past week, and what progress we had made in our respective vocations. The next business in order was a drink, then a story or a song. Andrew told the stories, and I did the singing. My songs were generally the productions of Burns, such as, "*Scots wha ha' wi' Wallace bled,*" "*Wha'll be king but Charlie,*" and "*Auld Lang Syne.*" The last verse we always sung standing. My good friend Andrew had one favorite standing toast, which was as follows :

"Here's to mysel', co' a' to my sel',  
 Wi' a' my heart here's to me ;  
 Here's to mysel', co' a' to mysel',  
 And muckle guid may it do me."

There were a number of respectable young men, natives of Scotland, arrived in Bath in the years '93 and '94, amongst whom was Hector McKenzie, said to be the son of a Scotch Laird, who was employed as a Clerk in the Land Office. Of him I have nothing to say, only that he felt himself a good deal taller than other young men ; and although otherwise respectable, I discovered that he did not possess any of the amiable qualities of his countrymen. the Camerons, and not a particle of the courtesy and unassuming manners of his employer, Capt. Williamson.\*

John Greig, Esq., (now of Canandaigua, and chief agent of the Hornby estate,) arrived about the same time, a young man of fine talents, a lawyer by profession. He did not make Bath his place of permanent resi-

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\*He died in the West Indies.

dence, but he often paid us a visit, and we were always glad to see him, and never allowed him to depart without having a real jovial old-fashioned thanksgiving.

Also, about this time, arrived Robert Campbell and Daniel McKenzie, both respectable mechanics. They have both lately departed this life. Mr. Campbell, (*though one of Williamson's first settlers,*) was sober and industrious, and a worthy member of the Presbyterian Church. There was also old Mr. Mullender, with a very interesting family, who settled on a farm of Capt. Williamson's, near Bath. They were from Scotland, and removed afterwards to the Old Indian Castle, near Geneva.

I must now take leave of my Scotch friends, while I talk a little about my *own dear countrymen*, as well as of some of the sons of the pilgrims.

Henry McElwee, and William, his brother, Frank Scott, Charles McClure, Gustavus Gillespie, and Brown, his brother, Samuel and John Metler, with large families of children—those, with many others whose names I do not now recollect, were natives of the North of Ireland, whose ancestors were of Scotch descent. They are all dead and gone long since, with the exception of Henry McElwee, who is yet alive and resides on his farm at Mud Creek. He was an honest, sober, industrious, hard-working man, and had the confidence and patronage of Capt. Williamson.

William Dunn, a native of Pennsylvania, came to Bath in the spring of 1793, and kept for a short time a house of entertainment. He was appointed High Sheriff of the County after its organization. He was

a very gentlemanly man. He entered largely into land speculation without capital, and like many others, his visionary prospects soon vanished, and wound him up. He moved to Newtown, where he shortly after died. Mr. Dunn had two brothers, who came to Bath with him, or shortly after: Robert and Joseph. The former was called Col. Dunn. This military title he obtained on his way from York County, in Pennsylvania, to Bath. He was one of a company of adventurers and speculators, who agreed that they should introduce each other by certain assumed titles. Some Judges, others Generals, Colonels, Majors, but none below the grade of Captain. This Col. Dunn would pass anywhere as a gentleman of the first rank in society.

Old Mr. Cruger moved from Newtown to Bath, and kept the house lately occupied by Wm. Dunn, on the southeast corner of the public square. Mr. Cruger, I understood, was a native of Denmark—a very pleasant man, full of anecdote and mother wit. He was the father of Gen. Daniel Cruger. Gen. Cruger was a lawyer, and was highly respected by his fellow-citizens. He represented the people of Steuben County in the State legislature several years, and also the District in the Congress of the United States. He served with me in Canada, in the campaign of 1813, as a Major of Infantry, and was a faithful and vigilant officer. Some years since he removed to the State of Virginia, and died there.

But I am violating my own rule in spinning out such long yarns. My locomotive being on the high pressure

system, I find it difficult to arrest its progress. When I come to speak of the trade and commerce of Mud Creek, and the Conhocton and Canisteo Rivers, which then wormed their way over sand-bars and piles of drift-wood into the Chemung River, I shall have something more to say of the enterprise of Mr. Bartles, and of his son Jacob, and son-in-law, Mr. Harvey.

The town of Prattsburgh was settled with Yankees. They were truly men of steady habits and correct morals. For further particulars I refer the reader to Rev. James H. Hotchkins' book in relation to the inhabitants of that town.

I have said nothing of the inhabitants of the town of Wayne, and, with a few exceptions, would beg leave to be excused. Dr. Benjamin Welles moved from Kinderhook, N. Y., to that town in 1798, if I am correctly informed. He had a numerous family of children. Dr. Welles was a surgeon in the army of the Revolution, and part of the time belonged to Gen. Washington's staff. He died in 1812.

Gen. William Kernan, an Irishman by birth, moved into Steuben I think about the year 1800, and settled in the town of Tyrone. He is an active politician of the Democratic party, but whether he is Hunker or Barnburner I am not able to say. Gen. Kernan has been a popular man in the county, and the people have conferred on him from time to time many important offices.\*

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\* Mr. John Faulkner, of the eastern part of the State, settled at an early day in Painted Post, where he died. Dr. James Faulkner, his son, an eminent physician, and a public man of sagacity and

A brief sketch of my own history will doubtless be expected. From the consideration that I have been one of the principal actors amongst the first settlers in Steuben County, and that I have undertaken to be the biographer of other men's lives, I can see no impropriety in giving a sketch of my own. I approach the subject with all due modesty, divesting myself of anything that might have the appearance of egotism; for it cannot be supposed that I have any ambitious views or propensities to gratify, either politically or otherwise, at my advanced time of life.

I was born in Ireland, in the year 1770; my ancestors emigrated from Scotland, and settled not far from the city of Londonderry. They belonged to a religious sect called Covenanters, who for conscience sake had to fly from their country to a place of greater safety, and out of the reach of their cruel and bigoted persecutors. I was kept at school from the age of four years to fifteen. The character and qualifications of those Irish pedagogues, to whom the education of youth was then committed, is not generally understood in this country. They were cruel and tyrannical in the mode and manner of chastising their pupils. Their savage mode of punishment, for the least offence, was disgraceful.

After leaving school, I chose to learn the trade of a carpenter, and at the age of twenty I resolved to come

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eccentricity, lived at Mud Creek. He was first Judge of the County Court, from 1804 to 1813. Mr. John Faulkner, a brother of Dr. Faulkner, settled on a farm five miles north of the village of Bath. Two other brothers, Daniel and Samuel, settled at Dansville.



to America. I therefore embarked on board the ship *Mary* of Londonderry for Baltimore. We made a quick and pleasant voyage of five weeks. I landed in Baltimore the first week in June, in good health and spirits. The whole of my property consisted of three suits of clothing, three dozen of linen shirts, and a chest of tools. As soon as I landed, I stepped into a new building, where a number of carpenters were at work, and inquired for the master builder. I asked him if he wished to employ a journeyman. He said that he did, and inquired how much wages I asked. My answer was, that I could not tell; that I knew nothing of the usages of the country, as I had but a few minutes before landed from the ship.

“Then,” said he, “I presume you are an Englishman.”

“Not exactly, sir,” I replied. “Although I have been a subject of King George the Third, of England, my place of nativity was Ireland, but I am of Scotch descent.”

“Ah, well, no matter. Come to-morrow morning and try your hand.”

I did so, and worked for him two months, when he paid me \$75. Thinks I to myself, this is a good beginning—better than to have remained in Ireland, and worked for two shillings and sixpence per day.

I then determined to see more of the land of liberty; for at this time I had never travelled beyond the bounds of the city. I had some relations near Chambersburgh, Pa., and I made preparations to visit them. In those days there were no stages, only from city to

city on the sea-board. All the trade of the backwoods was carried on by pack-horses, and some few wagons where roads were suitable. I was advised to purchase and rig out a pack-horse, but as to do this would use up half my means, I concluded to be my own pack-horse, and set out on foot for the far west, leaving the heaviest part of my goods and chattels to be forwarded by the first opportunity. I made good headway the first day, but I had put on too much steam and became foot-sore. I stopped for the night at the house of a wealthy German farmer, who had a large family of children, males and females, most of them grown up. Mine host and his good-looking *Frau* could not speak a word of English. He was very inquisitive, but he might as well have talked Hindoo to me as German, as I could answer them only in their own way by a kind of grunt and shake of the head, which meant "I can't understand." So he called his son *Jacob* (who had been to an English school, and could talk a little English,) to act as interpreter. He told his son to ask me whence I came, and whether or not I was a *forfloughter* Irishman (that is, in plain English, a d——d Irishman.) Thinks I this is a poser, and I answered judiciously, and I think correctly, under all the circumstances. I told him I was a Scotchman, as in Ireland all Protestants go by the name of Scotch or English, as the case may be. My Dutch landsman appeared to be satisfied, and we had a very social chat that evening to a late hour. The family were all collected, young and old, to hear of the manners and customs of the Scotch. They seemed to

take a great liking to me, and it was well for me that I had become quite a favorite, for my feet were so blistered with travelling that I could not move. I remained several days till I got over my lameness. When I called for my bill I was told that all was free, and was invited to remain a few days longer. I set out on my journey, refreshed and encouraged by the hospitality and kindness of that amiable Dutch family.

In three days thereafter I reached Chambersburgh, which is one hundred miles west of Baltimore. I remained there until the spring following, when I discovered in the newspapers an advertisement, signed by Charles Williamson, offering steady employment and high wages to mechanics and laborers who would agree to go with him to the Genesee Country. Thinks I this is a good chance, and I will embrace it. I set out immediately for Northumberland, the head-quarters of Mr. Williamson. On my arrival there, I was told that Capt. W. had started with a numerous company of pioneers to open a road through the wilderness to his place of destination—140 miles.

I had some relations and other particular friends and acquaintances in that country. An uncle of mine, of the name of Moore, who came with his family from Ireland in the year 1790, had settled near the village of Northumberland. I made Uncle Moore's my home until I heard of the arrival of Capt. Williamson at Bath, when I again made my preparations to set out for the land of promise, accompanied by my old Uncle Moore, a man who had never travelled more than twenty miles from his old homestead in all his life, ex-

cepting on his voyage to America. I told him that if his object in coming to this country was to purchase land for himself and his sons, he ought, without delay, to go to the Genesee country, where he could purchase first-rate land for one dollar per acre. This was all true, though I was somewhat selfish in making the proposition, as I did not like to travel alone through the wilderness, liable to be devoured by panthers, bears and wolves; so I eventually persuaded the old gentleman to accompany me. The old lady, Aunt Moore, packed up provision enough for at least a four weeks' journey. We mounted a pair of good horses and set out. We had only travelled twenty miles when we came to a large rapid stream or creek, which from late heavy rains was bank full. Uncle Moore concluded to retrace his steps homeward. I told him I could not agree to that. "Why, we will be laughed at." "Well," said he, "they may laugh if they please," and would go *no further*.

"Very well," said I, "If that's your determination, I will remain here until the water falls—but I see a house close by, and a large canoe, (the first I had ever seen,) let us go and inquire whether it would be safe to swim our horses alongside of it."

We were told there was no danger, and two men volunteered to put us over. Uncle Moore proposed that I should pass over first with my horse, and if I made a safe voyage, to send back for him. We landed in safety. I got the old gentleman just where I wanted him. He must now go ahead, as his retreat was now cut off. In the meantime I had learned that

there were two other large streams ahead of us. The first, called the Loyal Sock, within twelve miles, and the Lycoming, eight miles beyond. We went on our way rejoicing until we came to the Loyal Sock. There was no inhabitant near. What was to be done. I told Uncle Moore we must do one of two things, either swim our horses across, or encamp on the bank till the river falls, but I thought there was no danger in swimming, as it was a deep stream and not rapid. I proposed to go over first, and if I arrived safe, he might follow if he thought proper. I gave him directions to hold his horse quartering up stream, and seize with his right hand the horse's mane, and not look down in the water, but straight across to some object on the other side. I passed over without difficulty. The old gentleman hesitated for some time. At length he plunged in and crossed with ease. We soon after arrived at the bank of the Lycoming Creek. That stream was high and outrageously rapid. We concluded that it was best to wait until it became fordable. We stopped at the house of one Thompson, remained there several days, overhauled our clothing and provisions, and made another fresh start, and entered the wilderness on Capt. Williamson's new road.

There were no houses between Lycoming and Painted Post, a distance of 95 miles, except one in the wilderness, kept by a semi-barbarian—or in other words, a half-civilized Frenchman, named Anthony Sun. He did not bear a very good character, but we were obliged to put up with him for the night, or encamp in the woods. The next night we slept soundly

on a bed of hemlock, on the bank of the Tioga River. Next day, about 12 o'clock, we arrived at Fuller's Tavern, Painted Post. We ordered dinner of the very best they could afford, which consisted of fried venison and hominey. After dinner we concluded to spend the afternoon in visiting the few inhabitants of that neighborhood, of whom I have before spoken. First we called upon Judge Knox, who entertained us with a description of the country and his own adventures. We next called on Benjamin Eaton, who kept a little store of goods, and after an introduction by Judge Knox to the rest of the neighborhood, returned to our hotel and put up for the night. In the morning we started for Bath, a distance of eighteen miles. When we reached the mouth of Mud Creek, we found that a house of entertainment had been erected there, and was kept by one Thomas Corbit, who came from Pennsylvania with Williamson's company.\* Thomas had been a soldier of the Revolution, and could sing an unaccountable number of patriotic songs—Hail Columbia, among the rest. Some thirty years after he became poor and helpless. I procured for him a pension, through Henry Clay, but he did not live long to enjoy it.

We arrived at Bath and put up at the only house

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\* The first settlers at the mouth of Mud Creek were Thomas Corbit, in '93, John Dolson, in '94, and Henry Bush. Capt. Williamson, while on a journey from the North, was taken sick, and was so kindly taken care of at Dolson's house, on the Chemung, that he gave Mrs. D. 200 acres of land wherever she might locate it, between Painted Post and the Hermitage.

of entertainment in the village (if it could be called a house). It's construction was of pitch-pine logs, in two apartments, one story high, kept by a very kind and obliging English family of the name of Metcalfe. This house was the only one in town except a similar one erected for the temporary abode of Capt. Williamson, which answered the purpose of parlor, dining-room, and land office. There were besides some shanties for mechanics and laborers.

I called on Capt. Williamson and introduced myself to him as a mechanic. I told him that I had seen his advertisement, and in pursuance of his invitation, had come to ask employment. "Very well," said he, "young man, you shall not be disappointed." He told me I should have the whole of his work if I could procure as many hands as was necessary. We entered into an agreement. He asked me when I should be ready to commence business. I told him that I must return to Northumberland and engage some hands there, and send out tools and baggage up the North branch of the Susquehanna River to Tioga Point, that being the head of boat navigation.

I introduced Uncle Moore to him—told him that he came all the way to see the country, and that if he liked it, he would purchase a farm and move on it with his family. He made a selection four miles west of Bath on which some of his family now reside.

We returned immediately to Northumberland, hired a few young men carpenters. We shipped our tools and baggage on a boat, sold my horse, and we went on foot to Bath, arriving there in five days. One more

trip was necessary before we could commence business, as our baggage would be landed at Tioga Point. There were no roads at that time through the narrows on the Chemung for wagons to pass with safety; therefore eight of us started on foot for the Point. When we came within four miles of Newtown, we discovered a number of canoes owned by some Dutch settlers. I purchased four of them. One of them was a very large one which I bought of a funny old Dutchman, who said his canoe "wash de granny from de whole river up." My companions gave me the title of Commodore, and insisted on my taking command of the large canoe. I selected as a shipmate a young man by the name of Gordon who was well skilled in the management of such a craft. We laid in provision for the voyage and a full supply of the *joyful*. We pushed our little fleet into the river, and with wind and tide in our favor, arrived at Tioga Point in four hours, a distance of twenty-four miles. We shipped our goods, and set out with paddles and long setting poles against a strong current. Then came the tug of war. Many times we were obliged to land, and with a long rope tow our vessels up falls and strong riffles, and in ascending the Conhocton we had to cut through many piles of drift-wood. Our progress was slow. We made the trip from the Point (fifty-six miles) in nine days. It was the hardest voyage that I ever undertook. We were the first navigators of the Conhocton river.

By this time Captain Williamson had erected two saw-mills on the Conhocton river, near Bath, and they were in full operation. Houses were erected as fast



as thirty or forty hands could finish them. Captain Williamson called on me and asked me how long it would take me to erect and finish a frame building of forty by sixteen feet, one and a half stories high, all green stuff. He told me that he expected a good deal of company in a few days, and there was no house where so many could be entertained. I told him if all the materials were delivered on the spot, I would engage to finish it according to his plan in about three days, or perhaps in less time. "Very well, sir," said he, "if you finish the house in the time you have stated, you shall be rewarded." I told my hands what I had undertaken to do, and the time I had to do it in was limited to three days: "I will pay each of you one dollar a day extra. We shall have to work day and night. What say you, boys?" Their answer was: "We will go it." This was followed up by three hearty cheers for Captain Williamson. Next morning I went at it with thirty hands, and in forty-eight hours the house was finished according to agreement. No lime-stone had yet been discovered in that region, nor even stone suitable for walling cellars, therefore the whole materials for building were from necessity confined to timber and nails. Captain Williamson paid me \$400 for my forty-eight hours' job, and remarked that he would not have been disappointed for double that sum. He published an account of this little affair in the Albany and New York papers. It had some effect of bringing our little settlement into notice. He also gave orders for the erection of a large building of 80 by 40 feet, for a theatre, and for the

clearing of one hundred acres, around which was made a beautiful race-course, and another on Genesee Flats, near Williamsburgh. Such amusements had the effect of bringing an immense number of gentlemen into the county every spring and fall. This was done by Captain W. in order to promote the interest of his employer. Southern sportsmen came with their full-blooded racers; others, again, with bags of money to bet on the horses, and a large proportion of gamblers and blacklegs. Money was plenty, in those days at least, in and about Bath, and was easily obtained and as easily lost. Some men became immensely rich in twenty-four hours, and perhaps the next day were reduced to beggary.

Such amusements and scenes of dissipation led to another species of gambling called land speculation. Any respectable looking gentleman might purchase on a credit of six years, from one mile square to a township of land. The title that Captain Williamson gave was a bond for a deed at the end of the term, provided payment was fully made; otherwise the contract became null and void. Those bonds were transferable and the speculators sold to each other, and gave their bonds for thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars, which was the ruin of all who embarked in such foolish speculations. They became the victims of a monomania. Captain W. believed that this speculation would hasten the settlement of the county, but its tendency proved to be the reverse. Besides, it was the ruin of many honest, enterprising and industrious men.

Captain W. always advised me to keep clear of land speculation, and I resisted the temptation for more than two years. I was doing well enough, clearing several thousand dollars a year, but like many others, did not let well enough alone. My father's family had arrived in the United States, and had settled in the county of Northumberland, Pa., and I started in the fall of 1794 to visit them. On my way there, I met with one of those speculating gentlemen with whom I was acquainted. He offered me a great bargain, as I supposed, of half a Township, or 12,000 acres. It was the south half of Township No. 6, now called South Dansville. I agreed to pay him for his right twenty-five cents per acre, and paid him \$1,000 in hand—and gave him my notes for the payment of the balance in annual payments. I went on to New York city where a few had been lucky enough to make good sales. I employed an auctioneer, and offered my lands for sale to the highest bidder at the Tontine Coffee House. It was knocked off at my own bid. I returned sick enough of land jobbing, but held on to my land until the next races in Bath, when I made a sale to one Mr. John Brown, a very respectable merchant and farmer of Northumberland Co., Pa. He paid me in merchandise \$1,000, and gave his bonds for the balance. He shortly after failed in business, and I lost the whole of my hard earnings.

The next project that claimed his attention was the improvement of our streams. They were then called creeks, but when they came to be improved, and were made navigable for arks and rafts, their names were

changed to those of rivers. The Colonel ordered the Conhocton and Mud Creek to be explored by a competent committee, and a report to be made, and an estimate of the probable expense required to make them navigable for arks and rafts. The report of the committee was favorable. A number of hands were employed to remove obstructions and open a passage to Painted Post—which was done, though the channel still remained very imperfect and dangerous.\* The question was then asked, who shall be the first adventurer? We had not as yet any surplus produce to spare, but lumber was a staple commodity, and was in great demand at Harrisburgh, Columbia, and Baltimore. I therefore came to the conclusion to try the experiment the next spring. I went to work and built an ark 75 feet long and 16 feet wide, and in the course of the winter got out a cargo of pipe and hogshead staves, which I knew would turn to good account should I arrive safely at Baltimore. All things being ready, with cargo on board, and a good pitch of water and a first-rate set of hands, we put out our unwieldy vessel into the stream, and away we went at a rapid rate, and in about half an hour reached White's Island, five miles below Bath. There we ran against a large tree that lay across the river. We made fast our ark to the shore, cut away the tree, repaired damages, and next morning took a fair start. It is unnecessary to state in detail the many difficulties we encoun-

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\*The Conhocton was declared navigable above Liberty Corners. The first attempt at clearing the channel was made on the strength of a fund of \$700, raised by subscription.

tered before we reached Painted Post, but in about six days we got there. The Chemung River had fallen so low that we were obliged to wait for a rise of water. In four or five days we were favored with a good pitch of water. We made a fresh start, and in four days ran 200 miles, to Mohontongo, a place 20 miles from Harrisburgh, where, through the ignorance of the pilot, we ran upon a bar of rocks in the middle of the river, where it was one mile wide. There we lay twenty-four hours, no one coming to our relief or to take us on shore. At last a couple of gentlemen came on board, and told us it was impossible to get the ark off until a rise of water. One of the gentlemen enquired, apparently very carelessly, what it cost to build an ark of that size, and how many thousand staves we had on board. I suspected his object, and answered him in his own careless manner. He asked if I did not wish to sell the ark and cargo. I told him I would prefer going through if there was any chance of a rise of water—that pipe-staves, in Baltimore, were worth \$80 per thousand, but if you wish to purchase, and will make me a generous offer, I will think of it. He offered me \$600. I told him that was hardly half the price of the cargo at Baltimore, but if he would give me \$800 I would close a bargain with him. He said he had a horse, saddle and bridle on shore, worth \$200, which he would add to the \$600. We all went on shore. I examined the horse, and considered him worth the \$200. We closed the bargain, and I started for Bath. I lost nothing by the sale, but if I had succeeded in reaching Baltimore I should have cleared \$500.

The same spring, Jacob Bartles, and his brother-in-law Mr. Harvey, made their way down Mud Creek with one ark and some rafts. Bartles' Mill Pond and Mud Lake afforded water sufficient at any time, by drawing a gate, to carry arks and rafts out of the creek. Harvey lived on the west branch of the Susquehanna, and understood the management of such crafts.

Thus it was ascertained to a certainty, that, by improving those streams, we could transport our produce to Baltimore—a distance of 300 miles—in the spring of the year, for a mere trifle.

In the year 1795 I went to Albany on horseback. There was no road from Cayuga Lake to Utica better than an Indian trail, and no accommodations that I found better than Indian wigwams. It may save me some trouble if I tell what took me there, and all about my business. I volunteered to give a history of my own life, and I shall redeem my pledge so far as my memory will enable me to do so. I had got it into my head to dispose of my chest of tools, and turn merchant. I therefore settled my accounts with Col. Williamson. He gave me a draft on a house in Albany for \$1,500, accompanied by letters of recommendation. I laid in a large assortment of merchandise, and shipped them on board a Mohawk boat. Being late in the fall the winter set in, and the boat got frozen up in the river about thirty miles west of Schenectady, at a place called the *Cross Widow's*, otherwise called the *Widow Veeder's*. Here the goods lay for about two months, till a sleigh-road was opened

from Utica to Cayuga Lake. About the last of January I started with sleighs after my goods, and in two weeks arrived at Bath.

I have already mentioned that Col. Williamson expended a good deal of money in improving a number of farms, and erecting a number of buildings on them, which gave employment to many hands.\* These hands were my best customers, and paid up their accounts every three months by orders on Williamson; but orders came from England to stop such improvements, and shortly after Col. W. resigned his agency. Those tenants and laborers got in my debt, at this time, about \$4,000, and in one night the whole of them cleared out for Canada. They were a sad set of unprincipled scamps. They were a part of that "sprinkling of Yankees that came to make money." There was not one foreigner, nor a Virginian, nor a Marylander amongst them. They were a part of the first settlers in the town of Wayne. I waited some time till they got settled down in Upper Canada, and then started to pay them a visit. At that time there were no white inhabitants between Genesee River and Niagara, a distance of about 90 miles. I lodged one night with the Tonnewanta Indians, and the next day crossed the river to Newark. I found some of my customers

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\*Several of the Haverling, Brundage and Faulkner farms, north of the village of Bath, were cleared by Capt. W. He built large framed barns on them, and settled them with tenants. The scheme was a failure. The soil, even at that early day, declared its abhorrence of estates other than for fee-simple. After Capt. W.'s departure, the farms were almost hopelessly overrun with oak brush.]

at York or Toronto, and some at the Bay of Cauty. I employed a lawyer named McDonald, who advised me to get all I could from them in the first place, and he would undertake to collect the balance if they were worth it. They paid me about \$200. I heard that some of them had gone up Lake Erie, and were in Detroit. I re-crossed Lake Ontario, went to Fort Erie, and up the lake in the old U. S. brig *Adams*. She was the only vessel on the lake, except one small schooner. I was nine days on the passage. I found some of my runaways at Detroit, but did not receive one cent of them. I set my face homewards—was taken sick on my passage down the lake, and lay six weeks at Fort Erie. The physicians pronounced my case hopeless, but owing to the kindness and attention of Mrs. Crow, my landlady, and of Col. Warren, the commissary of the garrison, I recovered. I at length reached home, after an absence of three months. My lawyer McDonald was shortly after drowned in crossing the lake. It was the last I heard of him or of my papers.

My next start in business was attended with a little better success. My brother Charles kept a small store in Bath, and in the year 1800 we entered into partnership. I moved to Dansville, opened a store, and remained there one year. I did a safe business, and took in that winter 4,000 bushels of wheat and 200 barrels of pork—built four arks, at Ashport, on the Canisteco River, and ran them down to Baltimore. These were the first arks that descended the Canisteco. My success in trade that year gave me another fair



start. My brother, in the mean time, went to Philadelphia to lay in a fresh supply of goods for both stores; but on his way home he died very suddenly at Tioga Point. He had laid in about \$30,000 worth of goods. I returned to Bath with my family—continued my store at Dansville—opened one at Penn Yan, and sent a small assortment to Pittstown, Ontario County.

At this time I purchased the Cold Spring Mill site, half way between Bath and Crooked Lake, of one Skinner, a Quaker, with 200 acres of land, and purchased from the Land Office and others about 800 acres, to secure the whole privilege. Here I erected a flouring-mill, saw-mill, fulling-mill and carding machine. I perceived that wheat would be the principal staple of the farmers, and I also knew from experience that there would be great risk in running wheat to Baltimore down a very imperfect and dangerous navigation, and the risk in running flour, well packed, comparatively small. The flouring mill, with two run of stones, I completed in the best manner in three months. I sent handbills into all the adjoining counties, offering a liberal price for wheat delivered at my mills, or at any stores in Dansville, Penn Yan and Pittstown. I received in the course of the winter 20,000 bushels of wheat, two-thirds of which I floured and packed at my mills; built in the winter eight arks at Bath, and four on the Canisteo. In the spring I ran the flour to Baltimore, and the wheat to Columbia. The river was in fine order, and we made a prosperous voyage and a profitable sale. I cleared enough that spring to pay all my expenditures and improvements

on the Cold Spring property. After disposing of my cargo, I went to Philadelphia and settled with my merchants, laid in a very extensive assortment of goods, loaded two boats at Columbia, and sent them up the river to Painted Post.

My next project was to build a schooner on Crooked Lake, of about thirty tons burden, for the purpose of carrying wheat from Penn Yan to the head of the lake. I advertised the schooner Sally as a regular trader on Crooked Lake. *The embargo to the contrary notwithstanding*, (for Jefferson's long embargo had then got into operation.) Some of my worthy democratic brethren in the vicinity of Penn Yan charged me with a want of patriotism for talking so contemptuously of that wholesome retaliatory measure. I received a very saucy and abusive letter from a very large, portly, able-bodied gentleman of Yates County, whose corporation was much larger than his intellect. This famous epistle raised my *dander* to a pretty high pitch, and I answered his letter in his own style, and concluded by saying that if Jefferson would not immediately raise his embargo, I should go to work and dig a canal from Crooked Lake to the Conhocton River, and the next he would hear of the schooner Sally would be, that she had run in, in distress, to Passamaquaddy, or some other Northern harbor. This brought our correspondence to a close.

I erected a store-house at each end of the lake. The vessel and store-houses cost me \$1,400. The whole, as it turned out, was a total loss, as the lake was frozen over at the time I most wanted to use it.

The farmers did not then carry their wheat to market before winter.

I had given notes the previous winter to the farmers for wheat to the amount of about \$3,000, payable in June following, but after opening my new goods, I took in money fast enough to meet the payment of my notes when presented, which established my credit with the farmers throughout the West, far and near. There was not at that time any other market for wheat, until the great canal was finished as far as Cayuga. Wheat was brought to my mill from all parts of Seneca and Ontario Counties and the Genesee River. After Col. Troup came into the agency, he authorized me to receive wheat from any of the settlers that wished to make payments in the land-office, and pay in my drafts on the office for the same.

Indians were very numerous at that time. Their hunting-camps were within short distances of each other all over the county. The Indian trade was then an object. I hired a chief of the name of Kettle-Hoop, from Buffalo, to teach me the Seneca language. He spoke good English. All words that related to the Indian trade or traffic I wrote down in one column, and opposite gave the interpretation in Seneca, and so I enlarged my dictionary from day to day for three or four weeks, until I got a pretty good knowledge of the language. I then set out on a trading expedition amongst the Indian encampments, and took my teacher along, who introduced me to his brethren as *seos cagena*, that is, *very good man*. They laughed very heartily at my pronunciation. I told them I had a

great many goods at *Tanighnaguanda*, that is, *Bath*. I told them to come and see me, and bring all their furs, and peltry, and gammon, (that is, hams of deer,) and I would buy them all, and pay them in goods very cheap. They asked me, *Tegoye ezeethgath* and *Negaugh*, that is, "Have you rum and wine, or fire-water." That fall, in the hunting season, I took in an immense quantity of furs, peltry and deer hams. Their price for gammon, large or small, was two shillings. I salted and smoked that winter about 3,000 hams, and sold them next spring in Baltimore and Philadelphia for two shillings per pound. At this time there was an old bachelor Irishman in Bath, that kept a little store or groggery, by the name of *Jemmy McDonald*, who boarded himself, and lived in his pen in about as good style as a certain nameless four-legged animal. He became very jealous of me after I had secured the whole of the Indian trade. The Indians used to complain of *Jamie*, and say that he was *tos cos*, that is, *not good—too much cheat, Jimmy*. When I had command of the army at Fort George, in Upper Canada, about 600 of these Indians were attached to my command.

The next spring I started down the rivers *Conhocton* and *Canisteo*, with a large fleet of arks loaded with flour, wheat, pork and other articles. The embargo being in full force, the price of flour and wheat was very low. At *Havre de Grace* I made fast two or three arks loaded with wheat to the stern of a small schooner which lay anchored in the middle of the stream, about half a mile from shore. Being ebb tide, together with

the current of the stream, we could not possibly land the arks. Night setting in, there was no time to be lost in getting them to shore, as there was a strong wind down the bay, and it would be impossible to save them if they should break loose from the schooner. I left the arks in charge of William Edwards, of Bath, whilst I went on shore to procure help to tow the arks to shore. Whilst I was gone the wind increased, and the master of the schooner halloed to Edwards, who was in one of the arks, that he would cut loose, as there was danger that he would be dragged into the bay and get lost, and he raised his axe to cut the cables. Edwards swore if he cut the cables he would shoot him down on the spot, and raising a handspike, took deliberate aim. It being dark, the Captain could not distinguish between a handspike and a rifle. This brought him to terms. He dropped the axe, and told Edwards that if he would engage that I should pay him for his vessel in case she should be lost, he would not cut loose. Edwards pledged himself that I would do so.

When I got on shore, I went to a man named Smith, who had a fishery, and a large boat with eighteen oars, and about forty Irishmen in his employ, and offered to hire his boat and hands. He was drunk, and told me with an oath, that I and my arks might "go to the d—l." He would neither let the boat nor his hands go. I went into the shanty of the Irishmen, and putting on an Irish brogue, told them of my distress. "The d—l take Smith, we will help our countryman, by my shoul boys," said their leader. They manned

the boat, and the arks were brought to the shore in double-quick time. They refused to take pay, and I took them to a tavern and ordered them as much as they chose to drink. My friend Edwards and those jolly Irishmen saved my arks and cargo. Edwards is yet alive, and resides in Bath.\*

The loss I sustained in flour and wheat this year was great, but I did not feel it to be any serious interruption to my business. On my return, I concluded that I must suspend the purchase of wheat while that ruinous measure, the embargo, was in force, and fall upon some other scheme and project. So I opened a large distillery, which opened a market to the farmers for their rye-corn, and even wheat, which I converted into "fire-water," as the Indians very properly call it. Jefferson's embargo did not injure the sale of it, but the contrary, as whiskey was then worth by the barrel from eight to ten shillings per gallon, and all men, women, and children drank of it freely in those days. I converted much of my whiskey into gin, brandy, and cordials, in order to suit the palates of some of my tipping customers.

I purchased in the fall droves of cattle and sent them to Philadelphia. I also stall-fed forty head of the best and largest cattle in the winter, which I shipped on arks to Columbia, and drove to Philadelphia, where they sold to good advantage. This mode of sending fat cattle to market astonished the natives as we passed down the river. It proved to be a profitable business.

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\* He died in March, 1851.

In the year 1814 I sold my Cold Spring Mills to Henry A. Townsend for \$14,000. I erected other mills at Bath. In 1816 I ran down to Baltimore about 1,000,000 feet of pine lumber and 100,000 feet of cherry boards and curled maple. I chartered three brigs and shipped my cherry and curled maple and 500 barrels of flour to Boston. I sold my flour at a fair price, but my lumber was a dead weight on my hands. At length, the inventor of a machine for spinning wool by water power, offered to sell me one of his machines for \$2,500, and take lumber in payment. I closed a bargain with him, which induced me to embark in woolen manufacture. I obtained a loan from the state, and was doing well until Congress reduced the tariff for the protection of home industry to a mere nominal tax. The country immediately after was flooded with foreign fabrics, and but few woolen factories survived the shock.

I will now close my narrative so far as it relates to my own business concerns, with a single remark, that although I have been unfortunate at the close of my business, yet I flatter myself that all will admit that I have done nothing to retard the growth and prosperity of the village of Bath, or of the inhabitants of Steuben county generally, especially at a time when there were no facilities for the farmers of the county to transport their produce to market other than that which was afforded them by my exertions. And whether the people of Steuben or myself have received the most benefit I leave for them to determine.

It would appear to be of very little consequence for

me to state the number of civil offices that I held during my residence in Steuben county. It will only show how far I had the good will of the people. First, I was appointed Justice of the Peace; next, a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and Surrogate of the county. In 1816 I was appointed High Sheriff of the county, which office I held four years. I held the office of Post Master of the village of Bath, about eight years. The good people of Steuben also elected me three years in succession to represent them in the Legislature of the State of New York.—For all these favors I felt then, and ever shall feel grateful.

This brief narrative is nothing more than a mere synopsis of some of the principal events of my life during the last sixty years. I find that all labor, whether of the hand or head, have become burthen-some, which will be a sufficient apology for its insufficiencies.

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NOTE.—Gen. McClure, at the age of 64, again started “in pursuit of the Far West,” which he says “had got a thousand miles ahead of me,” and located at Elgin, in Illinois, where he resided until his death in the summer of 1851.



## CHAPTER VI.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMSON'S ADMINISTRATION—LIFE AT BATH—GRAND SIMCOE WAR—RACES—THEATRE—VINDICATION OF THE ANCIENTS—BATH GAZETTE—COUNTY NEWSPAPERS—THE BAR—PHYSICIANS.

CAPTAIN Williamson having, toward the close of the last century, fairly established himself at Bath, was the greatest man in all the land of the West. His dominion extended from Pennsylvania to Lake Ontario; a province of twelve hundred thousand acres owned him as its lord; Indian warriors hailed him as a great chief; settlements on the Genesee, by the Seneca, and at the bays of Ontario, acknowledged him as their founder; and furthermore, by commission from the Governor of the State of New York, he was styled Colonel in the militia of the Commonwealth, and at the head of his bold foresters, stood in a posture of defiance before the Pro-Consul of Canada, who beheld with indignation a rival arising in the Genesee forests, and taking possession of land which he claimed for his own sovereign, with a legend of New Englanders and Pennsylvanians, mighty men with the axe and rifle, and with colonies of Scotch and Irish boys, who cleaved to the rebellious subjects of the King.

His was no idle administration. It did not content him to sit in idle grandeur in his sumptuous log-fortress on the Conhocton, like a Viceroy of the Backwoods, feasting on the roasted sides of mighty stags, and eating luxurious hominy from huge wooden trenchers with the captains of his host. Neither did he yield to those temptations which so often beset and overpower governors sent to administer the affairs of distant districts of the wilderness, who, instead of collecting tribute from the refractory aborigines, and keeping them well hanged, are forever scouring the woods with hounds, and beating the thickets for bears, to the great neglect of the royal finances. He galloped hither and thither with restless activity—from Bath to Big Tree, from Seneca to Sodus, from Canadarque to Gerundigut, managing the concerns of his realm with an energy that filled the desert with life and activity. People heard of him afar off—in New England, in Virginia, and in Canada. The bankers of Albany and New York became familiar with his signature, Englishmen and Scotchmen were aroused from their homes and persuaded to cross the ocean for Genesee estates, and hearty young emigrants of the better sort—farmers and mechanics of some substance—were met upon their landing by recommendations to leave the old settlements behind them, and try their fortunes in Williamson's woods. Pioneers from below pushed their canoes and barges up the rivers, and men of the East toiled wearily through the forest with their oxen and sledges. Not a few Virginian planters, with their great household, abandoned their barren estates be-

yond the Potomac, and performed marches up the Susquehanna valley and over the Laurel Ridge in much the same style (saving the camels) as the ancient Mesopotamian patriarchs shifted their quarters—youngsters and young ladies making the journey gaily on horseback, while the elderly rode in ponderous chaises, secured against catastrophes by ropes and props, and the shoulders of their negroes. Several such cavalcades came over the Lycoming Road. One is yet remembered with some interest by a few, as containing a pair of distinguished belles, whose fame went before them, and who were met on their descent, half frozen, from the mountains in mid-winter, at the Painted Post Hotel, by a couple of no less distinguished sprouts of Northern gentility, one of whom was afterwards so fortunate as to gain the hand of one of the frost-bitten beauties.

The administration of the affairs of the estate beyond the limits of this county, is not, of course, a matter to be treated of with propriety in this volume. Much of the agent's personal attention was of course required in this, but he made his residence at Bath, and to life and doings at the metropolis, our attention will for the present be directed.

Captain Williamson dwelt in his stronghold on the Conhocton, in high style, like a baron of old. All the expenses necessary to support the state which such a regent should maintain, were borne by the boundless fund which he controlled. Gentlemen from far countries came up to the woods on horseback, and were entertained sumptuously, as the gallant captain's feudal prototypes were wont to welcome to their castles

straggling crusaders, pilgrims and foreign knights. There was an abundance of gentility in the land, both sham and genuine. Sometimes the admiring wood nymphs, who had heretofore seen only ill-favored and bare-backed pagans striding through the forest, beheld a solitary horseman, finely dressed in the most approved fashion of the cities, trotting down the interminable lane of pines, followed at a respectful distance by his servant (a spectacle which this good republican county has not seen for many a year), and sometimes Captain Williamson himself might be seen dashing in gallant style through the woods, with a party of riders from the Hudson or the Roanoke, mounted on full blooded horses, while a functionary from the baronial kitchen brought up the rear, with luncheon and a basket of wine. There were, moreover, asses in lions' hides, who came down with a great flourish, and passed themselves off for real Nubians. A few old settlers have occasion to remember one of these gentry, a certain captain, "a great big man, and a mighty fine gentleman, with ruffles in his shirt, and rings on his fingers," who contracted to build Captain Williamson's stupendous Marengo barns, and one day went off in a portly and magnificent way, without paying his carpenters.

The Pine Plains were unable to support such courtly personages, and indeed the good stock of working men and farmers who tilled the land, found the soil so ungracious, that they were not a little straightened for the means of supporting life. Captain Williamson transported his first flour from Northumberland, and

a quantity of pork from Philadelphia. Afterwards these luxuries were obtained as best they could be. Flour was brought on pack horses from Tioga Point, and a treaty of commerce was entered into with Jemima Wilkinson, the prophetess, who had established her oracle on the outlet of Crooked Lake, where her disciples had a mill and good farms. The first navigators of Crooked Lake carried their cargoes in Durham boats of six or eight tons burden, which they poled along the shore, or when favoring breezes filled their sails, steered through the mid-channel. These primitive gondoliers have lived to see the end of their profession. Notwithstanding these resources, the village of the Plains was sometimes reduced to great straits. The Canisteo boy brought over his bag of wheat on a horse, threw it down at the door of the agency-house, and was paid five silver dollars the bushel. He drove his bullock across the hills, slaughtered it at the edge of the village, and sold every thing from hoof to horn for a shilling the pound. He led over a pack-horse laden with grain, paid all expenses, treated, and took home eighteen dollars. One old farmer remembers paying two dollars and a quarter for a hog's head, "and it was half hair at that." "Bath was just like San Francisco," says an old settler on the comfortable farms of Pleasant Valley, "straw was a shilling a bunch, and every thing else in proportion. Money was plenty, but they almost starved out. They once adjourned court because there was nothing to eat. If it hadn't been for the Valley, the Pine Plains would have been depopulated. After court had been in

session two or three days, you would see a black boy come down here on a horse, and with a big basket, foraging. He would go around to all the farms to get bread, meat, eggs, or anything that would stay life. Bath was the hungriest place in creation. You could'nt trust a leg of mutton to anybody but the land-agent."

The citizens of the county made court week a kind of general gathering time, and the larders of Bath were sometimes speedily exhausted. The prudent juryman before setting out from home, slung over his shoulders a bag containing a piece of cold pork, and a huge loaf of bread; for no one knew to what extremities the ministers of justice might be reduced.

Nevertheless the affairs of the metropolis went on finely. The county prospered. The river was partially relieved of incumbrances; roads were opened; bridges were built; farms were cleared. In 1796, or about that time, Captain Williamson resorted to sundry bold devices to arouse the backward people of the East, and to spread the fame of his realm throughout the land. Before entering upon those subjects, however, there is a martial affair which must by no means be lightly passed over—the grand Simcoe War of 1794. The memory of this has almost perished. Few of the good people know how a high and mighty potentate of the North once rose up in wrath against Captain Williamson, and threatened to come down upon him with the King's regiment, to storm his villages, to plant his artillery, if necessary, under the ramparts of his stronghold on the Conhocton, and to restore the Pine Plains with the rest of Western New York, to the Crown of

Great Britain. This is really the bloodiest paragraph in the annals of Steuben County, and must be carefully treasured.

In a rather stunning explosion of rhetoric, a certain Fourth of July orator thus sounds the prelude to a kind of epic anthem, in which he indulges, in view of the threatened conflict with the Powers of the Pole. "Hark! what sounds are those which arise from the lowering North! Lo! the great Unicorn of Albion begins to moan in the forests of Canada, and that other red quadruped which rides rampant upon the British shield, begins to growl in an offensive and impertinent manner from the bristling ramparts of Toronto. War's mighty organ murmurs in distant caverns, and clouds like black war-elephants, raise their dusky backs out of the waters of Lake Ontario."

Further quotations from this sonorous document will be refrained from. Humbler imagery will suffice to illustrate the passage of arms between Captain Williamson and the high and mighty Viceroy of Upper Canada. It is not generally known to our citizens what an enemy arose against us in our infancy, and how the infant settlement, like a sturdy little urchin, squared itself in defiance against the veteran bruiser, who offered to bully it out of its rights.

It is well known that although by the treaty of 1783, the British agreed to evacuate forthwith all military posts held by them within the territory of the United States, the forts at Niagara and Oswego were held under various pretexts until the year 1796. Certain

claims of sovereignty over certain lands in Western New York, were asserted by British officers, and their presence, their influence over the Indians, and the intrigues of their agents, caused much apprehension and annoyance to the settlers. Captain Williamson, as we have seen, was interested in a settlement at Sodus. On the 16th of August, 1794, Lieut. Sheaffe, a British officer, called at that place, "by special commission from the Lieutenant Governor of his Britannic Majesty's province of Upper Canada," and in the absence of Captain Williamson, left a letter for him, demanding "by what authority an establishment has been ordered at this place, and to require that such a design be immediately relinquished."

The potentate by whom this order was dictated was Colonel Simcoe, an officer, who, we believe, served with some distinction at the head of a regiment of loyalists in the Revolution, a gentleman undoubtedly of ability and discretion, and esteemed a good Governor by the Canadians, but one who felt sore at the late discomfiture of the Royal arms, and who appears to have embraced the delusion for a long time entertained by British officers of the old school, of the possibility of marching through America with a brigade of grenadiers. The Duke de la Rochefoucault Liancourt, a French traveller, gives us the key to Col. Simcoe's character and aspirations.—"He discourses with much good sense on all subjects, but his favorite topics are his projects and war, which seem to be the objects of his leading passions. He is acquainted with the military history of all countries.



“No hillock catches his eye without exciting in his mind the idea of a fort which might be constructed on the spot, and with the construction of this fort he associates the plan of operations for a campaign, especially of that which is to lead him to Philadelphia.”

Col. Simcoe, then, had a professional hobby. He looked at banks and braes with the eye of Major Dalgetty, and believed that hills were made for castles, harbors for forts, and knolls for “sconces.” Of Pharsalia and Agincourt, of the Retreat of the Ten Thousand, and the flank movements of Gustavus, of the tactics of Gideon and the forays of Shishak, of battering-rams and bomb-shells; of torpedos, catapults, pikes and pistols—of such was the *conversation* of Col. Simcoe. Of marching from Niagara through the wilderness like a Canadian Hannibal, of routing the backwoodsmen and making captive the audacious Williamson in his stronghold among the mountains, of emerging from the forest with drums, clarinets and feathers, of riding over the stupified farmers of Pennsylvania, and trailing his victorious cannon through the streets of Philadelphia, of hiding the humiliation of Saratoga in a blaze of glory, and of generally grinding to powder the rebellious enemies of the King—of such were the *dreams* of Col. Simcoe.

As the first step toward the attainment of these magnificent results, the Viceroy of His Britannic Majesty stole a barrel of flour.

How this exploit was performed,—whether the storehouse was approached after the style of Turenne, and the clerk summoned to surrender the key of the pad-

lock, in the words of the Grand Turk at Constantinople; whether hoops were respected and staves treated considerately, according to the usages of the Black Prince and other mirrors of courtesy, we cannot say, though the Governor undoubtedly overhauled his library and reviewed Rollin's History before he attempted a manoeuvre which was probably without a precedent in the "military history of all nations." The particulars of this fell swoop of the Canadian war-kite do not appear in the few books hastily consulted on that subject,—loftier matters, the evacuation of forts, the movements of emissaries, and the correspondence of functionaries, being solely discoursed of in those. Old settlers, however, aver that a quantity of flour belonging to Capt. Williamson was seized by the British and carried off.

Capt. Williamson resented the affront in a spirited manner. A sharp correspondence followed between himself and the trespassing parties. The cabinet at Washington took the matter in hand. The prospect looked, to the men in the forest, decidedly warlike. The "black war elephants," which the orator saw rising out of the billows of Ontario, it may be believed, shook their bright and glittering tusks with evil purport, while those other surly quadrupeds which displayed themselves in such an ill-tempered manner on the "bristling ramparts of Toronto," undoubtedly indulged in demonstrations equally hostile and alarming. Captain Williamson had reason to believe that in the event of actual hostilities, the vengeance of Col. Simcoe might seek him in his own city. He determined

to make ready for the blow, to rally the woodsmen, to picket the public square, and to entertain the Canadian Hannibal and his legions with such a feast of smoke, steel, and sulphur, as those fire-eaters alone could relish.

Gen. McClure in his manuscript says, "The administration at Washington apprised Capt. Williamson of the difficulties that had arisen between this country and Great Britain, and required him to make preparations for defence. He therefore received a Colonel's commission from the Governor of New York, and immediately thereafter sent an express to Albany for one thousand stand of arms, several pieces of cannon and munitions of war. He lost no time in making preparations for war. He gave orders to my friend Andrew Smith to prepare timber for picketing on a certain part of our village and ordered that I should erect block-houses according to his plan. The work went cheerily on. We could rally, in case of alarm, five or six hundred, most of them single men. Our Colonel organized his forces into companies. I had the honor of being appointed Captain of a light infantry company, and had the privilege of selecting one hundred men, non-commissioned officers and privates. In a short time my company appeared in handsome uniform. By the instructions of our Colonel we mounted guard every night,—exterior as well as interior. Most of our own Indians, whom we supposed were friendly, disappeared, which we thought was a very suspicious circumstance."\*

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\* Mr. Henry McElwee, of Mud Creek, was employed by Col. W.

The young settlement, like the infant hero of old, seemed likely to be attacked in its cradle by a serpent; and although the backwoodsmen, even of Canisteco, were too considerate to strangle the British Empire aggressively, and without an act of Congress authorizing such violence, yet it is quite apparent that had this great power seen fit to assail Col. Williamson's little province, the consequences would have been disastrous either to the one or the other. Every thing was made ready. Further movements of those "black war-elephants" and the rest of the hostile menagerie were awaited with interest. How soon will the snorting charger of Simcoe prance upon the banks of the terrified Conhocton, while his gloomy grenadiers stride through the forest with fixed bayonets and frowns. How soon will the flags of St. George flaunt under the Eight-mile Tree, or field pieces roar under our splintering palisades, while all the Six Nations, yelling in the under-brush, drive the wolves distracted. The apprehension of invasion was probably not very alarming, yet sufficiently so to excite patriotism and visions. The lonely settler, sleeping in his cabin far in the forest, the loaded rifle standing at his bed side, the watchful hounds growling without, dream that his house is assailed by seventy or eighty Esquimaux, painted like rainbows, and led on by George the Third in person, while Lord Cornwallis supports his sovereign with a ninety-gun ship and a bomb-ketch.

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to cut white oak saplings eighteen feet long and eighteen inches thick at the butt, to be used for palisades, in enclosing the Pulteney Square. A great many of these were cut and peeled ready for use.

All stand waiting for the dogs of war. "The solitary express-rider now gallops through the streets of Northumberland, clatters along the rocky roads, wheels up the Lycoming, climbs the Laurel Bridge and urges his stumbling horse over the rugged German path, descends to the Tioga, hurries along the rivers, and, riding at night into the guarded citadel of the Conhocton, declares tidings of peace. The lion, grumbling no longer on the ramparts of Toronto, lies down in his lair; the pacified unicorn ceases to stamp upon the Canadian soil, and the black war-elephants haul in their horns, and sink behind the northern horizon." Such is the peroration of the Fourth of July Orator.

In 1796, Col. Williamson, by way of blowing a trumpet in the wilderness, advertised to all North America and the adjacent islands, that grand races would be held at Bath. At the distance of half a mile from the village, a race-course of a mile in circuit was cleared and carefully grubbed, and all the resources of the metropolis were brought forth for the entertainment of as many gentlemen of distinction and miscellaneous strangers as might honor the festival by their presence. But what probability was there that such a festival would be celebrated with success in the midst of "a wilderness of nine hundred thousand acres?" From Niagara to the Mohawk were but a few hundred scattered cabins, and in the south a dozen ragged settlements, contained the greater part of the civilized population till you reached Wyoming. But Col. Williamson did not mistake the spirit of the times. Those

were the days of high thoughts and great deeds. On the day, and at the place appointed for the race in the proclamation, sportsmen from New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore were in attendance. The high blades of Virginia and Maryland, the fast-boys of Jersey, the wise jockeys of Long Island, men of Ontario, Pennsylvania and Canada, settlers, choppers, gamesters and hunters, to the number of fifteen hundred or two thousand, met on the Pine Plains to see horses run—a number as great, considering the condition of the region where they met, as now assembles at State Fairs and Mass Meetings. No express-trains then rolled down from Shawangunk—no steamboats plowed the lakes—no stages rattled along the rocky roads above the Susquehanna. Men of blood and spirit made the journey from the Potomac and the Hudson on horseback, supported by the high spirit of the ancients to endure the miseries of blind trails and log taverns.

The races passed off brilliantly. Col. Williamson himself, a sportsman of spirit and discretion, entered a Southern mare, named Virginia Nell; High Sheriff Dunn entered Silk Stocking, a New Jersey horse—quadrupeds of renown even to the present day. Money was plenty, and betting lively. The ladies of the two dignitaries who owned the rival animals, bet each three hundred dollars and a pipe of wine on the horses of their lords, or, as otherwise related, poured seven hundred dollars into the apron of a third lady who was stake-holder. Silk Stocking was victorious.

This, our most ancient festival, is rather picturesque, seen from the present day. The arena opened in the

forest, the pines and the mountain around—the variegated multitude of wild men, tame men, rough men and gentlemen, form a picture of our early life worthy of preservation. Canisteo was there, of course, in high spirits, and throughout the season, with self-sacrificing devotion to the ancient, honorable and patriotic diversion of horse-racing, seconded, with voice and arm, every effort of Baron Williamson to entertain the country's distinguished guests. Young Canisteo went away with mind inflamed by the spirited spectacle, and before long introduced a higher grade of sport into their own valley. A pioneer of that region, known to the ancients as a youth of game and a "tamer of horses," will, at the present day, talk with great satisfaction of a Jersey horse, which not only bore away the palm in the Canisteo Races, but on the Pine Plains, in the presence of men from Washington, Philadelphia and New York, (fifteen hundred dollars being staked on the spot by the strangers,) distanced the horse of a renowned Virginia Captain, who, being a "perfect gentleman," invited the owner of the victorious beast and his friends to dinner, and swore that nothing was ever done more handsomely even in the ancient dominion. Bath and the neighborhood was, in those days, the residence of a sagacious and enterprising race of sportsmen. They not only raised the olympic dust freely at home, but made excursions to foreign arenas, sometimes discomfiting the aliens, and sometimes, it must be confessed, returning with confusion of face. It is told how a select party of gentlemen—Judges, Generals and Captains—once went down to Ontario

County "to beat the North;" how, after the horses had been entered, an Indian came up and asked permission to enter a sorry-nag which he brought with him, which with some jeering was granted; how, to the general astonishment, the pagan's quadruped flew off with a "little Indian boy sticking to his back like a bat," and led the crowd by a dozen rods. The judicial and military gentlemen straightway set out for home, each with an insect in his ear. The great race-course was not often used, during Williamson's time, for the purpose for which it was made, after the first grand festival. It was chiefly valuable as a public drive for the few citizens who were so prosperous as to keep chaises. There was, however, a course on the Land Office Meadows south of the village, which was at different times the scene of sport.

Colonel Williamson further embellished the backwoods with a theatre. The building, which was of logs, stood at the corner of Steuben and Morris streets. A troop of actors from Philadelphia, kept we believe, at the expense of the agents, entertained for a time the resident and foreign gentry with dramatic exhibition of great splendor. Of these exhibitions we have no very distinct account, but the public eye was probably dazzled by Tartars, Highlanders, Spaniards, Brigands, and other suspicious favorites of the Tragic Muse. The excellencies of the legitimate drama seem to have been harmoniously blended with those of the circus, and with the exploits of sorcery. We hear of one gifted genius who astonished the frontiers by balancing a row of three tobacco pipes on his chin, and by other



mysterious feats which showed him to be clearly in league with the psychologists.

The race course and the theatre brought the village which they adorned into bad odor with the sober and discreet. Without intending to speak of such institutions with more civility than is their due, we maintain that in the present case they brought upon the neighborhood where they existed, and upon the men who sustained them, more reproach than they merited. The theatrical exhibitions were but harmless absurd affairs at worst. The races were perhaps more annoying evils. People are certainly at liberty to think as badly of them as they please, but they should consider the spirit of the times, the military and European predilections of their founder, and also his object in their institution (which of course does not of itself change the moral aspect of the matter.) Colonel Williamson was inclined to hurry civilization. The "star of empire" was too slow a planet for him. He wished to kindle a torch in the darkness, to blow a horn in the mountains, to shake a banner from the towers, that men might be led by these singular phenomena to visit his establishment in the wilderness. Therefore, jockeys were switching around the meadows before the land was insured against starvation, and Richard was calling for "another horse" before the county grew oats enough to bait him.

Notwithstanding the extenuating circumstances, Baron Williamson's village bore a very undesirable reputation abroad—a reputation as of some riotous and extravagant youngster, who had been driven as a

hopeless profligate from his father's house, and in a wild freak built him a shanty in the woods, where he could whoop and fire pistols, drink, swear, fight, and blow horns without disturbing his mother and sisters. This was in a great measure unjust. The main employment of the town was hard work. "He couldn't bear to have a lazy drunken fellow around him," says an old settler speaking of the agent, "and if any such came he sent him away." The men of the new country were rough and boisterous it is true, but also industrious and hardy, and out of such we "constitute a State." It has often been flung into our faces as a reproach, that when the first missionary visited Bath, on a Sunday morning, he found a multitude assembled on the public square in three distinct groups. On one side the people were gambling, on another they were witnessing a battle between two bulls, and on a third they were watching a fight between two bullies. We are happy to say that the truth of this rascally old tradition is more than doubtful. Aside from the manifest improbability that men would play cards while bulls were fighting, or that bulls would be trumps while men were fighting, the evidence adduced in support of the legend is vague and malicious. To suppose that Colonel Williamson's ambition was to be at the head of a gang of banditti who blew horns, pounded drums, fought bulls and drank whiskey from Christmas to the Fourth of July, and from the Fourth of July around to Christmas again, is an exercise of the rights of individual judgment in which those who indulge themselves should not of course be disturbed.

It may be true that sometimes, indeed often, a horn or horns may have been blown upon the Pulteney Square, at unseasonable hours of the night, in a manner not in accordance with the maxims of the most distinguished composers; it is not impossible that a drum or drums may have been pounded with more vigor than judgment at times when the safety of the republic, either from foreign foes or from internal seditions, did not demand such an expression of military fervor; it will not be confidently denied by the cautious historian that once or twice, or even three times, a large number of republicans may have assembled on the village common to witness a battle between a red bull and a black one: but from these cheerful ebullitions of popular humor, to jump to the conclusion that the public mind was entirely devoted to horns, drums and bulls, is a logical gymnastic worthy of a Congressman.

These aspersions upon the character of the early settlers as men of honor and sobriety, are repelled with much sharpness by the few survivors. "We were poor and rough," say they, "but we were honest. We *fit* and *drinked* some to be sure, but no more than everybody did in those days."

"The man that says we were liars and drunkards, is a liar himself, and tell him so from *me*, will you? There isn't half the honesty in the land now that there was then. Oh! what miserable rogues you are now. You put locks on your doors, and you keep bull dogs, and then you can't keep the thieves out of your houses after all!"

“ I have seen them do in Bath what ye wouldn't do the morrow. When a pack-horse with flour came from Pang Yang or Tioga Pint, I have seen the ladies carry it around to them that hadn't any. Many and many's the time I have seen the M——'s and the C——'s and their daughters take plates of flour and carry them around to every cabin where they were needy. I have seen it often, and ye wouldn't do the same at Bath the morrow.”

In like manner on the Canisteo, you hear—“ People now, friend, ain't a comparison to those Ingens. They were simple creatures, and made their little lodges around by the hills, three hundred Ingens at a time, and never stole a thing. Those Ingens came to our houses, and were around nights, and never stole the first rag. Now, that's the truth, friend. They would snap off a pumpkin now and then perhaps, or take an ear of corn to roast, but they were just the simplest and most honest creatures I ever see. But now, Lord! you can't hang up a shirt to dry but it will be stolen.”

Occasionally there is an expression of contempt at the decay of chivalry. “ There was men enough then that would have knocked a fellow down if he said *Boo*. It isn't half an affront now to call a man a liar or a rascal. If you whip an impudent dog of a fellow, you get indicted.”

Captain Williamson further astonished the backwoods with a newspaper. In 1796, the Bath Gazette and Genesee Advertiser was published by Wm. Kersey and James Eddie. This was the earliest newspaper of Western New York,—the Ontario Gazette, of Ge-

neva, established in the same year, being the second. We have not had the good fortune to find a copy of this ancient sheet. Capt. Williamson, in 1798, said, "The printer of the Ontario Gazette disperses weekly not less than one thousand papers, and the printer of the Bath Gazette from four to five hundred." How long the latter artisan continued to disperse his five hundred papers we are unable to say. The candle was probably a "brief" one, and soon burned out, leaving the land in total darkness, till Capt. Smead's Democratic Torch, twenty years afterwards, illuminated the whole county, and even flashed light into the obscure hollows of Allegany. Of this happy event we may take the present opportunity to speak.

In 1816, Mr. David Rumsey published at Bath the "Farmers' Gazette," and Capt. Benjamin Smead started at the same place the "Steuben and Allegany Patriot." This sheet is the most unquestionable antiquity which the County has produced. Though but thirty-five years have elapsed since Capt. Smead opened his republican fire on the enemies of human rights, (a fire which never so much as slackened for more than a quarter of a century,) such have been the improvements in the art of printing that in comparison with the bright, clean country newspapers of 1851, the Patriot looks rusty enough to have been the Court Journal of that ancient monarch, King Cole, if it were lawful to suppose that the editor would ever have consented to manage the "administration organ" of such a rampant old aristocrat. The *Patriot* differed in several important particulars from our modern county

papers. Geneva, Olean, and Dansville advertisements were important features. The editorial matter was brief, and the first page was occupied with advertisements of sheriff's sales and the like, instead of such "thrilling thousand dollar prize tales" as "The Black Burglar of Bulgaria, or the Bibliomaniac of the Jungles," and others of like character, which in our modern home newspapers sometimes crowd off even the Treasury Report and elegant extracts from the leading journals. The columns devoted to news would poorly satisfy the demand of the present generation. We think the news cold if forty-eight hours old, but then tidings from New York in ten days almost smoked, and Washington items two weeks old were fairly scalding. The political matter was also of an ancient tone. There was a little sparring between *Observer* and *Quietis* on the one hand, and some invisible enemy on the other who dealt his blows under cover of the *Ontario Messenger*. The antiquarian of nice ear will also detect antiquity in the rythm of caucus resolutions. It is comforting to the patriotic citizen to think how much cheaper eloquence is now than formerly: how much casier one can strike the stars with his lofty head from the Buffalo platform, the Philadelphia platform, or the Baltimore platform, than from the Bucktail platform and other old-fashioned scaffolds. The style of abuse which prevails at present in school-house conventions is inclined to be rolling and magnificent; in the days of the old *Patriot* it was direct and well planted, straight, short, and distinct.

It appears that even then there was a brisk agita-

tion about the division of the County. Steuben was like Poland in the clutches of the Three Powers. Three "rogues in buckram let drive" at it,—Penn Yan in front, and Tioga and Allegany in the flanks; and like a man beset with thieves, the stout old County backed against the Pennsylvanian border and "dealt" by the Patriot very efficiently.

In the *Patriot* of Jan. 19, 1819, occurs the following proclamation indicative of the spirit of the times during court week.

#### GRAND HUNT:

A Hunting Party will be formed for the purpose of killing wolves, bears, foxes, panthers, &c., to commence on the 20th of January, at 7 o'clock A. M., and will close the same day at 3 P. M.

This being the week of the sitting of the court, gentlemen from towns of this vicinity are invited to meet at Capt. Bull's Hotel at 7 o'clock, on Friday the 15th inst., to aid in completing arrangements for conducting the grand hunt.

Bath, Jan. 12, 1819.

Capt. HOWELL BULL,

Appointed Commanding Officer of the day."

#### THE BAR, COURT, &c.

The year 1796 is furthermore a memorable one in our annals, for that in the said year was organized that wrangling brotherhood, the Steuben County Bar. A few straggling birds of the legal feather had alighted

on the Pine Plains in the preceding year, but were not recognized as constituting a distinct and independent confederacy. These adventurous eagles however found themselves in 1796 released from allegiance to the Ontario Bar by the act organizing Steuben County, and thenceforth confederated for the more systematic indulgence of their instincts, under the name and style of the *Steuben County Bar*.

A framed court house, and a jail of hewn logs was erected for the furtherance of justice, and in the former of these edifices the first Court of Common Pleas, held in and for the County of Steuben, convened on the 21st day of June, 1796.

The Honorable William Kersey was the presiding Judge. Judge Kersey was a grave and dignified Friend from Philadelphia. He came to Steuben as a surveyor, and practised that profession, and performed the duties of Lord High Chancellor of the county for several years, when he returned to Pennsylvania, greatly esteemed by the people whom he judged. Abraham Bradley, and Eleazer Lindley, Esqs., of Painted Post, were the Associate Judges.

“Proclamation made, and court opened,” says the record. “Proclamation made for silence; commissions to the Judges, Justices, Sheriff, Coroner and Surrogate read; George Hornell, Uriah Stephens and Abel White were qualified as Justices of the Peace; Stephen Ross as Surrogate.”

The following attorneys and counsellors appeared in due form. Nathaniel W. Howell, (late of Canandaigua,) Vincent Matthews, (late of Rochester,) William



Stuart, (who presented "letters patent under the great seal of this State, constituting him Assistant Attorney General, [District Attorney,] for the counties of Onondaga, Ontario, Tioga and Steuben,") Wm. B. Verplanck, David Jones, Peter Masterton, Thomas Morris, Stephen Ross, David Powers.

The first Court of General Sessions was held in 1796. In addition to the Judges mentioned in the Record of the Common Pleas, offenders against the people encountered the following array of Justices of the Peace. John Knox, William Lee, Frederick Bartles, George Hornell, Eli Mead, Abel White, Uriah Stephens, Jr.

The first Grand Jury was composed of the following citizens:—John Sheather, Foreman; Charles Cameron, George McClure, John Cooper, Samuel Miller, Isaac Mullender, John Stearns, Justus Woolcott, John Coudry, John Van Devanter, Alexander Fullerton, Amariah Hammond, John Seely, Samuel Shannon. This jury presented two indictments for assault and battery, and were thereupon discharged.

General McClure makes of the early members of the bar the following notice. "I will mention as a very extraordinary circumstance, that although our new settlement consisted of emigrants from almost all nations, kindred and tongues, yet not a single gentleman of the legal profession made his appearance amongst us during the first two years. However, had they come, we had not much employment for them in their line of business, as all our litigations were settled by compromise, or by the old English law of battle,

and all decisions were final. In our code there was no appellate jurisdiction. In the following year we had a full supply, shortly after the organization of Steuben County.

The first arrival was George D. Cooper, of Rhinebeck, on the North River. He was appointed the first Clerk of the County. The next arrivals were Messrs. Jones, Masterton and Stuart, from New York. Next William Howe Cuyler, from Albany. Mr. Cuyler was a fine portly elegant young man of very fashionable and fascinating manners, of the Chesterfield order. In 1812, General Amos Hall appointed him aid-de-camp, and while stationed at Black Rock he was killed by a cannon ball from Fort Erie. Major Cuyler was a very active intelligent officer, and his death was much lamented. He left a young wife and one son.

Next in order came Dominick Theophilus Blake, one of the sons of *Erin-go-bragh*. He was a well educated young man, but his dialect and manner of speech afforded much amusement for the other members of the bar. He had but little practice and did not remain long with us, but where he went and what became of him, I never have heard.

Samuel S. Haight, Esq., moved from Newtown with his family to Bath. Gen. Haight had an extensive practice, and a numerous and interesting family of sons and daughters. He is yet living, and resides in the county of Allegany. Daniel Cruger, William B. Rochester, William Woods, Henry Welles and Henry W. Rogers, members of the Steuben County Bar,

studied law in Mr. Haight's office. Edward Howell, Esq., of Bath, studied law in Gen. Cruger's office.

Gen. Vincent Matthews resided for many years in Bath. He was said to be at the head of the bar for legal knowledge, but was not much of an advocate. Judge Edwards, Schuyler Strong, Jonas Clark, Jonathan Haight, John Cook, and Leland and McMaster, are all that I can remember of the old stock. Ah, yes! there's one more of my old friends—Cuthbert Harrison, a Virginian, a young man of good sense, and whether drunk or sober, he was a good natured clever fellow."

Mr. Cuthbert Harrison is described as a young man of fine talents, and one of the most eloquent advocates in the western part of the State.

Gen. Daniel Cruger, for a long time a leading member of the bar and an influential politician, was a printer by trade. He worked in the office of the old Bath Gazette, before the year 1800. Afterwards he published a newspaper in Owego. Adopting the legal profession, he practised with success at Bath. In 1712, he was elected a member of the Legislature, and chosen Speaker of the House. After this he was chosen representative in the same body for three successive years. In 1813, he served with credit as Major of Infantry, under Gen. McClure, on the frontiers. In 1816, he was elected Member of Congress. In 1823, or about that time, he was again sent to the Legislature. He afterwards removed to Syracuse, returned to Bath, and in 1833, removed to Virginia, where he continued in the practice of the law until his death, in

1843. Gen. Cruger, under the judicial system of New York, was once Assistant Attorney General, or District Attorney, of the district composed of the counties of Allegany, Steuben, Tioga, Broome and others. After the abolition of this system, he was District Attorney of the county of Steuben.

Of the early Physicians of the county, we have not much to say. Dr. Stockton, of New Jersey, and Dr. Schultz, a German, came in with Capt. Williamson, and were the most prominent of the pioneer physicians. The surgeon, in ancient times, lived a rough life. His ride was through forests without roads, across rivers without bridges, over hills without habitations. Bears rose up before his startled steed as he rode at dusk through the beechen groves of the uplands, and wolves, made visible by the lightning, hung around him as he groped through the hemlocks in the midnight storm, and insanely lusted for the contents of his saddle-bags.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SKETCHES OF THE SETTLEMENT OF VARIOUS DISTRICTS.

#### PLEASANT VALLEY—(TOWN OF URBANA.)

THE settlement in that well known prolongation of the bed of Crooked Lake, famed as Pleasant Valley, was the first made under the auspices of Captain Williamson, and was for many years the most prosperous and one of the most important in the county. The soil was exceedingly productive, and yielded not only an abundance for the settlers, but furnished much of the food by which the inhabitants of the hungry Pine Plains were saved from starvation. For the young settlers in various parts of the county, the employment afforded by the bountiful fields of the valley during haying and harvest, was for many years an important assistance. In the midst of pitiless hills and forests that clung to their treasures like misers, Pleasant Valley was generous and free-handed—yielding fruit, grain and grass with marvellous prodigality.

The first settlers of Pleasant Valley were William Aulls and Samuel Baker. Mr. Aulls, previous to the year 1793, was living in the Southern part of Pennsylvania. In the spring of 1793, he made the first clearing and built the first house in the valley. In

the autumn of the same year he brought up his family. The house which he built stood on the farm now occupied by John Powers, Esq.

Samuel Baker was a native of Bradford County, in Connecticut. When 15 years of age, he was taken prisoner by a party of Burgoyne's Indians, and remained with the British army in captivity till relieved by the Surrender at Saratoga. After this event he enlisted in Col. Willett's corps, and was engaged in the pursuit and skirmish at Canada Creek, in which Captain Walter Butler, (a brother to the noted Col. John Butler,) a troublesome leader of the Tories in the border wars of this State, was shot and tomahawked by the Oneidas. In the spring of 1787, he went alone into the West, passed up the Tioga, and built a cabin on the open flat between the Tioga and Cowenisque, at their junction. He was the first settler in the valley of the Tioga. Harris, the trader, was at the Painted Post, and his next neighbor was Col. Handy, on the Chemung, below Big Flats. Of beasts, he had but a cow, of "plunder," the few trifling articles that would suffice for an Arab or an Arapaho; but like a true son of Connecticut, he readily managed to live through the summer, planted with a hoe a patch of corn on the flats, and raised a good crop. Before autumn he was joined by Captain Amos Stone, a kind of Hungarian exile. Captain Stone had been out in "Shay's War," and dreading the vengeance of the government, he sought an asylum under the southern shadow of Steuben County, where the wilderness was two hundred miles deep, and where the Marshal would not care to

venture, even when backed by the great seal of the Republic. On Christmas day of 1786, Mr. Baker leaving Captain Stone in his cabin, went down the Tioga on the ice to Newtown as previously mentioned,\* and thence to Hudson, where his family was living. At the opening of the rivers in the spring, he took his family down the Susquehanna to Tioga Point in a canoe. A great freshet prevented him from moving up the Chemung for many days, and leaving his family, he struck across the hills to see how his friend Captain Stone fared. On reaching the bank of the river opposite his cabin, not a human being was to be seen, except an Indian pounding corn in a Samp-mortar. Mr. Baker supposed that his friend had been murdered by the savages, and he lay in the bushes an hour or two to watch the movements of the red miller, who proved, after all, to be only a very good-natured sort of a Man-Friday, for at length the Captain came along driving the cow by the bank of the river. Mr. Baker hailed him, and he sprang into the air with delight. Captain Stone had passed the winter without seeing a white man. His Man-Friday stopped thumping at the Samp-mortar, and the party had a very agreeable re-union.

Mr. Baker brought his family up from Tioga Point, and lived here six years. During that time the pioneer advance had penetrated the region of which the lower Tioga Valley is a member. A few settlers had established themselves on the valley below them, and

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\* Chapter 2.

around the Painted Post were gathered a few cabins where now are the *termini* of railroads—the gate of a coal and lumber trade, bridges, mills and machinery. Elsewhere all was wilderness. The region, however, had been partially explored by surveyors and hunters. Benjamin Patterson, while employed as hunter for a party of surveyors, discovered the deep and beautiful valley which extends from the Crooked Lake to the Conhocton. Seen from the brink of the uplands, there is hardly a more picturesque landscape in the county, or one which partakes more strongly of the character of mountain scenery. The abrupt wooded wall on either side, the ravines occasionally opening the flank of the hills, the curving valley that slopes to the lake on one hand, and meets the blue Conhocton range on the other, form at this day a pleasing picture. But to the hunter, leaning on his rifle above the sudden declivity—before the country had been disfigured with a patchwork of farms and forest—the bed of the valley was like a river of trees, and the gulf, from which now rise the deadly vapors of a steam sawmill, seemed like a creek to pour its tributary timber into the broader gorge below.\*

In his wanderings the hunter occasionally stopped at the cabins of Tioga, and brought report of this fine valley. Mr. Baker did not hold a satisfactory title to his Pennsylvania farm, and was inclined to emigrate. Capt. Williamson visited his house in 1792, (probably

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\* This view, and the prospects from the South Hill of Bath, and the summit of the Turnpike between Howard Flatts and Hornellsville, are among the finest in the county.



while exploring the Lyeoming Road,) and promised him a farm of any shape or size, (land in New York, previous to this, could only be bought by the township,) wherever he should locate it. Mr. Baker accordingly selected a farm of some three hundred acres in Pleasant Valley—built a house upon it in the autumn of 1793, and in the following spring removed his family from the Tioga. He resided here till his death in 1842, at the age of 80. He was several years Associate and First Judge of the County Court. Judge Baker was a man of a strong practical mind, and of correct and sagacious observation.

Before 1795, the whole valley was occupied. Beginning with Judge Baker's farm, the next farm towards the lake was occupied by Capt. Amos Stone, the next by William Aulls, the next by Ephraim Aulls, the next by James Shether. Crossing the valley, the first farm (where now is the village of Hammondsport,) was occupied by Capt. John Shether, the next by Eli Read, the next by William Barney, the next by Richard Daniels. Nearly all of these had been soldiers of the revolution. Capt. Shether had been an active officer, and was engaged in several battles. Of him, Gen. McClure says:—"He was Captain of Dragoons, and had the reputation of being an excellent officer and a favorite of Gen. Washington. He lived on his farm at the head of Crooked Lake in good style, and fared sumptuously. He was a generous, hospitable man, and a true patriot." The Shethers were from Connecticut.

Judge William Read was a Rhode Island Quaker. He settled a few years after the revolution on the "Squatter lands" above Owego, and, being ejected, moved westward with his household after the manner of the times. Indians pushed the family up the river in canoes, while the men drove the cattle along the trail on the bank. Judge Read was a man of clear head and strong sense, of orderly and accurate business talent, and was much relied upon by his neighbors to make crooked matters straight.

The Cold Spring Valley was occupied by Gen. McClure in 1802, or about that time. He erected mills, and kept them in activity till 1814, when Mr. Henry A. Townsend entered into possession of the valley, and resided in the well known Cold Spring House till his death in 1839. Mr. Townsend removed from Orange County, in this State, to Bath in 1796. He was County Clerk from 1799 to 1814—the longest tenure in the catalogue of county officers.

Mr. Lazarus Hammond removed from Dannsville to Cold Spring in 1810, or about that time, and afterwards resided near Crooked Lake till his death. He was Sheriff of the county in 1814, and, at a recent period, Associate Judge of the County Court.

#### FREDERICKTON.

At the organization of the county, all that territory which now forms the towns of Tyrone, Wayne, Reading, in Steuben County, and the towns of Barrington and Starkey, in Yates, was erected into the town of

Frederickton. The name was given in honor of Frederick Bartles, a German, who emigrated with his family from New Jersey, in 1793, or about that time, and located himself at the outlet of Mud Lake, at the place known far and wide in early days as *Bartles' Hollow*. He erected under the patronage of Captain Williamson a flouring and saw mill.\* General McClure says of him, "Mr. Bartles was appointed a Justice of the Peace. He was an intelligent, generous and hospitable man. His mill-pond was very large, covering about one thousand acres of land, and was filled with fish, such as pike, suckers, perch and eels, which afforded a great deal of sport for the Bath gentlemen in the fishing season. Such parties of pleasure were entertained by Squire Bartles, free of costs or charges, and in the best style. We fared sumptuously, and enjoyed the company of the old gentleman. He possessed an inexhaustible fund of pleasant and interesting anecdote. His dialect was a mixture of Dutch and English, and was very amusing."

Bartles' Hollow, in the days of Captain Williamson, was thought a spot of great importance. Mud Creek was then a navigable stream, and it was thought that the commerce of Mud Lake and its outlet would require a town of considerable magnitude at the point

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\* Benjamin Patterson was employed by Captain W. to supply the workmen with wild meat while the mill was building. He was paid two dollars a day, and allowed the skins of the animals killed. He killed at this time on "Green Hill" nearly an hundred deer and several bears in three months, and his companion a hunter, named Brocher, destroyed nearly as many.

where Squire Bartles had established himself. In the speculating summer of 1796 the proprietor was offered enormous prices for his hollow, but he declined to part with it. In 1798 Mr. Bartles rafted one hundred thousand feet of boards from his mills to Baltimore. In 1800 he ran two arks from the same place; of which adventure the following minute was entered by the County Clerk, in Vol. 1, of Records of Deeds:—

“*Steuben County.*—This fourth day of April, one thousand eight hundred, started from the mills of Frederick Bartles, on the outlet of Mud Lake, (Frederickstown,) two arks of the following dimensions:— One built by Col. Charles Williamson, of Bath, 72 feet long and 15 feet wide; the other built by Nathan Harvey, 71 feet long, and 15 feet wide, were conducted down the Conhocton, (after coming through Mud Creek without any accident,) to Painted Post for Baltimore. Those arks are the first built in this county, except one built on the Conhocton at White’s saw-mill, five miles below Bath, by a Mr. Patterson, Sweeny and others, from Penna., 70 feet long, and 16 wide, was finished and started about the 20th of March the same year.

This minute is entered to show at a future day the first commencement of embarkation in this (as is hoped) useful invention.

BY HENRY A. TOWNSEND,  
Clerk of Steuben Co.”

The success of Squire Bartles’ arks produced as

great a sensation in the county as the triumph of the "Collins steamships" has created in our day; but craft of this species have long been abandoned by our lumbermen. Mud Creek has failed since the clearing of the forests, and the produce of the Mud Lake country seeks the eastern market by canals and railroads.

Among the early residents in the town of Bradford were Henry Switzer, Samuel S. Camp, Abram Rosenbury, Henry Switzer, senior, Thomas Rolls, Michael Scott, Daniel Bartholomew and Captain John N. Hight.

General William Kernan, of County Kavan, in Ireland, was the first settler in that part of the old town of Fredericktown, which is now the town of Tyrone. He settled in 1800 upon a lot, in a tract of 4000 acres, which had been purchased of Low & Harrison, by Mr. Thomas O'Connor of the County of Roscommon in Ireland. Mr. O'Connor proposed to settle a colony of his countrymen on this tract. He himself lived for a time in a log-house on the hill by Little Lake, above the farm now occupied by Gen. Kernan. Two children, a son and daughter, accompanied him in his sojourn in the woods. The former is now Charles O'Connor, Esq., the eminent lawyer of New York city. A large number of Irish Emigrants settled on the O'Connor tract, but after a few seasons abandoned their improvements—being discouraged at the labor of clearing the land, and discontented at the want of religious advantages according to the practice of the Roman Catholic Church. Gen. Kernan alone remained on the tract.

Other early settlers of the town of Tyrone were Benjamin Sackett, Abram Fleet, sen., Gersham Bennett, Thaddeus Bennett, Abram Bennett, Jonathan Townsend, Capt. John Sebring.

Elder Ephraim Sanford, Josiah Bennett, Solomon Wixon, Josiah Bennett, Joshua Smith, John Teeples, Simeon Sackett, John Sackett, sen., and John Woodward, were among the early settlers of the town of Wayne, in 1800 or 1803. It seems, however, that this township was settled several years before. Judge Dow, of Reading, says, "I think it was in the fall of 1791, I went to view land in township No. 5, second range, (now Wayne). At that time two families only were there, Henry Mapes and Zebulon Huff. I went to the same place again in 1794, and learned that Solomon Wixon, with a large family, two of the name of Silsbee, two or three Sandfords and others had settled there."

Judge Dow settled near the present village of Reading Centre, in 1798. David Culver followed him in 1800. Other early settlers of the towns of Reading and Starkey who came from 1800 to 1804, or about that time, were William Eddy, Abner Hurd, Timothy Hurd, Simeon Royce, Matthew Royce, Reuben Henderson, Andrew Booth, Samuel Gustin, John Bruce, and Samuel Shoemaker. Among others who settled about the year 1806, were John and James Roberts, Daniel Shannon, Caleb Fulkerson, Richard Lanning, George Plumer, and Andrew McDowell.

Judge Dow having been consulted by the writer of this sketch with regard to a supposed inaccuracy in

the outline of Seneca Lake on an old map, gave him a few notes of the settlement of the country, which are as follows :

“I left Connecticut and came to the head of Seneca Lake in April, 1789, and stayed there, and at the Friends’ Settlement until late in the fall, then, after being away a few months, returned to the head of the Seneca Lake in March, 1790, and continued to reside there and at the place where I now reside until the present time. The Friends (Jemima Wilkinson’s followers) made their settlement in 1788 and 1789, but between them and the head of the lake, a distance of 20 miles, it was not settled till the time above mentioned (1798).

“The map represents the Seneca Lake as extending south to Catharine’s Town. This is not correct. There were Indian clearings at the *Head* and at *Catharine* (as the two places were familiarly called) when white people came there in 1789. There was a marsh but a little higher than the level of the lake extending from the beach of the lake, up south, nearly to Catharines, and quite across the valley, excepting a tract of tillable land lying between the northern part of said marsh and the west hill, and extending south from the beach about one-half or three-fourths of a mile to a part of said marsh. This land was called the *Flat at the Head* on which David Culver and myself resided. This flat was the true locality of the *Culverstown* of the map and the village of *Culver’s* of the book, anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

“The rains and the melting of the snow raised the

lake some every spring about that time, (1790), and the greatest part of the marsh was covered with water. A stranger might possibly mark down the marsh for part of the lake.

“I saw Caleb Gardner in 1789, who said he lived at Big Flatts, and understood from him that others had settled there. In the spring of 1790 I saw Col. Erwin at Chemung, who with one or two men was driving some cattle to his son’s at Painted Post. The lands along each side of Catharine Valley were not settled, I think, till 1798 or 1799. People then came and settled, three, four, and five miles southeast of Catharine’s. This place was called Johnson’s Settlement. On the lands west of the valley settlements were made probably about the same time or soon after.

“When I first came to Newtown Point as it was then called (now Elmira) there were but few houses in that place. There were six or seven on the road and at Horse-heads. Further on were two houses, but at that time I think they were not occupied. There was one house within about a mile of Catharine; there were two or three in Catharine, and two or three on the flat at the head of Seneca Lake. I am pretty sure these were all the houses that had been built at that time (April 1789) at Newtown, at the head of the lake and between the two places.”

#### PRATTSBURGH.

[Most of the facts contained in the following sketch of the settlement of the town of Prattsburgh, are derived from a manuscript history of that town prepared by Samuel Hotchkin, Esq., of Fredo-



nia, (late of the village of Prattsburgh,) and politely furnished by that gentleman to the Editor. The manuscript is in the form of a Report made by the direction of the Prattsburgh Lyceum. It is to be regretted that the limits of this volume do not permit more liberal extracts from Mr. Hotchkin's interesting chronicle.]

The pioneer of Prattsburgh was Captain Joel Pratt. There were actual residents within the boundaries of that town before Captain Pratt, but its settlement and sale were conducted by him; by his care it was peopled by citizens who at an early day were reputed by all the county, men of good conscience and steady habits; and by his sound sense, and his discretion in conducting the settlement of the town, he gained an influence and enjoyed a public confidence at home, which entitle him to be styled the Founder of Prattsburgh.

The first purchase of Township Nunnumber Six, in the third range, was made in the year 1797, or about that time, by a surveyor named Preston, from Westerlo, in Albany County. Judge Kersey was admitted to an interest in the purchase by Preston, but a difficulty arose between the two which it is unnecessary to detail and the claims of both were ultimately relinquished. The township was first known as Kerseytown.

In 1799, or about that time, Capt. Pratt came into Steuben County. He had previously resided in Spencertown, -Columbia County, and was induced by the promised importance of the Steuben region, under the Williamson administration, to make a purchase among the discouraging mountains of the Five-mile Creek country in preference to settling himself upon lands in the neighborhood of Geneva or Canandaigua, which were

then held at a lower price than the hemlock hills of Wheeler. Captain Pratt's first purchase was of several thousand acres in Township No. 5, Range 3, being in the present town of Wheeler. Captain Pratt entered the forest with a gang of men, cleared one hundred and ten acres, and sowed it with wheat. On his return to the East, the rough life of the Steuben woods had so reduced and blackened the fair and portly farmer of Columbia County, that he was not recognized by his family. The following winter Captain Pratt removed his family into the wilderness. In 1802, being not altogether satisfied with his purchase, he was permitted to exchange it for the township above.

William Root, of Albany County, joined with him in the contract for the purchase of Township No. 6, by the terms of which contract, Messrs. Pratt and Root charged themselves with the survey, sale and settlement of the Township, two hundred acres being reserved for the support of a resident clergyman. They were to sell no land at a lower price than \$2 50 per acre, and were to receive one-half of all monies paid for land, at a rate exceeding \$2 00 per acre, after they had paid the sum of \$30,000 into the Pulteney Land Office. The connection of Messrs. Pratt & Root was terminated in 1806.

“ Mr. Pratt had determined to form a church as well as a town. It appears to have been his intention to have cast his lot with the hardy pioneers of the forest, while Mr. Root, who continued to reside at Albany, seemed to regard the whole enterprise in no other light than as a hopeful speculation.” . . .

“ Captain Pratt was a member of a Congregational Church in the village of Spencertown. It was his determination to settle himself and family in this Township, and establish a religious society in the order to which he had been accustomed. With a view to the accomplishment of this object, he required every person to whom he sold land, to give a note to the amount of fifteen dollars on each hundred acres of land purchased by him, payable within a given time, with the legal interest annually, till paid to the Trustees of the Religious Society which should be formed.

“ The first permanent settler within this township was Mr. Jared Pratt, a nephew of Capt. Pratt, who came here to reside in the spring of 1801. Mr. Pratt had just set out in his career of life, and brought with him a wife to cheer and sweeten the deprivations incident to a pioneer's life. The farm which he selected, and which he continued to occupy as long as he lived, is the same as is now owned by Mr. John Van Housen, and there a row of Lombardy poplars at this day marks the place of the first shelter built for civilized man within this township. Concerning this family, Rev. Mr. Hotchkin, in his history of the Presbyterian Church in Western New York, takes the following notice:—‘ They constituted the only family in the township for about two years and a half. Their hardships were many, and their privations great. No neighbor within several miles, no roads except a mere trail and a dense forest all around them. To obtain flour for their bread, Mr. Pratt would yoke his oxen, fill his bag with grain, lay it

across the yoke of his oxen, and drive his team eleven miles to Naples, where was the nearest mill to his habitation, the road all the way lying in a dense forest without any habitation contiguous to it.' Mr. Pratt continued to reside here till 1840, when, by a fall, he broke his neck, and died instantly in the 63d year of his age. Throughout his long life, he was respected and beloved, and in his death it may with perfect truthfulness be said, 'Tho' many die as sudden, few as well.'

"The next settler, if settler he might be called, was Daniel Buell. He built him a rude shanty on what is now an orchard, and attached to Mr. Isaac Ainsworth farm. Buell was a jolly and most eccentric bachelor. His usual and almost constant employment was hunting. He resided here but a few years, when he sought a deeper solitude, and soon afterwards was murdered by a party of Indians in Ohio."—(*MS. Hist. of Prattsburgh.*)

Rev. John Niles, a licentiate of a Congregational Association, settled, in 1803, with his family on a lot of eighty acres, being part of the farm occupied by the late Mr. Josiah Allis, upon the east side of the present Bath road, which was given to him by Capt. Pratt as an inducement to settle upon his township. "The Sabbath after Mr. Niles' arrival he held divine service in Jared Pratt's house, and from that day to the present, these people have never been without these sacred ministrations. About this time, the sons of Capt. Pratt, in advance of their parents, settled upon the

farm which has ever since been held by some one or more of his immediate descendants.

“Next in order of settlers, and in the winter of 1804, came the families of William P. Curtis, Samuel Tuthill, and Pomroy Hull. At this time, the only road leading to town was the Two Rod Road, (from Bath towards Naples.) Solsbury Burton came likewise in 1804, and occupied what used to be well known as the Burton farm. About this time came Capt. Pratt himself, with the remainder of his family from the East Hill, in Wheeler, and where he had resided for two or three years previous.

“In the year 1806, we find a goodly array of settlers. In addition to those we have named, are the following:—Enoch Niles, Rufus Blodget, Isaac Waldo, Judge Hopkins, John Hopkins, Dea. Ebenezer Rice, Robert Porter, Dea. Gamaliel Loomis, Samuel Hayes, Dea. Abial Lindley, Moses Lyon, Uriel Chapin, Asher Bull, Bohan Hills, Stephen Prentiss, and perhaps others.

“Whoever, at the present day, will walk through our grave-yard, to read there the records of the past generation, will find most of these names upon those rude head-stones, now defaced and nearly obliterated by the hand of time, for most of them have long since gone down to the silent resting place of the dead. The inscriptions there recorded are homely, but they are truthful.”—(*MS. Hist.*)

The first extensive clearing in Prattsburgh was one of seventy acres, including the Public Square of the

Village, made in 1803, under the direction of Captain Pratt. The first framed building was a barn built by Joel Pratt, Jr., in 1804, "and that identical building yet stands by Bishop Smith's orchard, and upon his lot. This building was during the first few years of our annals a sort of "Hotel Dieu." Families there rested until they could arrange the rude appointment of their own homes, sometimes in numbers of half a dozen at once. And till the erection of the first meeting-house, it was the usual place of holding public worship.....The first merchants of our town were Joel Pratt, jr. and Ira Pratt, two sons of Captain Pratt. The first hotel-keeper was Aaron Bull. His house, which was but a log one, was probably opened in 1806 or 1807, and adjoined Dr. Pratt's office. The buildings of Dr. Hayes now cover the same ground.....The same burying ground we at present use for interment, was set apart for this purpose in 1806. The first contribution to this now immense multitude, was Harvey Pratt, a young man of 22 years, and son of Capt. Joel Pratt." (*MS. Hist.*)

The Congregational church was organized in 1804, and at that time consisted of eleven members. The first church edifice was erected in 1807, and was a framed building standing near the southeast corner of the public square. The worshippers it seems were at first inclined to build it of logs, greatly to the displeasure of Capt. Pratt, who "retorted upon the society the anathema pronounced against those who dwelt in ceiled houses while the temple of the Lord laid waste."

Rev. John Niles and Rev. James H. Hotchkin were the early ministers of this society.

The West Hill settlement was commenced in 1805, by Stephen Prentiss, Warham Parsons, and Aaron Cook. The settlement of Riker's Hollow was commenced in 1807, by Michael Keith, who was joined in 1810, by Thomas Riker, John Riker, and William Drake.

“Captain Pratt, who figures so conspicuously in our early history, and who was the founder of our town, and to a great extent the fashioner of its polity, continued to reside among this people till 1820, when he ended his mortal career. His last days were a sort of patriarchal retirement, and to this day his memory is cherished by all who knew him.”—(*MS. Hist.*)

Judge Porter died in 1847. He was for many years one of the most prominent citizens of the town, and was a man of liberal education, of much literary taste, and an efficient and conscientious magistrate. The annalist, of the town says, “He probably filled more offices of trust among this people than any other man of his day. Our early town records show that all the most responsible offices within our bounds have from time to time been filled by him.”

Rev. James H. Hotchkin, a venerable and widely known citizen of Prattsburgh, (author of *The History of the Presbyterian Church in Western New York*, heretofore alluded to,) died September 2d, 1851. He was the son of Beriah Hotchkin, a pioneer missionary. He graduated at Williams College, 1800; studied theology with Dr. Porter, of Catskill, removed to

Prattsburgh in 1809, and there labored twenty-one years. The *Genesee Evangelist* says of him "He had a mind of a strong masculine order, well disciplined by various reading, and stored with general knowledge. The doctrinal views of the good old orthodox New England stamp which he imbibed at first, he maintained strenuously to the last, and left a distinct impression of them wherever he had an opportunity to inculcate them. His labors through the half century were 'abundant' and indefatigable. He had the happiness of closing his life in the scenes of his greatest usefulness."

#### WHEELER.

The first permanent settler in this town was Capt. Silas Wheeler, a native of Rhode Island, who emigrated from Albany County, in the State of New York, in the year 1790 or 1800. Capt. Joel Pratt made a purchase of several thousand acres in this town, in the year previous, and had made a clearing of one hundred and ten acres, and raised a crop of wheat from it, on what is now known as the "Mitchell farm." Capt. Pratt was permitted, by Capt. Williamson, to exchange this for a tract in the town of Prattsburgh, where he removed in 1804, or about that time.

Capt. Wheeler had been a man of adventure. He was one of Benedict Arnold's men in the perilous march through the forests of Maine, and at the assault of Quebec stood near Montgomery when he fell. He was four times taken prisoner in the revolutionary war—twice on land, and twice when roving the high seas



as privateer's man. From his first captivity, he was soon released by exchange. After another capture, he lay in prison more than a year. Being taken a second time on one of the daring privateers that tormented the British coast, he was confined in the Jail of Kinsale, in Ireland, and condemned to be hung as a pirate—or at least was very rudely treated, and threatened with hanging by powers that had the authority to make good their threats. He escaped this disagreeable fate by the assistance of a friendly Irishman, and of the distinguished orator and statesman Henry Grattan. Mr. Grattan procured for him a passport, protected him from press-gangs and the police, and secured for him a passage to Dunkirk, in France.

Capt. Wheeler was induced to settle in Steuben County by Preston, the Surveyor, (mentioned in the sketch of the settlement of Prattsburgh,) who, on his return to Westerlo, spread the most glowing accounts of the fertility and prospects of the Conhocton Country. Capt. Wheeler's settlement was made at the place now occupied by his grand-son, Mr. Grattan H. Wheeler.

Capt. Wheeler's first trip to mill, is worthy of record. There were, at the time when he had occasion to "go to mill," three institutions in the neighborhood where grinding was done—at the Friend's Settlement, at Bath, and at Naples. The mill-stones of Bath had suspended operations—there being nothing there to grind, as was reported. Capt Wheeler made a cart, of which the wheels were sawn from the end of a log of curly-maple; the box was of corresponding architecture. He started for Naples with two oxen

attached to this vehicle. Two young men went before the oxen with axes and chopped a road, and the clumsy chariot came floundering through the bushes behind—bouncing over the logs, and snubbing the stumps, like a ship working through an ice-field. The first day they reached a point a little beyond the present village of Prattsburgh—a distance of six miles from their starting point—and on the second, moored triumphantly at the mill of Naples.

Capt. Wheeler was a man famous for anecdotes throughout all the land. Not one of the multitude of Captains, who flourished in our country in early days, earned his military title more fairly. He died in 1828, aged 78. Hon. Grattan H. Wheeler, son of Capt. Wheeler, died in 1852. He had been a prominent citizen of the county many years, and had served in the State and National Legislature.

After Capt. Wheeler's settlement, lots were purchased, and improvements made by persons residing abroad, some of whom afterwards established themselves on these farms. Thomas Aulls, Esq., a son of William Aulls, the first settler of Pleasant Valley, and Col. Barney, of the same neighborhood, with Philip Murtle, who lived on the farm now owned by Gen. Otto F. Marshall, were among the earliest settlers after the Wheelers. These, with settlers named Bear, Ferral, and Rifle, were mentioned by our informant as constituting all, or nearly all, of the original stock of settlers. Esq. Gray came in at an early time. The Gulf Road to Bath was opened by Capt. Wheeler; the Kennedyville Road was opened a year or two after—

wards. The first saw-mill in the town stood at the Narrows of the Five Mile Creek, and was built by Capt. Wheeler.

#### PULTENEY.

The first settlement in the town of Pulteney, was made on Bully Hill, by John Van Camp and D. Thompson, in 1797. The following are the names of other early settlers from 1799 to 1807:—Samuel Miller, G. F. Fitz Simmons, Thomas Hoyt, Abraham Bennet, Ephraim Eggleston, John Kent, Joseph Hall, senior, Samuel Wallis, John Turner, John Ellis, Augustus Tyler, and Ezra Pelton. John Gulick kept the first dry goods store in the town.\*

#### HOWARD.

Abraham Johnston settled in 1806 where Richard Towle now lives, and about the same time, Samuel Baker settled where J. Rice now lives, and Reuben Smith, Abraham Smith and Abel Bullard, settled on the road between Goff's Mills and the old Turnpike, near the old State Road. Jacob, Benjamin and Daniel N. Bennett, settled in 1807, or about that time, on what is yet called Bennett's Flatts, Job B. Rathbun, with three of his brothers, in the Rathbun settlement, in 1808 or 1809. William Allen and David Smith, in the Pond settlement in 1810 or '11, and Captain Joel Rice and Esq. Israel Baldwin in 1811 or '12. Major Thomas Bennet settled on the old turnpike about

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\* Communicated by Melchior Wagener, Es

six miles east of Hornellsville, toward 1808. Colonel Henry Kennedy built a saw-mill at Goff's Mills in 1809. William Goff, Esq., came in in 1812.

The town of Howard was set off from the old town of Canisteo in 1812. The first town meeting was held at the house of Simeon Bacon, on the old turnpike, in the spring of 1813. In the year 1812, there were about thirty families in the town.\*

#### HORNBY AND ORANGE. †

Asia and Uriah Nash, the first settlers of Hornby, settled in 1814, in the north part of the town called Nash settlement. Edward Stubbs, Ezra Shaw, Samuel Adams, and Jesse Underwood, settled in 1815. In the same year, Jesse Platt, John Babbins and Amasa Stanton, settled in the Platt settlement, in the southwestern part of the town. James S. Gardner, Chester Knowlton, and Adin Palmer settled in the Palmer settlement in 1816.

Darius Hunt, Chauncey Hunt, James Overhiser and Thomas Hurd, were the first settlers in Orange, on Mead's Creek, probably in 1812.

#### CONHOCTON. ‡

Captain Williamson, about the time of the settlement of Bath, sent a man named Bivin, to the *Twenty-two mile Tree*, (now Blood's Corners,) to keep a tavern.

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\* Communicated by William Goff, Esq.

† Communicated by Henry Gardner, Esq.

‡ Communicated by Mr. Levi Chamberlain.

This point was known in early times as *Bivin's Corners*. The first settlement made in the town of Conhocton after this, was made, according to the best of our information, in the Raymond Settlement, by James and Aruna Woodward. In 1806, Joseph Chamberlain, of Herkimer County, settled on the Davis farm, near Liberty Corners. His household consisted of a cow and a dog. All his property, besides his axe, was contained in a small pack. For his cow the accommodations were rather rude. When the hour of milking arrived, the settler resorted to the strange expedient of driving the beast "a straddle of a log," and milking into a notch cut with his axe. Into this he crumbled his bread, and ate therefrom with a wooden spoon.

In the following year, Levi Chamberlain, Captain Jones Cleland, Joseph Shattuck and Deacon Horace Fowler, settled in this neighborhood. Other early settlers were—Timothy Sherman, James Barnard, Samuel Rhoades, Jesse Atwood, Isaac Morehouse, and Charles Burlingham. The Brownsons settled at Loon Lake at an early day. Abram Lint settled at Lint Hill, in 1809, or about that time, and afterwards the Hatches, the Ketchers, and others.

Captain Cleland built in 1808 the first mills. Levi Chamberlain built in 1809, the first frame house at Liberty Corners, and Joseph Shattuck kept the first tavern at the same place about the same time.

On account of some legislative awkwardness, the settlers in the northern part of the town, went for several years to Bath, to vote at town meetings, while those in the southern part went to Dansville. The

two squads of voters used to meet each other on the road when going to the polls.

#### THE COUNTRY SOUTH OF CANISTEO.

The following are names of settlers who were living in 1810 in the town of Troupsburgh, which then comprised nearly all the territory in the county south of the Canisteo River, "Beginning on the east side, the settlers were Caleb Smith, Daniel Johnson, Lemuel Benham, Breakhill Patrick, Samuel B. Rice, Nathaniel Mallory, Elijah Johnson, Joseph Smith, Reazin Searle and Bethuel Tubbs. Further west, on the old State Road, were Ebenezer Spencer, Andrew Simpson and a family of Marlatts, Elisha Hance, Philip Cady, Elijah Cady, Samuel Cady, Peter Cady, Caleb Colvin, Matthew Grinnolds, William Card, Charles Card; and west of the old State Road, were Nathan Coffin, Henry Garrison, Edmund Robinson, Jeremiah Nudd. The last three came in 1812, Alanson Perry came in 1810. There was some others here in an early day, as by the census of 1815, there were over 500 inhabitants."\* Daniel Johnson was Supervisor till 1812, and Charles Card from 1813 to 1819. Samuel B. Rice was Town Clerk for about twenty years. The first grist-mill was built by Caleb Smith, the second by George Martin in 1812. "There was but little improvement made for several years, and many of the first settlers became discouraged and emigrated to the West, and the town seemed to be at a stand. Those remaining have become

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\* Communicated by Charles Card, Esq.

comfortable in circumstances." The Brotzman's, Andrew Boyd, the Rowleys and John Craig were early settlers of Jasper.

ORANGE.\*

"That part of the Town of Orange called Mead's Creek was settled, or began to be settled, a few years previous to 1820. Among the inhabitants who were there previous to or about that time, were Jedediah Miller, Andrew Fort, David Kimball, Esq., and his brother Moses, John Dyer, Sylvester Goodrich, and three settlers named Hewitt. Joshua Chamberlain came there four or five years later and bought the land where the village of Monterey stands, of a man by the name of De Witt.

"The northeast part of the Town of Orange known by the appellation of Sugar Hill, did not receive its name from any distinguished elevation or large hill, but from the following circumstance. Some of the men and boys from the older settlements used to come to this place to make sugar in the spring of the year, while it was yet a wilderness. They had traversed the woods in quest of deer, and taken notice of the fine groves of maple in this locality, and as there were no settlers on the land, and nobody in their way, they had an excellent chance for making sugar; and as they had to give the place some name, they called it Sugar Hill. The settlement began about the year 1819 or 1820. Lewis Nichols, William Webb, Thomas Horton, Abraham

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\* Communicated by Dr. Silas B. Hibbard, of Sugar Hill.

Allen, John Allen, Ebenezer Beach, Mr. Eveleth, Seymour Lockwood, and two families of Comptons, were among the first settlers. Dr. Hibbard arrived in 1821, and Abraham Lybolt, Esq., came about the same time.

“After the commencement of the settlement the land was very soon taken up by actual settlers. The fertility of the soil, its proximity to the head of Seneca Lake, their anticipated place of market, the easy manner of obtaining the land from the Land Office at Bath, their confidence in the validity of the title, and perhaps the novelty of the name, might all have contributed to the speedy settlement of the place.”

#### CAMPBELL.\*

THE first permanent settlers of that part of the old Town of Bath which is now the Town of Campbell, were Joseph Stevens, Robert Campbell, Solomon Campbell, and Archa Campbell. In addition to these, the remaining inhabitants of the Town in the year 1800, and about that time, were, Elias Williams, blacksmith, Samuel Calkins, farmer, Abram Thomas and Isaac Thomas, hunters, James Pearsall, farmer, David McNutt, Joseph Woolcott, and ~~Camp~~ Sailor.

#### AVOCA.

AVOCA was known in the early part of Col. Williamson's time as “Buchanan's,” or the *Eight-Mile-Tree*. The name of the first settler, as the title of the settlement indicates, was Buchanan. He was established at

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\* Communicated by Mr. Samuel Cook, of Campbell.



that point by the agent and kept "accommodations" for travellers. A correspondent has returned the names of the oldest residents as follows: James McWhorter, Abraham Towner, Gersham Towner, Daniel Tilton, John Donnahee, Spence Moore, Henry Smith, Allen Smith, who have been residents for about thirty years, and John B. Calkins, Joseph Matthewson, Gersham Salmon, James Davis, and James Silsbee, who have been residents about twenty-four years.

#### WAYLAND.\*

THE first settlement in the town of Wayland was made by — Zimmerman, in 1806, on the farm now occupied by J. Hess, at the depot. The north part of the town was settled by Captain Bowles (1808), Mr. Hicks (about 1810), Thomas Begole (1814), Mr. Bowen (1808), and John Hume (1808).

The settlements at Loon Lake in the south part of the town, were made in 1813 by Salmon Brownson, James Brownson, Elisha Brownson, and Isaac Willie,

The settlers of the central part of the town were Walter Patchin (1814), Dr. Warren Patchin (1815), Dennis Hess (1815), Benjamin Perkins, and Samuel Draper.

"No road passed through the town except the ancient one from Bath to Dansville. It was a hard town to settle, and people were generally poor. They passed through many hardships and privations, but now our town is in a prosperous condition.

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\* Communicated by Rev. E. Brownson.

“ One circumstance connected with the early settlement of this town may be somewhat interesting. In 1815, there being a scarcity of bread, I went through the towns of Springwater, Livonia, and Sparta, and thence to Dansville, in search of grain for sale, and none was to be had in those towns, nor in Western New York. People had to hull green wheat and rye for food. I found a field of rye on William Perine’s farm which was thought nearly fit to cut. I went home and got some neighbors, and with oxen and cart went and cut some of it, threshed it, and took it to the mill and had it mashed, for it was too damp to grind, and thought ourselves the happiest people in the world because we had bread.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE AIR CASTLE VANISHING—THE CLOSE OF COL.  
WILLIAMSON'S AGENCY—HIS CHARACTER.

Nearly sixty years have passed away since the Scottish Captain started from the West Branch in pursuit of the air-castle which shone so bravely like a balloon to him, looking northward from the Cliffs of Northumberland. The changes which have in the mean time been wrought upon this continent, are without a parallel in the world's annals. Prophecy has been put to silence: conjecture has proved a fool; for the things which have been accomplished exceed so far any thing promised in the visions of political prophets, or in the ravings of dreamers, that the extravagance of our ancient soothsayers is this day accounted moderation. No conquest of Goths, or Tartars can be compared for rapidity with that which has been achieved by the woodsmen of America in the overthrow of a forest as broad as an ocean. The little weapon which they wielded against the innumerable host that they went forth to conquer, seemed enchanted, like the swords of those champions of old, who are said to have slain their pagan enemies till rivers were choked, and hollows became hillocks. States have been founded,

cities, built, savage rivers made highways, prairies where the Genius of Barbarism fed his herds of elk and buffalo, made pastures for mules and bullocks, and the lakes which lay afar off in the solitudes, crossed only by flocks of wild fowl and the fleets of Indian admirals, have been gladdened by the keels of steamships and the watchful flame of light-houses. The utmost western wilderness which the settler of "The Genesee" beheld over the Lakes, and which he surmised might become the dwelling place of desperate pioneers when he had been a century in his grave, is now but midway between Niagara and the outposts of the Republic, and caravans of restless men, pressing beyond these momentary borders, have crossed the Cordilleras and built cities on the coast of the Pacific.

Where now is the gallant Scot and his city? The Genesee country has not lagged in the advances of the Republic. Its population is counted by hundred thousands, and its wealth is told by millions; but the memory of the city builder and his schemes has almost perished. While the Northern counties have been making almost unexampled strides to power and opulence, the district which wise men of the last century pointed at as the centre of future Western commerce has dragged its slow length along in poverty and obscurity, and only by the sheerest labor has reached its present position of independence. The Great Western Highway was diverted from the valley of the Conhocton. For a quarter of a century the wealth of the North and West has been rolling in one tremendous torrent to the Mohawk and the Hudson, and by the

side of the channel through which it poured, the demon, our ancient enemy aforementioned, has struck swamps and salt-bogs with his staff, and forthwith cities have risen from the mire. The little river which was to have been the drudge of the broad northwest, carrying to the seaboard squadrons of rough arks laden with the grains of Genesee and far-off Michigan, has been happily delivered from that tedious servitude, and rambles idly through its valley, turning a few mill-wheels and watering meadows. The fair valley of Bath, instead of groaning under the weight of a wilderness of bricks where brokers and cashiers, and other mercantile monsters might go about, gratifying their financial instincts to the full, bears at this day only a quiet village and a few ranges of farms, and is girdled by wooded hillsides as wild as in the days when the great Captain of the Six Nations was wont to rest with his warriors under their shadows,

The memory of the Scot and his city has almost perished. A Senator of the United States, addressing not long since the members of the Legislatures of the State of New York, guests of the city of New York, at the Astor House, spoke of the prediction of a traveller in the year 1800, that the village of Bath on the Conhocton river, would in fifty years become the commercial metropolis of the State of New York.\* The

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\* A portion of the speech of Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD, at the Astor House, on the evening of March 22, 1851, is thus reported in the New York Courier and Enquirer:

"Gentlemen: It seems to me that we can improve this festival occasion by considering how intimate is the relation between the

public heard it with surprise. Many men of the past generation remembered the name of Williamson, but of the present generation few, except citizens of Western New York, knew of the attempted assassination of the great Atlantic city.

The story of the downfall of the Backwoods Baron and his city, is a brief one. Ten years Col. Williamson

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City and the State,—how essential each is to the other. There is a town in the interior of the State, far away in what was lately known as the secluded, sequestered part of it, Bath by name. Many of the representatives of the Rural Districts know it well: the members from Steuben can speak for it. Of this town I wish to speak. It is a beautiful but quiet one, situated in the delightful valley and on the banks of the Conhocton, a tributary of the Susquehanna. But those who know it well have remarked, that it has a broad and magnificent plan, imperfectly filled out. There are houses on corners, designating streets and avenues, without inhabitants. In short, it was laid out for a great city, but has long since renounced all ambitious pretensions. You do not know how this has happened. Well if on your return to Albany, you will call on my excellent friend (Mr. Street,) the State Librarian, he will give you a small duodecimo volume, published in the year 1800, containing an account of a journey performed by an English gentleman in the short space of six weeks, from the city of New York all the way to Niagara Falls. That traveller visited Bath, then in the day-spring of its growth, and he recorded of it that it was destined to be the greatest commercial metropolis of the State of New York.—The Hudson was only a short arm of the sea. It did not penetrate the interior far enough to take a hold of the trade of the country. Bath was to receive all of it that could be diverted from the channel of the St. Lawrence and the market of Quebec, and send it down through the Conhocton and the Susquehanna to Chesapeake Bay. Had that calculation been realized, Bath might have been a city like Albany, and New York would have been a city over which the President could have had but little ambition to preside.”—(Cheers.)

lived on the Conhocton, and exhausted all chemistry in his experiments upon the possibility of turning a castle of rainbows into stone. His expenditures had been enormous, and the British proprietors began to grumble audibly. The towers of glass, which they once imagined they saw glimmering in the wilderness, were scrutinized with profound suspicion. But whatever doubt there might be about the reality of those structures, as to one thing there could be no doubt at all. The greedy wilderness was swallowing the fortune of the Pulteneys with as little gratitude as an anaconda. Hundreds of thousands of pounds had been thrown to that monster, and like the grave it was yet hungry. To satisfy such a remorseless appetite one needed a silver mine, or a credit with the goblins.

Col. Williamson, however, was not discouraged. Time enough has not been given, he argued. Even a magician would not undertake to perform such a chemical exploit in ten years. The brilliant balloon which overhangs the wilderness is not yet securely anchored, it is true, and sways to and fro as if it might possibly rise into the air and sail away. Give but a few years more and every thing will be accomplished.

But the faith and patience of the proprietors had become utterly exhausted. They had had enough of balloons and ballooning, and were deaf to argument. Like one awaking from enchantment, the Baronet saw the towers of ivory to be but squat pens of logs, and the spires of glass, but long dead trunks of hemlocks, bristling with spikes and blackened with fire. It was determined to change the system which had regulated

the estate. Accordingly, in 1802, Col. Williamson descended from the throne, and Robert Troup, Esq., of the city of New York reigned in his stead.\*

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\* Colonel Williamson held the Pulteney Estates in New York in his own name, and conveyed them to Sir William Pulteney in the month of March, 1801. The act of 1798, permitting aliens to purchase and hold real estate in this State, (passed, it is said, through the influence of Col. W., who was a member of the Legislature in that year,) expired, by its own limitation, on the 2d of April following.

Col. Williamson assigned to Sir William Pulteney on the 13th of December, 1800, for the consideration of \$300,000, all the bonds and mortgages held by him.

In the month of March following, he executed to Sir William Pulteney five deeds, which were delivered as escrows to Robert Troup, Esq., to be delivered to Sir W. P., in case certain conditions were performed before the 25th day of October, 1801, which conditions were performed by the execution of a deed from Pulteney to Williamson, dated 23d July, 1801. Of these five deeds, the first, dated 4th March, 1801, conveys 50,000 acres of land in the County of Ontario; the second, dated 5th March, 1801, conveys twenty lots in the heart of the city of New York, 1784 acres of land in the County of Otsego, 1299 acres in the town of Unadilla, 1400 acres in the County of Herkimer, 9000 in the County of Montgomery, 34108 acres in the County of Chenango: the third, dated 27th March, 1801, conveys 7000 acres of land in the County of Chenango; the fourth, dated 31st March, 1801, conveys 5000 acres of land in the Gerundigut township, and 600 acres in the town of Galena, in Cayuga, and all lands in the State of New York, held by the said Williamson: the fifth is an assignment of all the personal property, notes, bonds, bills, and securities of every description, held by the said Williamson. The consideration expressed in each, is one dollar, and all lands sold, or contracted to be sold out of the tracts conveyed, are reserved.

By the instrument executed on the 23d day of July, 1801, Sir William Pulteney, in consideration of the execution of the said five escrows, and of the sum of twenty shillings, agreed—first, to accept and pay nine sets of bills of exchange drawn by Williamson on the 24th March, 1801, for the sum of £5,000 sterling, at two, three and



Col. Williamson, after the termination of his agency, returned to England. He afterwards made occasional visits to America. He died in the year 1807, (at sea, it is said,) of the yellow fever, while on a mission from the British Government to the Havana.

He was a man of spirit, energy and ability. Prepossessing in person, free and frank in manner, generous and friendly in disposition, he is remembered to this day as a "fine fellow" by the farmers who were once young pioneers, and opened his roads and hewed his forests. A keen follower of sports, a lover of the horse, the rifle and the hound, he was accounted a *man* by the rudest foresters. High-bred, intelligent, of engaging address, and readily adapting himself to the circumstances of all men, he was equally welcome to the cabin of the woodsman or the table of the Peer: and whether discussing a horse-race with Canisteo, a school project with Prattsburgh, or the philosophy of over-shot wheels with Bartle's Hollow, he was entirely at home, and pronounced opinions which were listened to with respect. His hale, prompt, manly greeting

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four months after sight: 2d, to indemnify Williamson against the effects of bonds and mortgages, to the amount of about \$70,000: 3d, to pay Col. W. in three years after the 1st April, 1801, £20,000 sterling, and the interest on that sum at five per cent. at the end of each year, till all was paid, as a compensation for his services in managing the concerns of the Genesee Association, and also £15,000 to pay debts contracted by him by reason of his management of the said concerns: and finally, all claims and demands against Col. W. arising before the 1st April, 1801, are relinquished and discharged.

These facts appear from records in the office of Secretary of State, copies of which in the possession of Robert Campbell, Esq., of Bath, the Editor was permitted to examine.

won for him the good will of the settler, and gave him influence at the occasional assemblies of the citizens. A crowd of men, for example, waiting in the meadows behind the Land Office for the beginning of a horse-race, became impatient, and at last Canisteo began to kill time by fighting. The Colonel, galloping over from the village, had but to exclaim, in his clear, cheerful way, as he rode around the mob, "What, boys, have you begun the fun already? Don't be in such haste," and wrathful Canisteo became pacified.

He had a gallant and impetuous way of doing what was to be done. Where he was, everything was kept stirring. The ordinary routine of a land agent's life had no charms for him. To sit in a drowsy office the live-long day, among quills, and maps, and ledgers, hearing complaints of failing crops, sickness, and hard times, pestered with petitions for the making of new roads and the mending of broken bridges, was unendurable. He must ride through the woods, talk with the settlers, awaken the aliens, show his lands to strangers, entertain gentlemen from abroad. By the pious and substantial settlers from the east, of whom there were many in the county, his tastes and practices were sternly condemned, but even these, while they were offended at his transgressions, and felt sure that no good would come of a state founded by such a Romulus, acknowledged the spirit and vigor of the man, and were willing to ascribe his failings partially to a military and European education.

He was dark of feature, tall, slender, and erect of figure. His habits were active, and he pleased the

foresters by vaulting lightly to his saddle, and scouring the roads at full gallop:

Gen. McClure says, "Col. Williamson was an excellent, high-minded, honorable man, generous, humane, obliging and courteous to all, whether rich or poor. In truth and in fact he was a gentleman in every sense of the word. He was well qualified for the duties conferred upon him as agent of such an immense estate, and for the settlement and growth of a new country, so long as Sir William Pulteney would furnish the means to improve it."

Col. Williamson's objects and motives in conducting the affairs of the estate, were not merely those of a speculator. His pride and spirit were aroused. In invading the wilderness, in hewing, burning, bridging, turning and overturning, till the stubborn powers of the forest were conquered, broken on the wheel, and hanged up *in terrorem*, like the rebellious in ancient warfare—in these he found excitement. To stand in the midst of the mountains, and hear the crashing of trees, the ringing of axes, and the rattling of saw-mills—to see wild streams made tame, to see the continuous line of emigrant barges moving up the lower river, and to feel himself the centre of the movement, would brighten the wits of a dull man, much more invigorate one so wakeful as Col. Williamson. In his fine, dashing way, he would carry the wilderness by storm. Down with the woods; down with the hills; build bridges; build barns; build saw-mills, and shiver the forest into slabs and shingles—these were his orders, and they express the spirit of his administra-

tion. In this swashing onslaught his enthusiasm was fired. Besides, the money which he controlled, and the power which he wielded, made him a great man in the land. He was Baron of the Backwoods—Warden of the Wilderness—Hemlock Prince—King of Saw-mills. There was not a greater than he in all the land of the west. When, therefore, he found himself at the head of a little state which might sometime become great, the Napoleon of a war against the woods, it is not wonderful that in the excitement of building Babylons, or in the exultation of an Austerlitz among the pines, he should be animated with the thoughts and emotions which principals are not accustomed to expect in their agents.

All these dashing operations were fine sport to the men who rode on the whirlwind, but to the magician over the water, who was expected not only to raise the wind, but to keep it whirling, the fun was rather exhausting. To support a missionary of civilization in the American backwoods, purely out of philanthropy, or to keep amateur city-builders in funds, merely that gentlemen might enjoy themselves, were acts of benevolence, not, of course, to be expected from the British Baronet. When, therefore, Sir William Pulteney became alarmed at the encroachments upon his fortune, and abruptly stopped the operations of his viceroy, it would be difficult to say what fault could be reasonably found with him for this determination. Considering the remoteness of his possessions, their tenure under the supposed uncertain laws of a republic, and the great uncertainty of the enterprise attempted, he did

no more than a man of ordinary prudence would have done, in his situation, in determining upon a change or a modification of policy, and the exercise of greater caution in his expenditures.

Time has proved that the reasons and expectations which induced Col. Williamson to undertake his great enterprize were ill-founded; and upon the strength of these acknowledged errors, he is often sweepingly condemned as a visionary—a heedless, wasteful man, engaged in business of which he was ignorant, and for which he had little capacity. Against such broad and unqualified condemnation we must protest. He founded his schemes upon the expectation that the tract known as the Genesee country would some time become a region of vast wealth, and that through it the products of an indefinite Western country would pass to the Atlantic coast. Has time branded him a dreamer for these things? His error then, was, in mistaking the channel through which Genesee and the West would go to the sea-board. But, considering the modes of transit known to the world at that time, and the shape and position of the navigable waters which drained the Genesee, is any one prepared to say that there was a flagrant absurdity in pointing out the Valley of the Chemung as the destined outlet of the undefined Northern country? Most men of sense and experience, at the close of the last century, entertained this opinion. A prophet, it is true, might have unveiled the future to the Scottish chief, and shown him canals and railroads; but, except the wig-wam of the Indian doctor, where the destinies were

questioned by rattling porcupine-quills, and shaking the horns of a buffalo-bull, there was no oracle for the Western Cadmus to consult. To abuse Col. Williamson and his coadjutors, for want of common foresight, is as unreasonable as it will be for newspapers, sixty years hence, to be astounded at the modern project of connecting the Atlantic and Pacific by railway to San Francisco, when "anybody might have seen" that the natural port of the Pacific coast was Nootka Sound, and that the way to get there from New York would be to take the wires by way of Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan river.

## CHAPTER IX.

STEBEN COUNTY SINCE THE PERIOD OF SETTLEMENT—DISASTERS—PROGRESS—PROSPECTS—THE CITIZENS AND THE LAND PROPRIETORS.

THE history of that province over which those blameless shepherds of the people, the supervisors of Steuben County, wave their transitory sceptres, has now been traced with as much accuracy as the sources of information permitted, from the earliest ages to the beginning of the nineteenth century. It has appeared how, in the most distant times of which record can be borne, that region was covered with the waters of the sea; drifting icebergs then, perchance, scratched the tops of the hills, and our home was a pasture where marine herdsmen drove their ungainly cattle—whales, sea-lions, and mighty serpents of the ocean, and the shark and the sword-fish prowled along the trails afterwards trodden by the Indian and the Tory. It has furthermore appeared how the land, being at length delivered from these monsters, rose above the waters, received sunlight and showers, was covered with forests, became a hiding-place of wild beasts and barbarians, and lay in silence through many centuries, being pleased with the murmur of its forests and the rushing

sound of its rivers; how at length the clamors of a strange warfare were heard at a distance, in the valleys of the lower streams, and waxed louder and nearer by degrees, until barbarism, "clutching its curiously wrought tomahawk," and gathering its fantastic robe about its form, swept by in full retreat, followed by a horde of light-haired men, who assailed the wilderness with axes, scathed it with fire, and tore it with iron harrows. It has appeared how, afterwards, a republican baron, coming from the East, built himself a castle out of the trunks of trees, in a broad, round valley, begirt with pine and hemlock hillsides, and dwelt there in the depths of the forest in true frugal style, exchanging defiant missives with potentates who claimed fealty, and entertaining all manner of errant gentry, from French dukes to Newmarket jockeys, with much better grace, in faith, than the Front de Bœufs of the ancient English backwoods, while, to complete the similitude, Robin Hood and his lusty foresters reappeared on the Canisteo Flats, and there renewed the merriments of Sherwood Forest.\*

With the close of this baronial period the present chronicle will conclude. Our heroic ages there abruptly ended, and modern time set in with a vengeance.

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\* Curiously enough, we are able to perfect the similitude, by the addition of a Friar Tuck. The first Presbyterian clergyman who ministered to the spiritual wants of the Canisteo pioneers, is described as "a clever, humorsome man, who could drink grog and throw the maul with the best." He was a man of enormous muscular strength. Preaching once in early days in a warehouse in Angelica, he became so much engaged in his subject that he dashed a store-desk in pieces with his fist.



The history of the county, after that epoch, would be but a record of the incidents which make up the daily life of an inland, obscure, almost inaccessible region, as the movements of emigrants, the establishment of stage routes, the sessions of supervisors, the burning of log-heaps, the building of saw-mills, the excitements of courts, trainings and elections—all passing by so quietly that, but for the clouds of smoke that overhung the hills on still, dry days of autumn, or the occasional gusts of martial music from rustic battalions, one standing without would hardly know that any living thing was stirring within the hemlock highlands. A few startling interruptions, as the war of 1812 and the Douglas affair, disturbed the routine of daily life, but the people kept steadily at work from year to year, had little intercourse with the world beyond their own boundaries except through the medium of newspapers, had their frolics without proclamation to all North America and the adjacent islands, opened great and unsightly gaps in the forest, steered thousands of rafts through the cataracts of the Susquehanna, and, devoting themselves mainly to the task of transforming the wilderness into meadows and plow-land, did few memorable things which are discoverable by the chronicler.

Let us barely glance at the general progress of the county, from the close of Col. Williamson's agency to the present time. At the time of the agent's departure the county had about two thousand inhabitants. The work of subduing the forest had been but begun, but the beginning had been made vigorously and with good hope. A lumber-trade had been opened with the

ports of the lower Susquehanna and the Chesapeake. Northern men had begun to bring grain in considerable quantities to Bath for transportation to the markets. The location on the Conhocton was yet considered highly advantageous.

The rupture between the proprietors and the agent, though sensibly felt at the scene of his prominent operations, was not regarded as hopelessly disastrous to the prospects of the county. The development of the agent's plan was far from complete, and the experiments which he had made were insufficient to determine whether his enterprises were wisely or unwisely conceived. The fate of "this great Babylon which I am going to build" was yet uncertain, and it was hoped that, although for the present the progress of the town towards an honorable position among the cities of the land might be retarded, yet that it would ultimately rise from embarrassment and fulfil its destiny. The air-castle, though rather dingy and dilapidated, was nevertheless a very fine affair, and was not without power to attract people from afar. After the year 1800, many men who might have bought lands near Geneva, Canandaigua and Rochester, for a trifling price, were induced, by the superior advantages for access to a market, then offered by the valleys of Steuben, to establish themselves among our own ungracious hills. Many a farmer now residing in this county has the satisfaction of complaining, that had it not been for Williamson's balloons, himself or his father might have had the site of a city for their corn-fields, or perchance would have pastured their flocks

on the ground now occupied by some stirring village of Genesee, Ontario, or Onondaga.

But the cold water suddenly showered on the delicate phantoms that overhung the forest—soon scattered them. The abrupt drying up of the Pulteney Pactolus, that river of gold which had hitherto refreshed the thirsty wilderness, caused the plant which had been entrusted to the Pine Plains, to grow up scrubbily. A very ignominious metropolis, for many years, was the shire-town of the county. It was a quarter of a century or more before it began to free itself from its deformities, and to cast off its beggarly apparel for comfortable garments, and to pick up Grecian, Gothic and Italian finery to bedeck itself withal. Indeed, immediately after the departure of Baron Williamson it was threatened with destruction in a very strange manner. The clearings in its vicinity were abandoned, and a growth of oak of amazing stoutness and activity sprung up. The farmers were fairly overpowered, as if by tribes of wild men, and driven from their fields. Whole farms were overrun by these invaders. They even pushed their conquests to the edge of the village, and stood insultingly at the heads of the little streets, like a horde of marauders, descending from the hills and pillaging the suburbs of some seedy old city, which has barely enough of its ancient vigor to keep the brigands outside of the gates. The wild beasts re-took possession of the land. Between St. Patrick's Square and Gallows Hill was good hunting. The owl and the wolf clamored nightly for re-annexation. The bear thrusting his nose through

the garden pickets, snuffed the odors of the kitchens. In 1811, the whole space between the village and the pine-forest, which encircled it at the distance of about half a mile, was overgrown with stout oak stalks, from ten to fifteen feet high. A few huts, occupied by negroes, were scattered among the bushes half smothered, and it was only by sleepless care on the part of the citizens that the sprouts were kept down in the streets and market-place, and that the whole metropolis, like a babe in the woods, was not buried in the leaves, so deep that the robins couldn't find it. It was told then, as a great thing, that a farmer on one of the Marengo farms had raised twenty acres of wheat. To such littleness had the standard of greatness shrunken in the abandoned Barony.

Not only the central village but the whole county felt the shock at the dethronement of Col. Williamson. He had been the life of the land, and "times were dead enough when he left," say the old settlers. No more the Hudson, the Potomac and the Delaware, were startled by proclamations of races in the wilderness: no more did rumors of bull-fights and the uproar of horns disturb the goodly: no more did gallant retinues of riders gallop through the forest, while servants followed with luncheons and baskets of wine. Newspaper paragraphs no longer told the citizens of the East of great things done in Steuben, and pamphlets no longer enlightened London and Edinburgh concerning the capabilities of the Conhocton river.

The county was thenceforward expected to work its own way out of the woods; to hew its own road to inde-

pendence and prosperity; to scuffle unhelped with whatever enemies should seek to trample it to the earth. After years of hard, and often of discouraging labour, we have gained the upper hand of the enemy. Our county, for so long a time proverbially a "hard county"—a kind of rough-handed, two-fisted, ill-fed county, an offence in the eyes of Eastern elegance and Northern wealth, is rising fast not only to respectability but to consequence, like some great backwoods lout, who, from a youth of log-rolling and shingle-shaving, passes to a manhood of judicial or senatorial dignity.

The first forty years of our county's existence were years of iron labor. The settlers were poor men, and the discouragements and difficulties which they met with will with difficulty be appreciated by coming generations, who shall inherit vallies long tilled and hills subdued by years of thorough culture. One long familiar with the farmers of the county says: "But *few* comparatively of the settlers ever succeeded in paying up their contracts and getting deeds for their land. The high price of the land and the constantly accumulating interest on their contracts, was more than they could bear. They were compelled to abandon to others their half-cleared farms, disheartened and weary. Most of the contracts given by the agents of the Pulteneys for the sale of land were assigned from one to another several times, before the whole amount of the principal and interest due on them was paid."

For the last twenty years we have occupied the vantage ground, and have been engaged in a work not only

of subjugation but of cultivation. Hard and discouraging work was done during this period, and quite enough of the same remains to be done among our stubborn hills; but the increasing independence of the early-settled districts and the additional facilities for communication with the outer world, placed us upon the whole on the vantage ground, and the work of subjugation went on with greater rapidity and ardor than at any time before. Railroads began to encampass us; a steamboat appeared on the Crooked Lake; the old farming districts began to grow smooth and sightly; new wildernesses were invaded; cattle and sheep by myriads fed in the pastures; villages were built, and old dingy towns brightened up and renewed their youth. Various schemes of progress were agitated. Canals and railroads were discussed. At length the rumbling of cars was heard on Shawangunk, then on the Susquehanna, then on the Chemung,—and the locomotive, ten hours from the Hudson, rushed over our glad frontiers and discharged the Atlantic mails at the ancient monumental post of the Senecas. Saw mills arose in every pine forest, and in the spring, when the snow on the hills melted and the ice in the rivers went down to be piled in long battlements on the meadows below, hundreds of lumbermen came out of the woods, steered their rafts of boards, timber and enormous spars down the torrents to the Chesapeake; riding over huge dams and rocky rapids, sometimes prosperously, and sometimes shattering their fleets and suffering shipwreck and drowning, and all marine disasters which await mariners who sail in whaleships and frigates.

“Fifteen years ago,” says the Citizen, in his Descriptive and Historical Sketch, (speaking, in imagination, at the beginning of this century,) “standing on an exceedingly high mountain, we beheld unbroken forests lying west of the Chenango as far as the rainbows of Niagara, and covering the ridges and long slopes of the Alleghanies. Standing now on that same promontory, behold a change. Broad swathes are opened in that meadow of timber. Smoke rises from the little chimnies of three thousand cabins, scattered among the choice valleys and by the pleasant river sides of the wilderness west of Seneca Lake. The noise of a myriad of axes is heard this side of the Mohawk, like the tapping of a host of woodpeckers in a grove: flotillas are riding upon the rivers, a long and scattered caravan is filing past old Fort Stanwix, while New Englanders are afloat in the canoes of Unadilla, and stout pioneers are urging upwards the barges of Susquehanna. At evening the great forest is dotted with lights. Torches glimmer by the cabins. Trees are burning where fire runs wild through the woods, so that in the mid watch, when the torch-lights by the cabins are quenched, you may see afar off a zig-zag serpent of flame coiling around some mountain knob or wandering by the lake shore, or pursuing its shining trail through plains and marshes. Two sounds disturb the silence of the night—the dull plunging of Niagara in the West, and the distant uproar of Napoleon’s cannon in the East. But what are all those thunders that rock the foundation of the other continent, and those tumults of kings and cannon, of horsemen and

musketeers which the nations hear with alarm, compared with that unnoticed war which is waged in the forest below you !”

Being unfortunately ignorant of the position of this convenient mountain (which has been strangely overlooked by the State Geologist), it will be impossible to invite the republicans for whom these chronicles are written to look off from the same at the present day. A view from some such promontory or from a balloon would enable them to see to advantage the present condition of our county. One looking thus from above would behold the upland forests slashed this way and that with the most lawless violence, and the principal valleys freed from their ancient vegetation except where long and crooked lanes of elm, sycamore, and willow mark the channels of the streams, or where groves of oak stand in the midst of the fields, or here and there a cluster of maples or a solitary pine alone remain of many brethren.

Nevertheless immense tracts of land are yet covered with the forest. Stripes of timber as broad as the height of the hills, almost unbroken for miles, line the most cultivated valleys. Many broad districts are almost as wild as at the first. Within a mile of the villages and clean meadows of the river-valleys, one finds yet the rude “settlement,” and on the further side of half the hills in the County are hollows, which in the provincial pronounciation of *hollers* are so suggestive of hemlocks, burnt stumps, log cabins, and of what is known in despair at the poverty of language as “the jumping-off place.” There are comparatively few



commanding heights from which one does not seem to see more forest than farmed land, and there are many places where one looks across to districts dented with ravines and covered with treetops, where the axe has hardly begun its mission.

Forty years ago almost the entire strength of the county was in the valleys. Great now is the strength of the uplands, and rapidly increasing. The subjugation of these obstinate regions has been a labor indeed, and to the eyes of the wanderer from softer lands they look as unsightly as the battle-field the day after the victory. The black stumps, the rough fences, the islands and broad girdles of timber, haggled of outline and bristling with long bare spikes, and the half-burnt trunks of trees, are indeed uncomely. Our hill-country, however, is calculated from its structure to attain generally a good, and often a high degree of beauty, when cultivation has removed its primitive roughness. A vision of rolling farms divided by wooded gulfs or ravines; of smooth knobs dotted with portly cattle; of clean slopes covered with grain-fields and orchards—the whole forming a landscape unsurpassed in rural beauty by ancient and renowned counties of the east and north, is a dream of the future by no means too extravagant to be indulged in.

Sixty thousand souls now live within the boundaries of the county. Twenty villages and upwards are scattered through the towns, some of them holding pretensions to beauty and importance. The great railway line between the city of New York and the Western States passes up the valleys of the Chemung and

Canisteeo, which, at the village of Corning, is joined by two important tributaries—one extending to the coal mountain of Pennsylvania where sixty years ago Patterson, the hunter, first unearthed the “black diamond” with his tomahawk—the other passing northward through the valley of the Conhocton to the Genesee and Buffalo. Another tributary to the great trunk joins it at Horoellsville on the Canisteeo, which also terminates at Buffalo, crossing the Genesee River at Portage Falls. The Canandaigua and Jefferson railroad crosses one corner of the county. The Chemung Canal thrusts itself within the county line as far as Corning, and the Crooked Lake gives direct communication with the Erie Canal.

The dreams of our ancients have not become realities, but wonders, of which they did not dream, are amongst us. Iron monsters more marvellous than any that were seen by geologists in the marine herds which of old fed on our sunken meadows, rush through the valleys with wild and discordant shrieks. The hoot of the engine, and the roar of its chariot, employ the echoes of the bluffs. Steamers, and heavy-laden barges plow the lakes where once wallowed the Durham boat of the pioneer, or skimmed the canoe of the red fisherman.

Let the reflecting republican, before turning from the perusal of these records to his saw-mill or meadow, consider a few of the comforts which the citizens of the county enjoys to-day, which were unknown to the backwoodsman of forty or fifty years ago.

Then the solitary settler shared his clearing with

the populace of the forest. Those hairy Six Nations, the bears, the wolves, the panthers, the foxes, the catamounts and the weasels, hovered around his narrow frontiers to slay and devour. His two or three swine or sorry sheep were in nightly peril of the scenes of Wyoming. Deer bounded before him in his walk through the woods. The fires of Indian lodges glimmered among the trees at night.—Now his flocks and herds range without fear over great pastures. Wag-gons roll before his dwelling on the roads which were once lonely trails. Lights glimmer at night on all sides from farm-house windows. He hears the bells in the distant village-steeples.

Then he was beyond the borders of the Far West. Behind him were the Atlantic cities,—before him were tremendous wilds which he heard were traversed by the Ohio, the Mississippi, the Missouri, rumored to be enormous rivers, on the banks of which were brakes and plains, possessed by buffaloes, wild horsemen and bears. When he went East, people looked at him as we now look at the Mormon from Salt Lake, or the fur trader from Winnipeg.—Now he is in the far East. As one standing on the shadow of a cloud sees it gliding under his feet, and presently beholds it miles away on the hill-side, so has the pioneer of Steuben seen the “Far West” gliding from beneath his feet, and now he beholds it moving up the slope of the Cordilleras. He reads of boilers bursting at the Falls of St. Anthony, of steamers dashing together at the mouth of the Arkansas, of flues collapsing under the Council Bluffs.

Then, in his lonely clearing, he guessed the hour of the day by the sunshine on his cabin floor; he foretold snows, winds and droughts, by the shape of the clouds, by the vapors at sunset, by the Moon-man's expression of countenance.—Now the clocks of Connecticut are ticking in the forlornest hollow: iron pointers, on many steeples, publicly expose all irregularities of that luminary which governs times and seasons, and almanacs calculated “expressly for the meridian of Western New York,” tell him exactly when to expect freshets, and when to look out for hail-storms.

Then, the trader, bestriding his horse, jogged off to the sea-port through the dark and dismal roads of the forest, dependent upon the whims of despotic tavern-keepers and the tender mercies of “cross widows”\* by the way. His yearly assortment of goods was dragged in wagons from the Hudson. Now, whirling to the city in a night, he may send up by railway those gorgeous fabrics which have superseded the homely merchandize of former times; or the canal boat, laden with his ponderous crates and hogsheads, is tugged through the Northern ditches to the Crooked Lake, where a steamer politely offers his wheel-house, and escorts the fair wanderer into the heart of the hills.

Then, the lumbermen saw the creeks come leaping down the ravines like hearty young mountaineers, pines stood in the glens like stupid giants, unconscious that they contained cubic-feet and cullings, and the hemlocks made dark the hill-sides and hollows with

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\* Vide McClure, Norr.

their worthless branches. Now, the pines are so nearly extirpated that their uncouth cousins, the hemlocks, are thought worthy of the saw. The creeks have been taught useful knowledge and drive gang-mills, just as in Pagan islands the missionaries make good boys of the little cannibals, and set them at work churning and grinding coffee.

Then, the flaxen-haired urchin tumbled in the leaves with bear-cubs and racoons; he blackened his face among the half-burnt logs; he was lost to all sense of syntax, but perhaps studied arithmetic at winter in the little log-school-house, and learned something about the Chinese wall and the antipodes. Then, the patriot saw the country going to ruin, without having it in his power to sound the alarm, for there was no county newspaper to trumpet his warnings to "a profligate and reckless administration." Now, there are school-houses, academies and seminaries—"bulwarks of liberty"—bristling at all points with rhetoric and geometry. Three political newspapers ride every week the length and breadth of the county, like chariots armed with scythes. Three editors, fit successors of the Shiversculls and Brighthatchets of old, brandish the political scalping knife, and at times drop their ferocious weapons, to touch the lyre of poetry or the viol of romance, at those brief intervals when the great congressional bass-drum ceases its sullen roar in the Republic's capitol.

Of the things to be attained by the county at a future day, we will not attempt to prophecy. The chief ~~agricultural~~ eminence now believed to be within our

reach, is in the dairy line. Distinguished graziers indulge in dreams of a Buttermilk Age, when the churns of Steuben will be as renowned as the forges of Pittsburgh, or the looms of Lowell. They publicly assert that while our neighbors of Allegany may presume to make cheese, and our cousins of Ohio may hope to shine in the grease market, it will be presumption in them, or in any other tribes west of the Genesee, to try to rival the butter of Steuben: that the grass abounding on our juicy hills possesses a peculiar flavor and a mysterious virtue, and will produce most stupendous and unparalleled butter; that while there is much grass of the same quality in Chemung, some in Onondaga, and scanty patches elsewhere, the wretched natives of Ohio are utterly destitute of it, as also are all those miserable myriads who extract a substance from the herbage of the prairies, which they insanely style "butter;" that, feeding upon this grass, calves have attained an appalling magnitude; the ox may, by proper encouragement, become gigantic, and the Hornby steer, with his broad horns and deep flanks, will be looked upon with unspeakable envy by those rattish red bullocks that migrate in such immense hordes, like the ill-favored Huns of old, from Illinois and Indiana to the New York market.\*

To the degree of physical prosperity to be attained by the county hereafter, one will hardly venture to set a limit. Let its citizens, first of all things, have a care that they themselves be men of whom the Re-

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\* Speech of a prominent agriculturist at a "~~Railroad~~"

public need not be ashamed—God-fearing, law-abiding, intelligent, and free men, and they need not doubt that the future will fulfil the promise of the present. Failing in this great thing, it would be better that the land had remained a wilderness.

There are a few considerations respecting the relations which have heretofore existed, and which have not yet ceased to exist, between the citizens of the county and the original foreign purchasers and their heirs, which may with propriety be here presented.

It is now about sixty years since the greater part of the county became the property of the London Associates. From that time until the present day, an office has been kept at the shire-town of the county, for the sale of lands. The lands have been sold in small parcels, and upon credit, the purchaser taking immediate possession. The most valuable portions of the county have thus been long sold : but considerable tracts of land are yet undisposed of, and actions against shingle splitting, tort-feasors, are yet brought in the name of Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland and King of Hanover.

As was almost unavoidable, from the nature of these relations, there has been no love lost between the citizens and the proprietors. During the agency of Col. Williamson there seems to have been a cordial understanding between the two parties. The original proprietors were men of generous and enlightened spirit. Sir William Pulteney was a statesman of high standing. Mr. Colquhoun had also mingled in public affairs, and was distinguished as a philanthropist. The

administration of the estate in the first years of the settlement was conducted with an evident regard for the prosperity of the settler, and with a liberality and justice on the part of the proprietors which none are more ready to acknowledge than those who dealt with them. It is since the period of the earliest settlements that the policy and tone of the alien owners have failed to command the respect of the citizens.

The relation, and the sole relation, which for forty years and upwards has existed between the proprietors and citizens, has been that of sellers and buyers. So long as the former confine their claims to consideration to this relation, it cannot be alleged against them that they have transcended the bounds of what is considered reputable amongst men of business. They have required high prices for their lands, it is true, even the very highest prices that could be borne, but to demand high prices for lands or chattels is not considered an offence against the rules of reputable dealing amongst men of business. No one is compelled to buy. It is true that men have been required to fulfil their agreements with the land-holders, and, in default thereof, have been made to suffer the legal consequences, but neither against this can one, according to the settled maxims of common dealing, object. The law gives the right, and it is the practice of men to avail themselves of it. There are many large land proprietorships in the United States. We do not know that the administration of the generality of these is characterized by any greater degree of liberality than is that of the Pulteney and Hornby estates. The



proprietors of the latter have certainly not insisted upon their strict legal rights, but have habitually refrained from exercising the utmost stringency which the letter of the law would permit, and have many times granted indulgence to those in delinquency which they were not bound to grant. Whatever causes of quarrel may have existed between purchasers and agents of the proprietors are not fit subjects of comment here; we speak merely of the general policy of the owners in administering the affairs of the estate, and hold that so long as they are content to confine their claims to consideration to their character as sellers of land, it must be admitted that they have conformed to the rules of common dealing amongst men. But if, beyond this, they should have the effrontery to lay claims to public gratitude for services rendered to the county in its days of toil and privation, or should demand credit for liberality in the administration of the affairs of the estate, of a higher tone than is generally exercised in this lower world, these pretensions would be simply preposterous. We do not know that any such claims are put forth. The only concern of the proprietors has been to get as much money as it was possible to get, and whether settlers lived or starved has not, so far as human vision can discern, had a straw's weight in their estimation. Many instances no doubt there have been of kind consideration on the part of employees of the estate, and some of these gentlemen have merited and obtained the respect of those with whom their business brought them in contact, but the general spirit of the administration of

the successors of the original proprietors, considering it as a matter affecting the interests of a little State, has been mean and narrow. A frank, generous, and considerate bearing of the proprietors, it is perhaps safe to say, would have obviated nearly all of that hostility of the people which it is so easy to ascribe wholly to democratic cupidity and jealousy. The alien proprietorship deserves no thanks from the public, and probably will never think it advisable to ask for any. It has been a dead, disheartening weight on the county. The undeniable fact that a multitude of hard-working men have miserably failed in their endeavors to gain themselves homes—have mired in a slough of interest and instalments, leaving the results of their labors for others to profit by, should be of itself sufficient to shame the absurd pretension of patronage, if it is ever put forth. The young county, full of a rude and indomitable vigor, gained its present position of independence by work and courage, and in spite of the incubus which rested upon it. It has to thank no human patron for its victory.

— And it is well that this is so. It is well that strong arms and stout hearts have achieved the conquest of this wilderness, unaided by patrons, either at home or abroad. Fight makes might. The discipline of a half a century of poverty and tedious labor has made this people stronger of heart and hand than they would have been if the hemlocks had snapped like icicles, or the hills had proved softer than old meadow lands, or the apparitions of foreign Peers had hovered in the air,

smiling encouragement to indigent squatters, and shaking showers of silver from the clouds.

There are certain other considerations arising from the relations which have so long existed between the citizens of the county and the foreign proprietors which may be here presented. No state of things can be imagined more offensive to democratic prejudices than that created by the relations existing between the people of this county and the heirs of Pulteney. Few stronger temptations to disregard the rights of property and to advocate something akin to that Agrarianism so much dreaded in republican communities by those distrustful of popular rule, are often presented to a populace, than such as arise from the tenure by foreign Lords of immense tracts of land in a country heartily hostile to everything savoring of aristocracy. No lawlessness would naturally be more readily excused by the popular sense than that which repudiated the European claims of title, and formed illegal combinations to harrass the proprietors, and to set at nought the edicts of lawgivers, and the process of courts in their favor. What can be imagined more annoying to democratic feeling than to see, as the orators sometimes tell us, the money of republicans, earned by desperate labor, rolling in incessant streams to the treasuries of British Lords—the sufferers thereby believing, at the same time, that these rivulets of coin are kept up by some kind of jugglery. What group would so well serve the purposes of the orator and the demagogue, as that of poor, brave and free-born farmers standing in the posture of serfs to foreign Nebu-

chadnezzars? What better pictures to adorn the popular harangue, or the County's Book of Martyrs, sometimes opened before sympathising juries, than those of foreign Nebuchadnezzars riding over the necks of prostrate democrats; of foreign Nebuchadnezzars plying the rack, the boot and the thumbscrew to the "unterrified;" of foreign Nebuchadnezzars hunting shingle-splitters with bloodhounds and janizaries, throwing farmers into fiery furnaces and dens of lions, and making a "St. Bartholemew's" among the squatters?

That under these circumstances defective foreign titles should have been amended by the Legislature of the State, and the rights of the proprietors carefully regarded and repeatedly asserted; that the tender mercies of the commonwealth should have reached such a climax of tenderness as to relieve the proprietors from the payment of taxes on their wild lands and to rebuke as unrighteous and impertinent the demands of the settlers that these indigent aliens should share in the maintenance of the roads by which they profited, and of the courts which they crowded with their suits; that for sixty years their office should have stood unmolested and unthreatened in the midst of a populace doubtful of the legality of their claims and aggrieved by their perseverance in a policy which is popularly considered unjust and disreputable; that their agents have never been flagrantly insulted, nor their foresters thrown into mill-ponds; that the process of the courts has seldom been illegally impeded and never effectually resisted, and that juries have never refused to ren-

der for the proprietors verdicts required by the law and the facts; that by a community abundantly intelligent to form unlawful combinations which would seriously disturb the operations of the land agency, no such unlawful combinations have been formed, but that the only remedies sought for that which was believed to be unjust and oppressive, have been by applications to the legislatures and by defences in the courts. These are things which those who tremble for the sacredness of property in republics will do well to consider.

The duty of the citizens to the alien proprietors is plain; to urge an observance of it would be justly offensive. There is no disposition in the mass of citizens to grant the proprietors anything less than justice. Law will be regarded; rights will not be disturbed; public faith will not be violated, and to urge in this case the practice of common honesty would be in the highest degree insulting. So long as the courts and the legislatures recognize the title of the proprietors, the people will not discredit the commonwealth by illegal resistance to authority.

Amidst all the causes of vexation which encompass us, there are yet various pleasant reflections for the exasperated republican to console himself withal, not the least of which is, the certainty that we shall in due time be delivered from the feudal phantoms which have so long beset us.

The mill-wheel turned by water never rests, but the institution that goes by land must sooner or later stop grinding. The water that pours through the floom goes down to the sea, but rises again in fogs and va-

pors; it ascends to the clouds; the winds blow it landward; it falls again upon the hill tops, and again pours through the floom. For the land office there is no such hope. The element that keeps its wheels in motion never evaporates. Acres of gravel do not readily become clouds and rain themselves again into the Duke of Cumberland's pond; and section lots, especially if they contain a ton or two of mountains, are most discouraging materials for a fog to feed upon. The republican, therefore, terrified or unterrified, may confidently look forward to the time when the coronets of English Peers will no longer glitter in the air, greatly to the disturbance of the public temper, when "articles," "instalments," "interest," "assignments," "back payments," and all the terms of that unpopular vocabulary will become dead language; when the deputy sheriff's occupation will be gone, and when Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland and King of Hanover, having been honestly and fairly paid for that which the law declares to be his, will beg no more the thunder of the courts to avenge, or the shield of the legislatures to protect him, but will abandon his title-deeds, discharge his stewards, and vanish forever behind the fogs of the Atlantic Ocean.

## CHAPTER OF MISCELLANIES.

### THE INDIANS.

It will not be necessary to speak of the history, laws or customs of the Six Nations in this volume; sufficient information for present purposes, as to those matters, is possessed by the popular mind. Steuben County constituted a part of the domain of the Senecas. The Indians with whom the pioneer had intercourse were from the North, and visited this region only to hunt. Many hundreds of them came in the winter from the Genesee, and even from the Niagara, built their lodges around in the woods, and killed deer for their summer's stock of dried venison, and other wild animals for their peltry.

The complement of a hunting lodge varied according to circumstances. Sometimes a solitary old savage made his wigwam apart from his brethren, and hunted, fished and slept in silence; sometimes the neat lodge of a couple of young comrades might be seen on some little island of the river, and sometimes the woodsman came upon a camp-fire blazing in the forest by night, where a score or more of hunters, squaws and children were eating and drinking in a very free and comfortable manner. The Indian "at home" was not often found by the pioneers to be that taciturn and im-

movable Roman which the romancers paint him. When before the fire of his wigwam with a half-a-dozen companions, he talked, laughed and joked, and had an odd habit of making a meal every quarter of an hour, as if afflicted with a chronic hunger, putting his hand into the kettle, or fishing up with a sharp stick a piece of venison as big as his fist at every pause of the conversation, till the young settler, witnessing this perpetual banquet, feared that he would kill himself. He did not talk in riddles or allegories like those whale-bone braves who stalk through the novels, but was often inclined to be shrewd and comical in his language, and sometimes loved practical jokes not of the most delicate order.

During the first few years of the settlement, many of the inhabitants were uneasy at the presence of the Indians. Some prepared to leave the county, and a few actually did leave it from apprehension of an attack. After the defeat of Harmar and St. Clair, in the Northwestern territory, the savages were often insolent and abusive, but Wayne's victory on the Miami, in 1794, put an end to their plots, and they afterwards conducted themselves with civility. Some of the settlers, however, were not entirely assured for several years. The wives of many of the emigrants from the East, unused to wild life, and familiar with the terrible fame of the Six Nations, lived in constant alarm—not an inexcusable fear when a score or two of barbarians came whooping to the cabin door, or raised the midnight yell in their camp by the creek-side, till even the wolves were ashamed of them.



The intercourse between the settlers and Indians, were generally friendly and social. The latter, however, had occasion sometimes to complain of lodges destroyed and furs stolen, and of other annoyances to be expected from civilized men. A hunter living at the Eight Mile Tree, (Avoca,) wished to drive the Indians from a certain hunting ground. These Native Americans were singularly reluctant to labor, and rather than chop down a tree for fuel, would walk half a mile to pick up an armful of scattered sticks. Founding his scheme upon this trait of character, the hunter cut a great many branches from the trees in the vicinity of their camps, bored augur-holes into them, filled the orifices with gunpowder, plugged them carefully, and strewed these treacherous engines through the woods. The Indians knew not what good spirit to thank for this miraculous shower of fire-wood, and gathered a great supply for their lodges. The disasters that followed were unaccountable. Now a loud explosion blew a quart of coals into the face of some mighty chief—then another hidden magazine being kindled, filled the eyes of the presiding squaw with dust and ashes, and another hoisted the pot off the fire, or hurled the roasting venison into the basket where the papoose was sleeping. The wood was plainly bewitched. Timber with such fiery sap was not to be endured. The Indians abandoned the neighborhood with precipitation, and left the hunter in quiet enjoyment of his forest-rights.

There were some occasions when the Indian was seen in his glory, arrayed in flaming blankets, adorn-

ed with plumes and medals, girt with curious belts, from which glittered the knife and tomahawk. Thus shone the warriors on their return from the Convention at Newtown, in the winter of 1791.\* But after a few years of familiarity with civilized men, the savage was seldom seen abroad in ancient style. The braves were inclined to become utter vagabonds, and gradually adopted that mixture of civilized and savage dress, which it is not going too far to pronounce shocking. Romance was horrified. The "dark-eyed forest-belles," so dear to poetry, looked like stage-drivers.

The traffic in liquors here, as elsewhere, proved ruinous to the unfortunate Indians. A large portion of their game was bartered for spirits. A favorite place for their carouses at Bath was in the bushes at the edge of the village, opposite the present jail. Here, floundering in the under-bush, howling, singing and screaming all night, they suggested vivid and singular dreams to the sleeping villagers. On such occasions the squaws, like considerate wives, stole the knives of their lords, and retired to the woods, till the fainter and less frequent yells from the bushes announced that the "Romans" were becoming overpowered by sleep. The townsmen were sometimes amused at their fishing. A half-a-dozen Indians wading up the river, and push-

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\* Mr. David Cook, a settler of Painted Post, met, while moving up, 300 Indians on the Chimney Narrows, who were going to the Treaty. On their return they were detained for a long time at Painted Post by a great snow-storm, till they could make snow-shoes, greatly to the annoyance of the settlers.

ing a canoe before them, would spear their boat half-full of fish in an incredibly short time, and sell their cargo for a mere trifle. The spear was but a pole with a nail in the end of it.

About thirty years ago, Mr. Joshua Stephens, a young man of Canisteco, was found dead in the woods, having been shot by two rifle balls. The murder had been evidently committed by Indians. Two of these, named Curly-eye and Sundown, were arrested on suspicion of having committed the deed, and were afterwards tried at Bath. The affair created a great sensation, and the trial was attended by a large concourse of people. Red Jacket and other prominent chiefs were present. The evidence against the prisoners was of a strong character, but they were acquitted. After this event the Indians became shy and evacuated the county, and never again returned except in straggling bands.

We have been told, on pretty good authority, of an "Indian-hater" living near the mouth of Mud Creek, in the town of Bath, many years ago. A settler in that neighborhood was requested one morning by one of his neighbors to go out to the woods and help him bring in a large buck which he had shot. On coming at the designated place, the hunter opened a pile of brush, and showed his companion the dead body of an Indian. He said that his father's family had been massacred by the savages in the Revolution, and since that event he had killed every Indian he could meet in a convenient place. This was nearly the twentieth.

## INDIAN NAMES, ETC.

The Indians and their institutions can, upon the whole, be spared from our social system, though there are not wanting those who find it in their hearts to deplore the decay of both—a melancholy thing to think of, truly. Yet, when it is considered how many of their practices were irreconcilable with the maxims of distinguished jurists, the most enthusiastic admirer of barbarism must admit that the preservation of the statutes and ceremonies of the Long House would be attended, at least, with inconvenience. The tomahawk, the scalping knife and the javelin, are properly, we think, excluded from the accoutrements of a well-dressed, civilized man, and we are quite sure that an enlightened public opinion would frown upon that grave and respectable citizen, who, out of respect for the earliest inhabitants of the county, should appear at town-meeting, at church, or at any other public assemblage, painted with red paint and black, decorated with porcupine quills, and arrayed in a crimson blanket. A cultivated community will always entertain sentiments of reverence for ancient fashions, and for the customs of former generations; yet, would not such a spectacle as that of the elderly gentlemen and clergy of the county, shrieking, howling, and dancing the grand War-Dance around a post in the Public Square of the shire town, fill the mind of a judicious man with melancholy forebodings with regard to the sanity of such elderly gentlemen and divines? There are yet certain vestiges of the ancient tribes for which

men of taste and learning earnestly plead—the names which they attached to their lakes, rivers, towns and castles. Whether deep and sonorous as Otsego, Niagara, Cayuga, Tioga, Onondagua, or light and musical as Unadilla, Wyalusing, Canisteo, Susquehanna, or abrupt and warlike as Mohawk, Conhocton, Shemokin, Tunkhannock, the names given by the Six Nations, were sweet or heroic of sound. The barbarous dialects which give us Penobscot and Passamaquoddy, or the still more atrocious Chattahoochie, Okechobee, Tombigby, Withlacoochie and other frightful words which prick the Southern ear, (though atoned for by the noble Alabama, Catawba, Savannah,) and the utterly heathenish Michilimacinac, Pottawottamie, Oshkosh, Kaskaskia and Winnipeg, of the North West, are fit for Ghouls, and “men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders.”

A lecture may profitably be read on the subject of names to people of our own and adjoining counties, and in doing so we do but echo what has been frequently proclaimed through other trumpets. The American map looks like a geographical joke. We name our towns after all heroes, from Hector to General Lopez—after all patriots, from Maccabeus to Daniel Shays—after all beasts, birds, fishes, and creeping things—to which there is certainly no objection, but one may plead that when we have exhausted Plutarch's Lives, and the Pension Roll, a few of the fine old Indian names may be recovered. In our own county, the musical and forest-like *Tuscarora*, was changed first to *Middletown*, which caused confusion in the mails, (that

popular name having been fairly *grabbed* by other towns which were so lucky as to stand half way between two places,) and afterwards to *Addison*, in honor, probably, of the essayist, who never saw a stump, a raft, or a saw-mill. The post-office of *Tobehanna* was lately changed to *Altai*, which is a mountain range in the antipodes, and would lead strangers to suppose that Tyrone was settled by Siberians. Our neighbors of Chemung became disgusted at the odd, but significant and historical name of *Horse-heads*, (being the place where Gen. Sullivan killed his horses,) and elegantly changed it to *Fair-port*, indicating, we suppose, that scows on the Chemung Canal are there secure from tempests. It is unfortunate that the schoolmaster was out of town when the change was made, for the offending Saxon might have been disguised under the magnificent syllables of *Hippocephali*. At the head of Seneca Lake lived for many years a famous Indian Queen, Catharine Montour, a half-breed, and surmised to have been a daughter of Count Frontenac. Her village was known far and wide as *Catharine's Town*. They now call it *Jefferson*—an act of “proscription” which the great republican would have scowled at.\* *Painted Post* will probably have to go next under the reign of refinement—a capital name, suggestive, historical and picturesque. If it is desirable to be known abroad, citizens of that village will do well to let the name stand as it is, for

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\* The actual village may have been a little out of town—but that makes no difference.

while *Painted Post* will arrest the stranger's eye more quickly perhaps than any other name on the map of Western New York, if this is changed to Siam or Senegambia, Ajax or Coriolanus, or any other title which the fashion of the day requires, the Painted Posters cannot hope to be distinguished from the mob of citizens who dwell in villages bearing the names of foreign kingdoms, and heroes of the "Silurian epoch."

Similar advice is ready for our neighbors at the foot of Crooked Lake whenever it may be called for. *Penn-Yan* is undoubtedly a very queer word—rather Chinese at least—and when pronounced with the favorite twang of our ancients, *Pang Yang*, the sound is as clearly "celestial" as Yang-Kiang, and the stranger would expect to find the village adorned by Mandarins and Joshes, and to see the populace, from the seniors down, diverting themselves with kites, fire-crackers and lanterns. For the relief of puzzled philologists, however, it may be explained that the word was *not* imported in a tea-chest, but was *made* from the first syllables of the words *Pennsylvanian* and *Yankee*, and indicates the races of the first settlers. It should by no means be disturbed.

It is a pity that so many fine villages of Western New York are saddled with names absurdly borrowed from the Old World. It would seem as if Congress had granted bounty lands to heroes of the Trojan and Punic wars; at all events, the names of those old veterans are affixed to more townships than there were sons of Priam Buffalo, Oswego, Canandaigua and

Genesee, are almost the only towns of importance which have escaped the Greeks and Romans.

Our own county must confess itself to be destitute of European or classical townships, but can yet boast of very illustrious neighbors. We have but to step over our Northern boundary to "see Naples and die." The distance from Naples to Italy, though greater here than it is in Europe, is yet but inconsiderable, while the distance from Italy to Jerusalem is less than in the Old World. In fact, the city of David here abuts the land of Cæsar. On the Eastern side of the county behold the hero *Hector*, a brown Republican farmer, shaking no more the bloody spear as he looks from his orchards into the waters of Seneca, having long since exchanged the chariot for the horse-rake. His old antagonist, Ulysses, has located his land-warrant in the next range. On the West *Ossian* howls his humbugs in the latitude of Loon Lake, and Saxon Alfred lives unmolested by marauding Danes. The Spartans have colonized the adjoining corner of Livingston County, and appear to have quite given up black broth and laconics. The Athenians are to be found at the mouth of the Chemung,\* and when the up-river raftmen, whooping and yelling, steer their rafts down the spring-flood, the citizens of the town are probably reminded of the time when the Goths came with similar uproar through the Hellespont, and sacked their city—a blow from which, judging from the present state of the fine arts at Tioga Point, it

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\* *Athens*, at the mouth of the Chemung, was formerly *Tioga Point*. The old name shows sense, the new one the want of it.



would seem that the seat of the muses never recovered.

*Crooked Lake* is the translation of Keuka, the aboriginal name. *Conhocton* signifies *come-together*. It is sometimes erroneously rendered *Trees-in-the-water*. Five Mile Creek was formerly called *Canoni*. Gen. McClure says that Bath bore the name of Tanighnanguanda, by no means a euphonious one. *Chemung* is said to mean *Big-bone*. The tradition that the identical bone by which the name was suggested, was taken from the river-bank by boatmen after the settlement must be erroneous. The Indians had a village and corn-field near Elmira, at the time of Sullivan's expedition, named *Chemung*, and the river was called the Chemung Branch. Further information concerning the aboriginal names of localities in this county we cannot give, and would be glad to receive.

#### GAME, ETC.

It is said in a manuscript, consulted in the preparation of this volume, that "Many of the hunters estimated that there were from five to ten deer on every hundred acres of land in the county, or in that proportion throughout the country over which they hunted. The probability is, that this estimate would not be too high for many parts of the forest which were favorite haunts of the deer, but then there would be other tracts which they frequented but little, so that for the whole extent of territory embraced in the present limits of the county, equal to about 900,000 acres, it would

probably be correct to estimate that at the first settlement of the country, there were, on an average, as many as four deer for every hundred acres of land—making the number within the present limits of the county, not less than 36,000.

An intelligent and respectable man, who came from Pennsylvania among the first emigrants from that State, used to relate that in the fall of the year 1790, or 1791, two young men came from near Northumberland up the rivers in a canoe, on a hunting expedition, built a lodge at the mouth of Smith's Creek, on the Conhocton, and hunted in that neighborhood. In the course of two months they killed upwards of two hundred deer, several elk, some bears and three panthers. Elk were at that time quite numerous in most parts of the county, and were found south of the Canisteo River, ten or fifteen years after. They also killed a number of wolves, foxes and martins, and a few beaver. The hunters preserved as much of the venison as they could, and with that and the skins they had taken, they loaded two large canoes, and early in the winter returned to Northumberland, where they sold their cargoes for upwards of \$300.

Sixty years of persecution with hounds and rifle have not exterminated the deer; but, as may well be believed, the buck that now shakes his horns in the forest, does so with little of that confidence with which in former times his predecessors tossed aloft their antlers. In twenty-four hours his ribs may be smoking on the dinner-table of a hotel, his hide may be steeping in the vats of the mitten-makers, and his

horns may be grating under the rasps of the men that make cane-heads and knife-handles. In the days before the conquest, notwithstanding the depredations of the wolves and Indians, the deer constantly increased in numbers, or at least held their own, and lived in a high state of exhilaration. It was a fine sight, that of a full-grown buck racing through the woods, clearing "fifteen to twenty feet, often twenty-five feet, and sometimes more than thirty feet of ground, at a single jump." The last elk killed in the county was shot in the town of Lindley, about forty years ago.

As for the wolves, history despairs of doing them justice. They deserve a poet. How they howled, and howled, and howled; how they snarled and snapped at the belated woodsman; how they killed the pigs and the sheep; how they charmed the night with their long drawn chorus, so frightful that "it was enough to take the hair off a man's head," and yet so dismally hideous that it could not but be laughed at by the youngsters—all these must be imagined; words are too feeble to do justice to the howling of one wolf in the day time, much less to the howling of ten wolves at night, in the depth of a hemlock forest. Each pack had its chorister, a grizzled veteran, perhaps, who might have lost a paw in some settler's trap, or whose shattered thigh declared him a martyr for the public good. This son of the Muses, beginning with a forlorn and quavering howl, executed a few bars in solo; then the whole gang broke in with miracles of discord, as in a singing school the full voiced choir shouts in chorus, after the teacher has shown them "how that

chromatic passage ought to be executed." All the parts recognised by the scientific, were carried by these "minions of the moon." Some moaned in barytone, some yelled in soprano, and the intermediate discords were howled forth upon the night air in a style that would make a jackall shiver. The foreign musician, awaked from his dreams by such an anthem, might well imagine himself fallen from a land where the Red Republicans had it all their own way, and having abrogated the rules of rythm and dynamics, with other arbitrary and insufferable vestiges of the feudal system, had established musical socialism. The wolves and their howling linger more vividly than any other features of the wilderness in the memory of old settlers. It is only within a few years that they found the land too hot for them. It is not a great while since the citizens of the shire town were occasionally behowled from the Rollway Hills, and among those who, fifteen years ago, were very young school-boys, the memory is yet green of that day when the weightiest and gravest of the townsmen, with many others who were not quite so weighty and grave, sallied forth with the avowed purpose of exterminating the wolves which lurked in the surrounding hills—a campaign barren of trophies indeed; but which must have carried dismay into the councils of the enemy, and convinced them of the uselessness of opposition to their "manifest destiny." A few members of this ancient family may yet lurk in the wild corners of the country; but the more discreet have withdrawn to the solitudes of Pennsylvania.

The panthers have vanished, hide and hair, leaving a reputation like that of the Caribs. The "painter," in lack of lions, must always be the hero of desperate hunting tales, and were it not for the too well established fact that his valor was rather freely tempered with discretion, he would be a highly available character for the novelists. Except when wounded, they were not feared. Though powerful of frame and ferocious of face, they belied physiognomy and were generally quite willing to crawl off, or at most to stand at bay when met by the hunters. This forbearance, it must be confessed, arose not so much from sweetness of temper as from a bashfulness which almost amounted to cowardice. They disappointed the expectations of their friends, and invariably forsook their backers before coming up fairly to the "scratch." However, the fierce face, the lion-like proportions, (they were from seven to ten feet long,) and the collusion of the novelists, have proved too much for the truth, and the "Great Northern Panther" at this day rivals in popularity Captain Kyd and Black-Beard. When exasperated by wounds he showed himself worthy of this high favor, but under ordinary provocation he was scarcely more terrible than a wood-chuck. For instance, a housewife, who owned Ireland as her native land, while attending to her domestic duties in the cabin, heard signals of distress among the pigs. On going out to see what had befallen her porkers, she found a fine shoat attacked by a panther. It was evidently the first acquaintance of the robber with animals of this species, for as often as he sprang upon

the back of his prey, the pig squealed dismally, and the panther bounced off in amazement, as if he had alighted upon a hot stove. The lady ran screaming, and with arms uplifted, to rescue her pig, and the "Great North American Panther," instead of annihilating both pig and "lady-patroness" on the spot, scrambled into the top of a tree with evident alarm. The woman sent her husband straightway to fetch Patterson the hunter with his rifle, and stood under the tree to blockade the enemy. Several times the latter offered to come down, but his intrepid sentry screamed and made such violent gestures, that the panther drew back in consternation. The hunter came in an hour or so and shot it just as it took courage to spring.

The bear, too—the wise, respectable and independent bear was, in early times, a citizen of substance and consideration. Statistics concerning him are wanting. Disturbed by bone-breaking bullets in his berry gardens and plum orchards, blinded by gusts of buckshot that blew into his face as he put his head out of his parlor window, punched with sharp sticks by malicious youngsters as he sat nursing his wounded hams in the seclusion of a hollow log, plagued by ferocious traps which sometimes pinched his feet, sometimes grasped his investigating nose with teeth of steel, assailed in his wooden tower by axe-men hewing at its basis, while boys with rifles waited for its downfall—the bear, we say, distressed by a line of conduct that rendered his existence precarious, emigrated to the mountains of the Key Stone State in disgust.

As for the lesser tribes, known as wild-cats, catamounts and lynxes, there were flourishing families of those creatures in all parts of the land, and they are still occasionally heard from in the outer districts. The last one worthy of historical notice prowled for a time in the interior woods, but his head at last pre-eminent among the heads and tails of racoons and wood-chucks, adorned the Log Cabin of Bath in the picturesque election of 1840.

There were but few beaver remaining in the streams at the time of the settlement. The lively trade in peltry which had been carried on between the Indians and Europeans was attended with a disastrous loss of fur to those poor creatures. In 1794 there were a few beaver remaining in Mud Lake, but the renowned Patterson set his eye upon them, and soon appeared on the harmonious shores of that secluded pond with his arms full of traps. Seven of the beaver were caught, the eighth and last escaped with the loss of a paw. These were the last beaver taken in this county. About twenty-five years ago a single beaver appeared in the Tioga, and even showed his nose on the farm of the old trapper. He was a traveller. He visited various parts of the river, as agent perhaps for some discontented colony on another stream, but probably discouraged by the farms and saw-mills, left the upper waters and appeared next in the lower Chemung. He imprudently went upon an island of a snowy morning; Canisteo raftmen tracked him to a corn-stout, beset, slew and skinned him, and delivered his hide to the hatters. The streams, though depopu-

lated of beaver, abounded with fish, and contained for many years fine shad and salmon.

Rattlesnakes will conclude this catalogue of worthies. It has been previously intimated that these deadly reptiles flourished in certain places in large tribes. To say that there were thousands of them in the Conhocton valley among the pines, would be to speak modestly. The incident related of Patterson, the hunter, in a previous chapter of this volume, is sometimes told in a different form. It is told on excellent authority, that he and his dog were going down the river trail, and killed rattlesnakes by daylight, till the odor of them made him sick, and till his dog, which was an expert snake-fighter, refused to touch them any more—(an active dog will dance around a snake, dash suddenly in, snatch it up in his teeth, and shake it to death.)—It then becoming dark, he took the river and waded two miles to its mouth. There is another story touching snakes, which history will not willingly let die. The hero of the tale, it may be premised, was the narrator of it, and the sole witness to the facts. An old settler of this country was once journeying through the woods, and when night came, found himself in a district infested by rattlesnakes, numbers of which were twisting their tails in the bushes in great indignation. Fearful that if he lay on the ground he would wake up in the morning with his pockets full of snakes, (for they are extremely free to snug up to sleepers on chilly nights, to enjoy the warmth of the human body,) in which case, it would be a delicate thing to pull them out, he placed a pole across two crotched



stakes, and *slept on the pole*. His slumbers were sound and refreshing. In the morning he found himself on his roost with no serpents in his pockets, his boots, his hat, or his hair, and observed, moreover, that, during his sleep, he had unconsciously *turned over* from his right side to his left.

So much for rattlesnakes. Concerning other kinds of serpents—black snakes, racers, and the like of which there was no lack in this bailiwick, we have nothing to offer—not from disrespect, but from ignorance.

The chase, as we have seen, was not often attended with peril; yet there were times when the hunter was obliged to move briskly for his life. The wounded panther was a dangerous enemy. Men have been killed by them. A noted Canisteo hunter once hurt one of these animals with a rifle ball, and it sprang upon his dog as the first adversary it met. Knowing that himself would be the next victim, the hunter closed with the ferocious beast and killed it with his knife. As it lay upon the ground after the fight, eight feet or more in length, it looked like a lion, and the hunter was astonished at his boldness.

A Justice of the Peace in one of the outer towns had once occasion for a little practice, not provided for in the "Magistrate's Manual." Relieving his judicial cares by the pleasures of the chase, he one day met a great panther which he severely wounded, but did not immediately cripple it. The monster, enraged at the tort, attacked him furiously. The plaintiff in the case found himself unexpectedly made defendant. The books suggested no proceeding for relief in such a

strange turn of affairs, and he was obliged to fall back on first principles. He dealt a rousing blow with his gun, and then dexterously seized the panther's tail. A novel action ensued, which was neither trover nor replevin. The plaintiff, though partially disabled, had yet so much of his former enormous strength, that, when he turned with a savage growl to bite the defendant, the latter, by jerking with all his might, baffled the manœuvre of his antagonist. This odd contest, worthy of record in the "Crockett Almanac," lasted a good while—jerking this way, jerking that way, rejoinder and sur-rejoinder, rebutter and sur-rebutter—till at length the panther became so weak from loss of blood, that the guardian of the people's peace could work the ropes with one hand; when resuming his position as plaintiff, he speedily entered up final judgment against the defendant with a hunting knife, and seized his scalp for costs. This is a true story, (as also are all other stories in this book) and can be proved by a Supervisor, a Justice of the Peace, and a Town Clerk.

A Canisteo hunter was once watching a deer lick at night. A large tree had partially fallen near the spring, and he seated himself in its branches several feet above the ground. No deer came down to drink. Towards midnight the tree was shaken by the tread of a visitor. It was a huge panther, which slowly walked up the trunk and sat down on its haunches within a very few yards of the hunter. The night was clear and the moon was shining, but the uneasy deerslayer could not see the forward sight of his gun, and did not like to attempt the delicate feat of send-

ing a bullet to the heart of such a lion so decisively that there would be no snarling or tearing of his throat afterwards. All night long they sat in mutual contemplation, the hunter watching with ready rifle every movement of his guest; while the latter, sitting with the gravity of a chancellor, hardly stirred till day-break. As soon as the light of morning brought the forward sight in view the rifle cracked and the panther departed life without a growl.

Wolves seldom or never were provoked to resistance. The settler walking through the woods at dusk, was sometimes intercepted by a gang of these bush-pirates, whom hunger and the darkness emboldened to snarl and snap their teeth at his very heels; but a stone or a "chunk of wood" hurled at their heads was enough to make them bristle up and stand on the defensive. They were generally held in supreme contempt. We hear of a bouncing damsel in one of the settlements who attacked half a dozen of them with a whip, just as they had seized a pig and put them to flight, too late, however, to save the life of the unhappy porker.

The buck, under certain circumstances, was a dangerous antagonist. The following incident is given in a manuscript heretofore alluded to: "An individual who eventually became a leading man in the county and a member of Congress, once shot a buck near Bath. He loaded his gun and walked up to the fallen deer, which was only stunned, the ball having hit one of his horns. When within a few steps of it, the deer sprang up and rushed at him. He fired again, but in

the hurry of the moment missed his aim. He then clubbed his gun and struck at the head of the infuriated animal, but it dexterously parried the blow with its horns and knocked the rifle out of the hunter's hand to the distance of several yards. The hunter took refuge behind a tree, around which the deer followed him more than an hour, lunging at him with his horns so rapidly that the gentleman who "eventually went to Congress" could not always dodge the blow, but was scratched by the tips of the antlers and badly bruised on his back and legs, and had almost all his clothes torn off. He struck the deer several times with his knife indecisively, but when almost tired out managed to stab him fairly just back of the shoulder. The enemy hauled off to repair damages but soon fell dead. The hunter threw himself upon the ground utterly exhausted, and lay several hours before he had strength to go home. A man thus assailed was said to be "treed by a buck."

#### THE PLUMPING MILL.

There are few tribulations of the new country about which old settlers are more eloquent than those connected with "going to mill." Grist mills being fabrics of civilization, were not of course found in a wild state along the primitive rivers. The unfortunate savage cracked his corn with a pestle and troubled his head not at all about bulkheads and tail races, and, although his meal was in consequence of a very indifferent quality, yet it may be a question if this was not

compensated for by the freedom of the courts of the Six Nations from those thrilling controversies about flush-boards, and drowned meadows, and backwater on the wheel, which do in modern times confound the two and thirty Circuit Judges of the Long House.

In 1778, a grist-mill and saw-mill belonging to the Indians and Tories, at their settlement of Unadilla, the only mills in the Susquehanna valley in this State, were burned by a party of rangers and riflemen. In 1790, four mills are noted on the map of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase, one in T. 8, R. 3; one in T. 10, R. 4; one at the Friends' Settlement near Penn Yan; one in Lindley town on the Tioga. Shepard's mill on the Susquehanna, a short distance above Tioga Point, was the main dependence of our settlers till they built mills for themselves. The people of Painted Post and Canisteo took their grain down to that mill for several years.

There was, however, one truly patriarchal engine which answered the purpose of the grist-mill in times of necessity which it would be ungrateful not to remember. That backwoods machine known as the Plumping Mill, the Hominy Block, the Samp Mortar, or the Corn Cracker, is now as obsolete an engine as the catapult or the spinning-wheel. The gigantic red castles that bestride our streams rumbling mightily with their wheels and rollers, while their mill-stones whirling day and night, crush the grains of a thousand hills, are structures entirely too magnificent to be mentioned with a homely plumping-mill. Nevertheless, granting all due deference to these portly and respect-

able edifices, historians will insist that their rustic predecessors be remembered with some degree of kindness.

The Plumping Mill was made after this wise. From the outer edge of the top of a pine stump, and at a little distance within the extreme edge, so as to leave a rim of about half an inch in breadth, augur holes were bored toward the centre of the stump pointing downward so as to meet in a point several inches below the surface. Fire was placed on the top of the stump, which, when it had eaten down to the augur holes, was sucked according to atmospherical laws, through those little mines and burned out the chip or conical block nicely, leaving a large deep bowl. This was scraped and polished with an iron and the mill was ready for the engine. The engine was a very simple one of about two feet stroke. From a crotched post a long sweep was balanced like the swale of an old-fashioned well. A pole, at the end of which was a pounder, was hung from the sweep, and your mill was made. The backwoodsman poured his corn into the bowl of the stump, and working the piston like one churning, cracked his corn triumphantly. Modern mills, with all their gorgeous red paint and puzzling machinery, are uncertain affairs at best—nervous as it were and whimsical, disturbed by droughts and freshets, by rains and high winds like rheumatic old gentlemen: there is always a screw loose somewhere, and their wheels need “fixing” almost as often as the “wheels of government.” But the sturdy old Plumping Mill was subject to no such whimsies, no more than the men of the frontiers

were to dyspepsia, or the women to hysterics and tantrums.

The reflecting citizen will duly honor the old Plumping Mill. It is the pioneer engine. It can even now be heard thumping on the edge of the Far West, thumping on the outer edge of the Canadas, and so will go, stoutly thumping its way across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific.

#### INCIDENTS OF THE WAR OF 1812.

At the commencement of the War of 1812, the standing army of our country was a much more respectable corps than it is at the present day. Either from modern degeneracy or from our superior enlightenment, the appearance of a phalanx of militia in any public place in this noon of the nineteenth century, is a signal for universal laughter. Forty years ago it was not so. Then the army of Napoleon could not have been much more an object of respect to itself than the rustic regiment which paraded yearly in each important village of Western New York. There were many independent companies of horse, rifles and artillery. The officers took pride in the appearance of their men, and the men, instead of indulging in all manner of antics, were disposed to keep their toes pointed at a proper angle, and to hold their guns with the gravity of Macedonians. The militia was respected, and men of reflection beheld in it a great bulwark to defend the republic against the demonstrations of the Five Great Powers, and other

monarchical phantoms which hovered before the eyes of our vigilant forefathers. The plume, the epaulette, the sash, were badges of honor. To be an officer in the militia was an object sought for by respectable men. The captain was a man of more consequence than he would have been without the right to command forty of his neighbors to ground arms, and to keep their eyes right. It was a great addition to the importance of a leading citizen that he was a colonel, and enjoyed the right of riding upon a charger at the head of half the able-bodied men of the county; and the general galloping with his staff from county to county, dining with the officers of each regiment, and saluted by the drums and rifles of five thousand republicans, was a Bernadotte, a Wellington; and, if a man of tact and vigor, carried an important political influence.

The social constitution of this domestic army was, of course, a different thing from that of the armies of the European Marshals. Captains went to logging bees and raisings with their rank and file, perhaps ground their corn, possibly shod their horses. Colonels and generals drew the wills of their legionaries, or defended them in actions of assault and battery and ejection in the courts, or employed them on their arks, or bought their cattle. They were dependent upon the men they commanded for elections as Sheriffs or Congressmen. The inferior officers might be hailed by their myrmidons as Tom or Harry, and, though the high commanders were generally men of more stately character, who were not to be treated exactly with such familiarity, yet their relations with the soldiers were



not those of Austrian Princes with their drilled boors. When, therefore, one of these high field-officers went forth to war, and indiscreetly put on the majesty of Marlborough, or affected to look upon his men as the Duke of York looked upon his, he soon found that the social laws of a European army were not to be applied to an army of such composition without modification. There was occasionally one of these magnificent commanders who, after the war, suffered the consequences of his exaltation, and even was in danger of being handsomely thrashed by some indignant corporal, who, at home, was the equal of his commander, but found himself treated very loftily when his former comrade commanded a corps upon the line, and snuffed the battle afar off.

The officer was expected to deal liberally with the infirmities of his men, and, as one of the popular infirmities in those times was a singular relish for stimulants, the epidemic was treated after the most approved practice of the ancients. The colonel often knocked in the head of a barrel of whiskey; the general, sometimes after review, dashed open his two or three barrels of the same delightful fluid, and the whole legion crowding around quenched their thirsts at these inspiring fountains; majors, captains and adjutants, were held responsible for "small drinks," that the fatigues of the day might be endured with greater patriotism. There was, according to the best information we obtain, one regiment in the county at the breaking out of the war. On review day the militia from all parts of the county met at Bath.

Three companies of Steuben County militia were ordered out for three months' service on the lines in the year 1812, two being independent companies of riflemen, and liable, as such, to be called at pleasure by the government, and the third being a company drafted from the regiment. Many who were disposed to volunteer, had been carried off by the recruiting officers of the regular service. Captain James Sandford commanded one of the rifle companies, which belonged chiefly to the town of Wayne, and the other, which mustered about 50 men, belonged to the town of Urbana, and was commanded by Capt. Abraham Brundage. William White, of Pulteney, was his first lieutenant, and Stephen Garner his ensign. Two rifle companies from Allegany County were attached to these, and the battalion thus formed was commanded by Major Asa Gaylord, of Urbana. Major Gaylord died on the lines. After his death, the battalion was commanded by Col. Dobbins. The drafted company was composed of every eighth man of the regiment. Capt. Jonas Cleland of Conhocton, commanded. Samuel D. Wells, of Conhocton, and John Gillet were lieutenants, and John Kennedy, ensign.

These companies reached the frontiers just at the time when Col. Van Rensselaer, with an army of militia, was about to make an attack on the works and forces of the British at Queenstown Heights. Capt. Cleland, with many of his men, volunteered to cross the boundary.

As to the movements of the Steuben County militia on that day, there are discrepancies in the accounts of

the actors. We give the story of the ensign, afterwards Major Kennedy, Sheriff of the county, a reliable man, and brave soldier, and obtained from him as related to our informant many years ago.

The men of the company, being ranged on the shore of the Niagara river at the foot of the precipitous bank, were fired upon by the British batteries on the opposite side. The grape shot rattled furiously against the rocks overhead. The captain advised his men to seek a less exposed position, and disappeared with some of his soldiers. He appeared again on the field of battle, over the river, in the course of the forenoon, and complaining of illness returned to the American side. Lieutenant Gillett and Kennedy remained under the fire of the British batteries with most of the men, crossed the river, and went into the battle. The former was well known through the county as "Chief Justice Gillett," an eccentric oratorical man, a Justice of the Peace sometime, and a practitioner in the popular courts. Upon him devolved the command of the company. It was doubted by some whether this Cicero would make a very good figure upon the battle field, and whether his chivalrous flourishes and heroic fury would not suddenly fail him at the scent of gunpowder. What was the surprise of the men when the "Chief Justice," as soon as he snuffed the British sulphur, rushed into the fight as if he had just found his element, whirled his sword, bellowed savagely with his coarse, powerful voice, urged on the men, cheered and dashed at the Britons like a lion. The soldiers were astonished to find themselves led by such a

chevalier. Even after receiving a dangerous and almost mortal wound, he faltered not, but swung his hat, brandished his sword, and continued his outlandish uproar till he fell from pain and exhaustion.\*

Ensign Kennedy, after the fall of the lieutenant, took command of that part of Capt. Cleland's company which crossed the river, and of a few others, hastily formed into a company. At one time they were opposed to the Indians, whom they drove before them into a wood. While exchanging an irregular fire with these enemies among the trees, Benjamin Welles, a young man from Bath, who stood beside Kennedy, looking over a fence, was shot through the head and mortally wounded. At the final engagement in this random, but often gallantly-fought battle, Kennedy, with his men, were ranged in the line formed to meet the British reinforcements, which were just coming up.

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\* Old soldiers tell of a militia captain from a neighboring county, who was engaged in the same battle, and was in some respects a match for the fighting Chief Justice. He was a physician by profession—a dissenter from the establishment, however, never having taken a degree—and accustomed to garnish his conversation with the most sonorous language. In battle, he made good his words, and fought bravely. He went into the fight in full uniform, adorning himself with great care, and from this circumstance became a mark for the Indians, who supposed that such a blaze of finery must cover at least a Major General. He was last seen by his men engaged in single combat with an Indian, slashing manfully with his sword, while the savage danced around him with a hatchet, watching a chance to strike. The next day the Indian made his appearance before the prisoners, clad in the gorgeous raiment of the captain. He strutted to and fro with great self-admiration, and was not entirely sure that he had not slain the President of the United States.

“Bill Wadsworth,” as their general, was known to the militia, (upon whom the command devolved after the fall of Van Rensselaer,) went through their lines, in a rough-and-ready style, with hat and coat off, explaining to the inexperienced officers his plan. To avoid the fire of the British the men were ordered to retire below the brow of the hill upon which they were ranged, and up which the enemy would march. When the British appeared on the top of the hill the militia were to fire from below. The slaughter would be great; they were then to charge bayonets, and in the confusion might be successful, though the decisiveness of a charge of bayonets up a hill against veterans, by militia, who before that day had never been under fire, might well have been doubted. The first part of the plan succeeded famously. As the British appeared above the hill a fire was delivered which was very destructive; but a misapprehension of the word of command by part of the line caused disorder. The fire was returned by the enemy. The militia suffered a considerable loss, and fell back overpowered to the river, where the most of them were made prisoners. Of the Steuben County men two were killed and three wounded.

It is popularly told, that on this day Ensign Kennedy was engaged in personal combat with a British officer, and being unacquainted with the polite learning of his newly-adopted profession, was speedily disarmed; that he immediately closed with his confounded antagonist, knocked him down with his fist, and made him prisoner. The hero of the story, however,

is said to have denied it. He was present at other engagements, and gained the reputation of a cool and resolute officer. At the sortie of Fort Erie he served with distinction. It was here that, under a close and heavy fire, he paced to and fro by the heads of his men, who had been ordered to lie flat on the ground to avoid the balls—not for a vain exposure of his person, but “being an officer,” he thought “it wouldn’t do.”

In the second year of the war two companies were drafted from the Steuben County militia, and sent to the Niagara frontier, under the command of Captains James Read, of Urbana, and Jonathan Rowley, of Dansville, faithful and reliable officers. Capt. Read refused to go as a drafted officer, but reported himself to the General of the Division, at the commencement of the war, as ready to march at the head of a company, as a volunteer, whenever he should be called upon. Both the companies were principally levied from the Northern part of the county. Of Capt. Rowley’s company, John Short and John E. Mulholland were lieutenants, and George Knouse and Timothy Goodrich, ensigns. Of Capt. Read’s company, George Teeples and Anthony Swarthout were lieutenants, and Jabez Hopkins and O. Cook, ensigns. From muster to discharge these companies served about four months. All of the officers and most of the men volunteered to cross the boundaries of the Republic, and were stationed at Fort George.

We have not succeeded in learning anything about the draft for the last year of the war, if any was

made, nor concerning the militia of this county who were engaged at Fort Erie.

The following incident is related by one of the Steuben County militia who was engaged in one of the battles on the line as sergeant of a company. His company was ordered into action, and before long found itself confronted by a rank of Old Peninsulars, arrayed in all the terrors of scarlet coats and cartridge boxes. When within a distance of ten rods from their enemies, the militia halted, and were ordered to fire. Muskets came instantly to the shoulder and were pointed at the Britons with the deadly aim of rifles at a wolf hunt, but to the dismay of the soldiers there was a universal "flash in the pan"—not a gun went off. The sergeant knew in an instant what was the cause of the failure. The muskets had been stacked out of doors during the night, and a little shower which fell toward morning had thoroughly soaked the powder in them. It was his business to have seen to it, that the muskets were cared for, and upon him afterwards fell the blame of the disaster. Nothing could be done till the charges were drawn. There were but two ball-screws in the company. The captain took one, and the sergeant the other, and beginning their labors in the middle of the rank, worked towards the ends. A more uncomfortable position for untried militia can hardly be imagined. The men, as described by the sergeant, "looked strangely, as he had never seen them before." The British brought their muskets with disagreeable precision into position and fired. The bullets whistled over the heads of the militia. The British loaded their guns again:

again the frightful row of muzzles looked the militia-men in the face—again they heard the alarming command, *fire*, and again two score bullets whistled over their heads. A third time the British brought their muskets to the ground and went through all the terrible ceremonies of biting cartridges, drawing ramrods, and priming in full view of the uneasy militia. The moistened charges were by this time almost drawn, and when the enemy were about to fire the sergeant stood beside the last man. He was pale and excited. “Be quick sergeant—be quick for God’s sake!” he said. They could hear the British officer saying to his men, “You fire over their heads,” and instructing them to aim lower. The muzzles this time dropped a little below the former range; smoke burst forth from them, and seven militia-men fell dead and wounded. The sergeant had just finished his ill-timed job, and was handing the musket to the private beside him, when a bullet struck the unfortunate man between the eyes and killed him. The fire of the British was now returned with effect. Reinforcements came on the field and the engagement became hot. An officer on horseback was very active in arranging the enemy’s line—riding to and fro, giving loud orders, and making himself extremely useful. “Mark that fellow!” said the sergeant to his right hand man. Both fired at the same instant. The officer fell from his horse and was carried off the field by his men. They afterwards learned that he was a Colonel, and that one of his legs was broken.



## THE BATTLE OF DANSVILLE.

In the midwinter of 1814, the bareheaded express-rider, galloping through the frozen forests, brings startling tidings. The British Lion, bounding forth from the snow-drifts of Canada, with icicles glittering in his mane, has pounced upon the frontiers of the Republic. Black Rock is taken! Buffalo is burned! General Hall's militia have been captured and generally eaten. The supervisors of Niagara County have been thrown into the grand whirlpool. The floodgates of invasion have been opened, and the whole standing army of Great Britain, with several line-of-battle ships, and an irregular horde of Canadians and Esquimaux, is now rolling Eastward with fire-brands and artillery, breaking furniture, shattering flour-barrels, burning cabins, blowing up mills, and terrifying the wives and children of our fellow-citizens.

Since Col. Simcoe, brandishing his two-edged sword on the ramparts of Toronto, beckoned those "black war-elephants" out of the billows of Ontario, there had not been such a martial ferment in our county, as arose at this alarming intelligence. Before the horse tail of the express-rider vanished beyond the Chimney Narrows, the murmur of war arose from the valleys like the humming in a disturbed bee-hive. The Brigadier blew his gathering horn, and all the cavaliers and yeomen, in the uttermost corners of the county, hurried to their regimental mustering grounds. A draft was ordered of every second man.

One battalion mustered on the Pulteney Square, at

Bath. The snow was deep and the wind keen, but the soldiers stood formed in a half-moon, with the fortitude of Siberians. Col. Haight, mounted upon a black charger, rode up with great circumstance, and made a vigorous and patriotic speech, calling for volunteers, and exhorting every man to go forth to the battle. If half the corps volunteered, a draft would not be necessary. Nearly the requisite number offered themselves at once. Then the deluding drum and the fanciful fife began to utter the most seducing melodies. The musicians again and again made the circuit of the regiment, as if surrounding the backward warriors with some enchantment. Drummers pounded with marvellous energy, and the fifers blew into their squealing tubes with such extraordinary ardor, that if the safety of the republic had depended upon the active circulation of wind through those "ear-piercing" instruments, all apprehensions of danger from the invaders might have been instantly dismissed. Occasionally a militia-man broke from the line and fell in behind the musicians; but the most of the legionaries who had resisted the first appeal, stood in the snow, proof against drums, fifes, and the Colonel's rhetoric. The draft to complete the corps was finally made, and the battalion started for the seat of war in high spirits. A great rabble followed their enlisted comrades to Dansville in sleighs. A very uproarious column it was. At Conhocton the army encamped. Houses, barns, pens and haystacks, overflowed with fire-eaters.

In the meantime the Canisteo country had been wide awake. Col. James McBurney, hearing the Brigadier's

alarming horn sounding its portentous quavers afar off, mounted his snorting war-steed, and gathering together his boisterous myrmidons from the sawmills and gorges, set forth in hot haste.\* At Dansville, the two battalions met and united. Their descent from the forests of Steuben was like an irruption of the Goths of old. The chieftain of Canisteo opened the battle after the ancient fashion, by a single combat in the presence of the combined battalions. A broad-breasted barrel of whiskey stood forth in its wooden mail, made thrice secure by hoops of seasoned hickory. This grim foe the undaunted Ostrogoth assailed with an axe, and, at the first blow, beat open his head. The barbarians set up a howl of triumph, and, crowding around, drank like the Scandinavians out of the skull of their vanquished enemy. The battle then became general. Streets and bar-rooms resounded with tremendous uproar. Dansville was captured, and her citizens knew no peace till the invaders sank down, from exhaustion, to dream that they had just fought a great battle on the Genesee Meadows, in which the British fled before them, scampered toward Canada like a multitude of rats, ran into the Niagara, and were now sailing around in the great whirlpool—cannon and horses, officers, non-commissioned officers, musicians and privates—while the Prince Regent, according to the sentence of a drum-head Court Martial, was hanging by his heels from an oak tree, and the lion and unicorn, yoked like bullocks to the tri-

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\* Col. Wm. Stephens, of Canisteo, was his Major, and Col. J. R. Stephens, of Hornellsville, Adjutant.

umphal car of Colonel Haight, were dragging that victorious consul around the Pulteney Square of Bath.

News arrived that the invaders had retired into Canada. The drafted battalions were discharged and returned again to their homes. The Canisteo Alaric covered the retreat in a masterly manner, and saw to it that none of the Steuben County fire-eaters who had been put *hors du combat* by the enemy were left to the tender mercies of the Dansvillains. Certain young men who were entirely captivated by the free and vociferous spirit of the Canisteo and followed the Goths of Col. McBurney to their own valley, relate at the present day with laughter the adventures of the retreat, and talk of the life and hospitalities of the valley with great satisfaction.

The muster, the march, the carouse, and the retreat were the prominent features of this campaign, of which Timour the Tartar might be proud. It was known to the soldiery afterwards as the "Battle of Dansville."

THE END.





## APPENDIX.

### ORGANIZATION OF STEUBEN COUNTY.

The County of Steuben was detached from the old County of Ontario and constituted a separate County in the year 1796. At the time of its organization it was divided into six towns, viz: Bath, Canisteo, Dansville, Frederickton, Middletown and Painted Post. Since the organization, one tier of towns has been taken from the western side of the County and attached to Allegany County, the territory constituting the present town of Barrington and Starkey with part of the town of Jerusalem has been taken from the northern towns and annexed to Yates County, and one quarter of a Township, including the village of Dansville, has been given to Livingston.

### COUNTY JUDGES.

|                              |      |                            |      |
|------------------------------|------|----------------------------|------|
| William Kersey, appointed    | 1796 | Geo. C. Edwards, appointed | 1826 |
| James Faulkner, "            | 1804 | Ziba A. Leland,            | 1838 |
| Samuel Baker, "              | 1814 | Jacob Larrowe,             | 1843 |
| Thomas McBurney, "           | 1816 | William M. Hawley,         | 1846 |
| James Norton, "              | 1823 | David McMaster, elected    | 1847 |
| Jacob Larrowe, elected 1851. |      |                            |      |

### COUNTY CLERKS.

|                    |      |                   |      |
|--------------------|------|-------------------|------|
| George D. Cooper,  | 1796 | David Rumsey,     | 1829 |
| Henry A. Townsend, | 1799 | William H. Bull,  | 1832 |
| John Wilson,       | 1815 | William Hamilton, | 1838 |
| Edward Howell,     | 1818 | Paul C. Cook,     | 1844 |
| John Metcalfe,     | 1821 | Philo P. Hubbell, | 1850 |

### SHERIFFS.

|                         |      |               |         |      |
|-------------------------|------|---------------|---------|------|
| William Dunn, appointed | 1796 | John Magee,   | elected | 1822 |
| John Wilson, "          | 1800 | John Kennedy, | "       | 1825 |

|                  |   |      |                    |   |      |
|------------------|---|------|--------------------|---|------|
| Dugald Cameron,  | " | 1805 | Alvah Ellas,       | " | 1828 |
| Jacob Teeple,    | " | 1809 | George Huntington, | " | 1831 |
| Howell Bull,     | " | 1811 | John T. Andrews,   | " | 1834 |
| Thomas McBurney, | " | 1812 | Henry Brother,     | " | 1837 |
| Lazarus Hammond, | " | 1814 | Hiram Potter,      | " | 1840 |
| George McClure,  | " | 1816 | Hugh Magee,        | " | 1843 |
| Henry Shriver,   | " | 1819 | Henry Brother,     | " | 1846 |
| John Magee,      | " | 1821 | Oliver Allen,      | " | 1849 |

Gabriel T. Harrower, elected 1852.

## SURROGATES.

|                         |      |                          |      |
|-------------------------|------|--------------------------|------|
| Stephen Ross, appointed | 1796 | William Woods, appointed | 1827 |
| Henry A. Townsend, "    | 1800 | Robert Campbell, jr. "   | 1835 |
| George McClure, "       | 1805 | David Rumsey, jr. "      | 1840 |
| John Metcalfe, "        | 1813 | Ansel J. McCall, "       | 1844 |
| James Brundage, "       |      | David McMaster, elected  | 1847 |

Jacob Larrowe, elected 1851.

## POPULATION OF STEUBEN COUNTY.

|               |      |                    |               |      |         |        |
|---------------|------|--------------------|---------------|------|---------|--------|
| Population in | 1790 | 168                | Population in | 1820 | 21,989  |        |
| "             | "    | 1800               | "             | "    | 1830    | 33,975 |
| "             | "    | 1810               | "             | "    | 1840    | 46,138 |
|               |      | Population in 1850 |               |      | 62,969. |        |

## POPULATION ACCORDING TO THE CENSUS OF 1850.

## FIRST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT.

|              |      |           |      |
|--------------|------|-----------|------|
| Bath,        | 6185 | Pulteney, | 1815 |
| Reading,     | 1435 | Wheeler,  | 1471 |
| Tyrone,      | 1894 | Urbana,   | 2079 |
| Prattsburgh, | 2786 | Wayne,    | 1350 |

## SECOND ASSEMBLY DISTRICT.

|           |      |               |      |
|-----------|------|---------------|------|
| Bradford, | 2010 | Lindley,      | 686  |
| Caton,    | 1215 | Orange,       | 1887 |
| Campbell, | 1175 | Painted Post, | 4411 |
| Cameron,  | 1663 | Addison,      | 3723 |
| Erwin,    | 1477 | Woodhull,     | 1769 |
| Hornby,   | 1314 | Thurston,     | 726  |



## THIRD ASSEMBLY DISTRICT.

|                |      |              |      |
|----------------|------|--------------|------|
| Avoca,         | 1574 | Troupsburgh, | 1656 |
| Conhocton,     | 2006 | Greenwood,   | 1186 |
| Dansville,     | 2545 | West Union,  | 950  |
| Howard,        | 3144 | Jasper,      | 1749 |
| Hornellsville, | 2637 | Canisteo,    | 2030 |
| Hartsville,    | 854  | Wayland,     | 2067 |

## VOTES POLLED AT THE GENERAL ELECTION IN 1852.

|                  |      |                 |      |
|------------------|------|-----------------|------|
| For              |      | For             |      |
| FRANKLIN PIERCE, | 6880 | WINFIELD SCOTT, | 5236 |

## AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIONS, &amp;c.

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Acres of Land improved.....                    | 336,981      |
| “ “ unimproved.....                            | 388,415      |
| Cash value of farms.....                       | \$13,581,268 |
| Value of farming implements and machinery..... | \$ 676,792   |

## LIVE STOCK.

|                          |              |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Horses.....              | 12,744       |
| Asses and mules.....     | 4            |
| Milch cows.....          | 21,584       |
| Working oxen.....        | 6,744        |
| Other cattle.....        | 27,162       |
| Sheep.....               | 156,776      |
| Swine.....               | 23,939       |
| Value of live stock..... | \$ 2,155,090 |

## PRODUCE DURING YEAR ENDING JUNE 1, 1850.

|                                 |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| Wheat, bushels of.....          | 653,484 |
| Rye, “ “.....                   | 16,033  |
| Indian corn, “.....             | 297,717 |
| Oats “ “.....                   | 913,948 |
| Wool, pounds of.....            | 399,543 |
| Peas and beans, bushels of..... | 45,202  |
| Irish potatoes, bushels of..... | 360,725 |
| Sweet potatoes, “ “.....        | 245     |
| Barley “ “.....                 | 153,056 |
| Buckwheat, “ “.....             | 115,390 |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Value of orchard products.....          | \$ 30,565 |
| Wine, gallons of.....                   | 285       |
| Value of produce of market gardens..... | \$ 3,740  |
| Butter, pounds of.....                  | 1,918,465 |
| Cheese, pounds of.....                  | 210,889   |
| Hay, tons of.....                       | 111,869   |
| Clover seed, bushels of.....            | 1,386     |
| Other grass seeds.....                  | 4,479     |
| Hops, lbs. of.....                      | 424       |
| Flax, lbs. of.....                      | 16,241    |
| Flax seed, bushels of.....              | 1,276     |
| Silk cocoons, lbs. of.....              | 2         |
| Maple sugar, lbs. of.....               | 294,897   |
| Molasses, gallons of.....               | 3,547     |
| Beeswax and honey, lbs. of.....         | 94,991    |
| Value of home-made manufactures.....    | \$ 76,287 |
| Value of animals slaughtered.....       | \$296,798 |

#### SKETCH OF THE GENERAL HISTORY OF SETTLEMENT IN WESTERN NEW-YORK.

The first European visitants of Western New York were the French. During the first thirty years of the seventeenth century the English made their earliest settlements in New England and Virginia, the Dutch on the Hudson river, and the French on the St. Lawrence. One hundred and fifty years afterwards the English were lords of the Continent. At the beginning of the race, however, the French displayed a more daring genius for adventure and conquest than their competitors. While the English Colonists were yet doubtfully struggling for existence on the Atlantic shores, and the Hollanders, with beaver-like prudence strengthened their habitations at Fort Orange and New Amsterdam, French adventurers had ascended the Great Lakes, and before the end of the seventeenth century, crossed thence to the Mississippi, descended that river to its mouth, and established trading posts and missions half way across the continent.\*

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| * Date of Cartiers Voyage to Hochalaga (Montreal,) | 1534 |
| “ “ Settlement at Quebeo,                          | 1608 |
| “ “ “ “ Plymouth,                                  | 1620 |
| “ “ “ “ New York,                                  | 1613 |
| “ “ “ “ Jamestown,                                 | 1607 |
| “ “ Marquette's Voyage down the Mississippi,       | 1673 |
| “ “ La Salle's Western Explorations.               | 1682 |

During the first century of French dominion in Canada, their relations with the fierce proprietors of Western New York were not peaceful. Champlain, the founder of Quebec, soon after his advent to Canada, gave mortal offence to the Five Nations, by assisting their enemies, the Hurons and Algonquins in a battle near Ticonderoga, where the fire-arms of the Europeans gained for their confederates victory over the Iroquois. From that time down to the beginning of the eighteenth century, the implacable enmity of the red leaguers harrassed the colonists of Canada. The expeditions of the French Governors into the territory of their foes gained for them little beside disgrace. From about the year 1700, however, the influence of the Jesuit missionaries, and the prudence of the Governors preserved peace between the former beligerents, and neutrality on the part of the savages in the contests of France and Great Britain. When the great rivals joined in the final struggle of 1754, the four Western tribes of the Six Nations\* even took up the hatchet for the French. Ten years later the English were supreme in North America.

In 1771 the county of Albany embraced all the northern and western part of the province of New York, and extended from the Hudson river to the Niagara. In 1772 the county of Tryon was formed. It embraced all that part of the state lying west of a North and South line running nearly through the centre of the present county of Schoharie. It was named in honor of Sir William Tryon, the provincial governor. The boundary between the British and Indian territory as agreed upon in the treaty of 1768, ran from Fort Stanwix, near Oneida Creek, Southward to the Susquehanna and Delaware.

The settlement of this district was commenced early in the 18th century, when nearly three thousand German Palatinates emigrated to this country under the patronage of Queen Anne. Most of them settled in Pennsylvania; a few made their way in 1773 from Albany over the Helderberg to the bottom lands of Schoharie creek and there effected a settlement. Small colonies from here and from Albany established themselves in various places along the Mohawk, and in 1772 had extended as far up as the German Flats, near where stands the village of Herkimer.

In 1739, Mr. John Lindsay, a Scotch gentleman, founded the settlement at Cherry Valley, which in a few years became the

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\*The Tuscaroras joined the Five Nations in 1712,

home of a most worthy and intelligent community, mostly of Scotch and "Scotch-Irish" origin.

The gallant family of Harpers settled at Harpersfield in 1768, and about the same time settlements were planted near Unadilla, and scattered families took up their residence in other districts. The population of Cherry Valley was short of three hundred, and that of all Tryon county not far from ten thousand inhabitants when the Revolution opened.

For twenty years previous to the Revolutionary war, Sir William Johnson lived at Johnstown, the capital of Tryon county, by far the most notable man bearing a British commission in the American provinces. Emigrating from Ireland in the year 1737, as agent for the Mohawk estate of his uncle, Sir Peter Warren, he early obtained distinguished reputation and influence—rose to high military command, and in the last French war, by his victory over Baron Dieskau, at Lake George, and his successful siege of Fort Niagara, gained fame, fortune, and a Baronetcy. From that time till near the rupture between the Crown and the Colonies, he lived at Johnson Hall, near Johnstown, Superintendent of Indian affairs for the Northern provinces, with princely wealth and power, displaying an administrative genius superior to any which had before been at the service of the British government in America. In the year 1774, an Indian Council was held at Johnstown, at which were present a large number of the warriors of the Six Nations, besides many high civil dignitaries of the provinces of New York and New Jersey. In the midst of the council Sir William suddenly died. On the 13th of July he was borne from the Hall to his grave, followed by a great concourse of citizens and Indians, and lamented by all.

At the time of his decease, his department included 130,000 Indians, of whom 25,420 were fighting men. The Six Nations numbered about 10,000, and had two thousand bold and skillful warriors. Colonel Guy Johnson, son-in-law of the late Superintendent, succeeded Sir William in this important post.

In a few months the long gathering political agitations of the Eastern provinces broke out into open and determined rebellion. The patriots of Tryon county hailed with enthusiasm the tidings from Boston, and met to express sympathy with their friends in New England, and to organize for similar measures. Guy Johnson became the leader of the loyalists. Sharp discussions and correspondence between him and the revolutionary committee followed, and in a few months Colonel Johnson abandoned his residence at Guy Park, and attended by a formidable body

of Indian and Tory adherents, among whom were Col. Claus, the Butlers and Brant, made his head quarters at Fort Stanwix, afterwards at Oswego, and finally at Montreal. To the latter place Sir John Johnson, the son and heir of Sir William, followed him with a body of three hundred loyalists, chiefly Scotch.

Then followed the bloody border wars of New York and Pennsylvania. The British Government having determined to commit the dastardly and disgusting wickedness of setting ten thousand savages upon the scattered frontier settlements of the United Colonies, found in the Johnsons and Butlers fit dispensers of massacre to the Northern borders. A brief notice of the incursions into Western New York, must suffice in this place.

It was not till the campaign of 1777 that the citizens of Tryon county felt the power which had been enlisted against them. Rumors of savage invasion it is true had alarmed them, and a reported concentration of Indians at Oquago (now Windsor) on the Susquehanna, excited at one time much apprehension. In July of that year Gen. Herkimer, of the Tryon county militia, marched to Unadilla with 300 men, and there held an interview with Brant, the celebrated war-chief, who also appeared with a force of warriors. The Indians manifested a decided leaning toward the English, and the conference, after nearly becoming a deadly affray, terminated.

In a few days afterwards it became necessary for the General to issue a proclamation, announcing impending invasion. Burgoyne with his well appointed army of 7,500 regular troops beside Canadian and Indian auxiliaries, had reached Ticonderoga on his march from Montreal toward N. York, and Gen. St. Leger with about 2000 soldiers and savages began his march from Oswego, with orders to take Fort Schuyler, and pass down the Mohawk to Johnstown, and to fortify himself there. On the 3d of August he arrived before Fort Schuyler, and found the garrison under Col. Gansevoort, prepared for a determined resistance. Gen. Herkimer with 800 militia marched to reinforce the garrison. Apprised of this, St. Leger detached a body of soldiers and Tories under Brant, and Col. Butler to watch his approach, and if possible to intercept his march. A desperate hand-to-hand battle was fought on the 6th of August in the woods at Oriskany, a few miles from the Fort. The militia were surprised, and suffered severely for their negligence. The rear division of the column gave way at the first attack, and fled. The forward division had no alternative but to fight. "Facing out in every direction they sought shelter under the trees, and returned the fire of the enemy with spirit. In the beginning of the battle,

the Indians, whenever they saw that a gun was fired from behind a tree, rushed up and tomahawked the person thus firing before he had time to reload his gun. To counteract this, two men were ordered to station themselves behind one tree, the one reserving his fire till the Indian ran up. In this way the Indians were made to suffer severely in return. The fighting had continued for some time, and the Indians had begun to give way, when Major Watts, a brother-in-law of Sir John Johnston, brought up a reinforcement consisting of a detachment of Johnson's Greens. The blood of the Germans boiled with indignation at the sight of these men. Many of the Greens were personally known to them. They had fled their country and were now returned in arms to subdue it. Their presence under any circumstances would have kindled up the resentment of these militia, but coming up as they now did in aid of a retreating foe, called into exercise the most bitter feelings of hostility.— They fired on them as they advanced, and then rushing from behind their covers attacked them with their bayonets, and those who had none, with the butt end of their muskets. This contest was maintained hand to hand for nearly half an hour.— The Greens made a manful resistance, but were finally obliged to give way before the dreadful fury of their assailants, with the loss of thirty killed upon the spot where they first entered.”—(*Annals of Tryon County.*)

The Americans lost in killed nearly 200, and about as many wounded and prisoners. The Indians according to their own statement lost 100 warriors killed; and the Tories and regulars about the same number. Gen. Herkimer was wounded, and a few days after the battle died. During the battle an efficient sally was made from the Fort by Col. Willet. On the 22d of August, St. Leger, alarmed at the rumored approach of Arnold, abandoned the siege, and retired in great confusion, leaving behind a great part of his baggage.

In the summer of 1778, Brant made his head-quarters at Oquago and Unadilla, and there mustered a band of Indians and Tories, ready for any barbarity which might offer. The inhabitants of Cherry Valley threw up rude fortifications, of the need of which the hovering parties of enemies gave warning. Several attacks and skirmishes occurred along the frontiers. In July of this year, Col. John Butler made the celebrated incursion into Wyoming. After ravaging that ill-fated valley, Col. Butler returned to Niagara, but the Indians again took their station at Oquago. In the month of November, Capt. Walter Butler, a son of the devastator of Wyoming, to gratify a personal resentment, obtained from his father a detachment of 200

"Butler Rangers," and permission to employ the 500 Indians which Brant commanded at Oquago. Under circumstances which proved the Tory commander to be the most pitiless barbarian of the troop, their united forces assailed the little settlement of Cherry Valley, on the morning of the 11th November. Through the inexcusable neglect of the officer in command of the Fort, the farmers were surprised in their houses, with several officers from the Fort, who were their lodgers. The commander of the post, refusing to yield himself a prisoner, fell by the tomakawk. A piteous scene of massacre and devastation followed. The Senecas, the most untameable of the savages, with some Tories, were first in the fray, and slew without mercy or discrimination. Brant and his Mohawks, less inhuman here than their barbarous or renegade allies, plied their hatchets with less fury. The buildings and stacks of hay and grain were fired. The troops in the Fort repelled the attack of the enemy, but were not strong enough to sally from their intrenchments. At night the Indians had begun their march homeward, with about forty prisoners. On the following day a detachment of militia arrived from the Mohawk, and the last prowling parties of Indians disappeared. The Annalist of Tryon County says, "The most wanton acts of cruelty had been committed, but the detail is too horrible and I will not pursue it further. The whole settlement exhibited an aspect of entire and complete desolation. *The cocks crew from the tops of the forest trees, and the dogs howled through the fields and woods.* The inhabitants who escaped with the prisoners who were set at liberty, abandoned the settlement."\*

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\* In the summer of 1781, Col. Willett met and defeated Major Ross and Walter Butler, at Johnson Hall. In the rapid retreat which followed, Capt. Butler was pursued by a small party of Oneida Indians who adhered, alone of the Six Nations, to the American side. Swimming his horse across the West Canada Creek, he turned and defied his pursuers. "An Oneida immediately discharged his rifle and wounded him and he fell. Throwing down his rifle and his blanket, the Indian plunged into the creek and swam across. As soon as he had gained the opposite bank, he raised his tomahawk, and with a yell, sprang like a tiger upon his fallen foe. Butler supplicated, though in vain for mercy. The Oneida with his uplifted axe, shouted in broken English, "Sherry Valley! remember Sherry Valley!" and then buried it in his brains. He tore the scalp from the head of his victim, still quivering in the agonies of death, and ere the remainder of the Oneidas had joined him, the spirit of Walter Butler had gone to give up its account. The place where he crossed is called *Butlers Ford* to this day."—(*Annals of Tryon County*.)

During the same year McDonald, a tory, with 300 Indians and teries was ravaging the Dutch settlements of Schoharie.—“What shall be done?” said Col. Harper, the bold partisan, to Col. Vroeman, the commander of the Fort, while the enemy were scouring the country around. “O, nothing at all,” the officer replied, “we be so weak we cannot do anything.” Col. Harper ordered his horse and laid his course for Albany—rode right down through the enemy who were scattered over all the country. At Fox’s Creek he put up at a tory tavern for the night. He retired to bed after having locked the door. Soon there was a loud rapping at the door? “What is wanted?” “We want to see Col. Harper.” The Col. arose and unlocked the door, seated himself on the bed, and laid his sword and pistols before him. In stepped four men. “Step one inch over that mark,” said the Colonel, “and you are dead men.” After talking a little time with him they left the room. He again secured the door, and sat on his bed till daylight appeared. He then ordered his horse, mounted and rode for Albany, and the enemy were round the house. An Indian followed him almost into Albany, taking to his heels when the Colonel wheeled and presented his pistol. Next morning the Schoharie people heard a tremendous shrieking and yelling, and looking out, saw the enterprising partisan amongst the enemy with a troop of horse.—The men in the Fort rushed out, and the country was soon cleared of the whole crew of marauders.

The narrow limits allowed to this portion of the volume, warn that no further space can be occupied with a detail of the incidents of the Border Wars of New York. In 1779, Gen. Sullivan made his well known expedition into the territory of the Indians. During the remaining years of the war the frontiers were sorely harrassed. Bands of savages and loyalists incessantly emerged from the forests to ravage, burn and kill. And if they succeeded in bringing dreadful misery upon the homes of the borderers, it was not without resolute resistance on the part of the latter. Under the lead of Willsett, the Harpers and other partisans not less sagacious than determined, the marauders often felt to their discomfiture the rifles of the frontiers; and the well authenticated traditions of individual daring and adventure, rival in interest the annals of knight-errantry.

Soon after the close of the Revolutionary War, emigration began to penetrate Western New York from three quarters. Pennsylvanians, particularly inhabitants of the region of Wyoming, pushed up the Susquehanna to Tioga Point, where, diverging, some made settlements along the Chemung and Canisteo,



while others established themselves on the East branch of the Susquehanna and its tributaries. Adventurers from the East, crossing from New England or the Hudson river counties to Unadilla, dropped down the river in canoes and settled along the Susquehanna or Chemung, or travelled into the upper Genesee country. Yet another band took the ancient road through the Mohawk valley to Oneida Lake, then on to Canadesaga.

In May, 1784, Hugh White passing the boundary of civilization settled at Whitestown, near Utica. In the same year James Dean settled at Roms. In 1786, a Mr. Webster, became the first white settler of the territory now comprised in the county of Onondaga. In 1788, Asa Danforth and Comfort Tyler, located at Onondaga Hollow. In 1793, John L. Hardenburgh settled on the site of the city of Auburn. In 1789, James Bennett and John Harris established a ferry at Cayuga Lake. In 1787, Jemima Wilkinson's disciples made their first settlement on the outlet of Crooked Lake, one mile South of the present village of Dresden. On their arrival at Geneva from the East they found, says a local historian, but a solitary log house, and that not finished, inhabited by one Jennings.

After the purchase of Phelps and Gorham, of their Western estate, Mr. Phelps selected the site at the foot of Canandaigua Lake as the central locality in his purchase, and the village of Canandaigua received its first settler in the spring of 1789. Many others followed during the same season, and in the August ensuing the new village was described as being "full of people residents, surveyors, explorers, adventurers. Houses were going up—it was a busy, thriving place."

In the fall of 1788, Kanadesaga (now Geneva,) is described as having become "a pretty brisk place, the focus of speculators, explorers, the Lessee Company and their agents, and the principal seat of the Indian trade for a wide region. Horatio Jones, (*the Interpreter,*) was living in a log house covered with bark on the bank of the lake, and had a small stock of goods for the Indian trade. Asa Ransom, (the afterwards Pioneer of Buffalo,) occupied a hut and was manufacturing Indian trinkets. Lark Jennings had a log tavern and trading establishment covered with bark on the Lake shore, which was occupied by Dr. Benton. There was a cluster of log houses all along on the low ground near the Lake." In 1794, Col. Williamson having assumed the agency of the Pulteney Estate, began improvements at Geneva by the erection of the Geneva Hotel. "It was completed in December and opened with a grand ball, which furnished a memorable epoch in the early history of the Genesee

country. The hotel was talked of far and wide as a wonderful enterprise, and such it really was." In the same year Col. W. began his improvements at Sodus. By this time or in a few years later, nearly all the principal towns between Seneca Lake and the Genesee river in the northern district of the purchase, had received their first few settlers.

In the meantime the valleys of the Susquehanna and its tributaries, had been penetrated by adventurers from the South and East. In the year 1787, Capt. Joseph Leonard moving up the Susquehanna in a canoe with his family from Wyoming, made the first permanent settlement at Binghamton. In the same year Col. Rose, Joshua Whitney, and a few others, settled in the same vicinity. The settlement at Wattles' Ferry, (now Unadilla village,) a well known locality in the early days, had been made sometime previous.

The Indian settlement at Oquago, (now Windsor,) as has been stated before, was of long standing. For a few years previous to the French War of 1756, an Indian mission had been established there, at the instance of the elder President Edwards. A small colony of emigrants made a settlement at this place in 1785. In the same year James McMaster made the first settlement at Owego. Tioga Point is said to have been settled as early as 1780, but this seems incredible, unless the first residents were Tories. The pioneers of the Chemung Valley were principally Wyoming people, originally from Connecticut. Col. John Handy was the pioneer at Elmira, settling there in 1788.

The Chemung Valley enjoyed some fame before the arrival of the pioneers. John Miller, Enoch Warner, John Squires, Abijah Patterson, Abner Wells, and others, are given as the names of pioneers of the valley at Elmira and its vicinity; besides Lebbeus Hammond, of Wyoming, renowned for personal prowess above most of the men of the border. A notice of the settlements of Chemung, Canistota and Conhocton, has been given in the preceding portions of this volume.

The brief time allowed for the preparation of this sketch, and the unparalleled confusion of the otherwise valuable works from which our facts must be derived, will compel a random notice of the time of commencing the principal settlements remaining unnoticed. Rev. Andrew Gray and Major Moses Van Campen, with a small colony, settled at Almond, Allegany county, in 1796. Judge Church, of Angelica, not long afterward, began the settlement of Genesee Valley in the same county. William and James Wadsworth, emigrated to their fine estate at Big Tree or Genesee from Connecticut, in 1790.

It was till about the year 1798, that the State Road from Utica to the Genesee River at Avon, by way of Cayuga Ferry and Canandaigua, was completed. In 1799, a stage passed over this road in three days. In 1800, a road was made from Avon to *Ganson's*, now Le Roy. For many years this old *Buffalo Road* was the centre of settlement. The wide belt of dark, wet forest, which extended along the shore of Lake Ontario from Sodus to Niagara, formed a strong-hold of pestilence, which few dared to venture into. Not even the unmatched hydraulic advantages of the Genesee Falls, could tempt the speculator to encounter the fevers that there unnerved the arm of enterprise. It is true that as early as 1790, "Indian Allen," a demi-savage renegade from New Jersey, resuming a sort of civilization after the Revolutionary war, erected mills at these falls on a certain "one hundred acre tract" given him for that purpose by Mr. Phelps, but it seems that the enterprise was premature.—Other mills along the line of settlement engrossed the custom, and the solitary miller had hardly employment enough to keep his mill in repair. Sometimes it was wholly abandoned, and the chance customer put the mill in motion, ground his own grist, and departed through the forest. In 1810, however, settlements having been made in the Lake district, a bridge was built across the Genesee at this point, and in the following year Col. Nathaniel Rochester, with two associates Cols. Fitzhugh and Carroll, had become the proprietors of Allen's lot, laid out a village plot and sold several lots. Thus was founded the city of Rochester. In 1817, it was incorporated a village with the name of Rochesterville. In 1834, it received its city charter.

The Holland Company purchased their great estate west of the Genesee of Robert Morris, in 1792, and 1793. Mr. Joseph Ellicott, of Maryland, the first agent of this Company, and for many years a prominent citizen, arrived in Western New York, in 1797. In 1801, Batavia was founded under his auspices.—In 1798, there was an insignificant huddle of log houses, not a dozen in all, on the site of the present city of Buffalo. The possession of the lands at the mouth of Buffalo creek, long a favorite place of rendezvous of the Indians, was deemed of importance by Mr. Ellicott, and on purchasing it, plotted there the village of *New Amsterdam*, with its Schimmelpinneck, Stadtnit-ski, and Vollenhoven Avenues.

## SETTLER-LIFE.

The Editor has had in his possession a manuscript sketch of Settler-life, of much value for its exactness and particularity of detail, prepared several years since by a gentleman of accurate observation and most just sympathies, himself in early life a woodsman and a true lover of nature, and always a hearty friend of the pioneer. It was expected that liberal extracts from this manuscript might have been given, but being unexpectedly curtailed in space, we can present but a passage or two.

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### A SETTLER'S HOME.

"As I was travelling through the county on horseback on a summer day in an early year of settlement, I fell in company with two gentlemen, who were going in the same direction. One of them was the land Agent from Bath, who was going to the Genesee river, the other was a foreigner on his way from Easton, in Pennsylvania, to Presque Isle, (now Erie) on Lake Erie. We had followed in Indian file a mere path through the woods for several miles, passing at long intervals a log house where the occupants had just made a beginning; when having passed the outskirts of settlement and penetrated deep into the woods, our attention was attracted by the tinkling of a cow bell, and the sound of an axe in chopping. We soon saw a little break in the forest, and a log house. As we approached we heard the loud barking of a dog, and as we got near the clearing were met by him with an angry growl as if he would have said, "You can come no farther without my masters permission." A shrill whistle from within called off the dog. We proceeded to the house. A short distance from it, standing on the fallen trunk of a large hemlock tree, which he had just chopped once in two, was a fine looking young man four or five and twenty years of age, with an axe in his hand. He was dressed in a tow-frock and trowsers, with his head and feet bare. The frock, open at the top, showed that he wore no shirt, and exhibited the muscular shoulders and full chest of a very ath-

letic and powerful man. When we stopped our horses he stepped off the log; shook hands with the agent, and saluting us frankly, asked us to dismount and rest ourselves, urging that the distance to the next house was six miles, with nothing but marked trees to guide us a part of the way; that it was nearly noon, and although he could not promise us anything very good to eat, yet he could give us something to prevent us from suffering with hunger. He had no grass growing yet, but he would give the horses some green oats. We concluded to accept the invitation and dismounted and went into the house.

"Before describing the house I will notice the appearance of things around it, premising that the settler had begun his improvements in the spring before our arrival. A little boy about three years old was playing with the dog, which though so resolute at our approach, now permitted the child to push him over and sit down upon him. A pair of oxen and a cow with a bell on, were lying in the shade of the woods; two or three hogs were rooting in the leaves near the cattle, and a few fowls were scratching the soil. There was a clearing, or rather chopping around the house of about four acres, half of which had been cleared off and sowed with oats, which had grown very rank and good. The other half of the chopping had been merely burnt over and then planted with corn and potatoes, a hill being planted wherever there was room between the logs. The corn did not look very well. The chopping was enclosed with a log fence. A short distance from the house a fine spring of water gushed out of the gravel bank, from which a small brook ran down across the clearing, along the borders of which a few geese were feeding.

"When we entered the house the young settler said, "Wife, here is the land-agent and two other men," and turning to us said, "This is my wife." She was a pretty looking young woman dressed in a coarse loose dress, and bare footed. When her husband introduced us, she was a good deal embarrassed, and the flash of her dark eyes and the crimson glow that passed over her countenance, showed that she was vexed at our intrusion. The young settler observed her vexation and said, "Never mind Sally, the Squire (so he called the agent) knows how people have to live in the woods." She regained her composure in a moment and greeted us hospitably, and without any apologies for her house or her costume. After a few minutes conversation, on the settler's suggesting that he had promised "these men something to eat to prevent their getting hungry," she began to prepare the frugal meal. When we first entered the

house she sat near the door, spinning flax on a little wheel, and a baby was lying near her in a cradle formed of the bark of a birch tree, which resting like a trough on rockers, made a very smooth, neat little cradle. While the settler and his other guests were engaged in conversation, I took notice of the house and furniture. The house was about 20 by 26 feet, constructed of round logs *chinked* with pieces of split logs, and plastered on the outside with clay. The floors were made of split logs with the flat side up; the door, of thin pieces split out of a large log, and the roof of the same. The windows were holes unprotected by glass or sash; the fire place was made of stone, and the chimney, of sticks and clay. On one side of the fire place was a ladder leading to the chamber. There was a bed in one corner of the room, a table and five or six chairs, and on one side a few shelves of split boards, on which were a few articles of crockery and some tin-ware, and on one of them a few books. Behind the door was a large spinning wheel and a reel, and over head on wooden hooks fastened to the beams were a number of things, among which were a nice rifle, powder horn, bullet pouch, tomahawk and hunting knife—the complete equipment of the hunter and the frontier settler. Every thing looked nice and tidy, even to the rough stones which had been laid down for a hearth.

“In a short time our dinner was ready. It consisted of corn bread and milk, eaten out of tin basins with iron spoons. The settler ate with us, but his wife was employed while we were at dinner in sewing on what appeared to be a child’s dress. The settler and the agent talked all the time, generally on the subject of the settlement of the country. After dinner the latter and his companion took their departure, the one making the little boy a present of a half dollar, and the other giving the same sum to the baby.

“I have now introduced to the reader one of the best and most intelligent among the first settlers of the county. He was a man of limited information, except as to what related to his own particular business; but his judgment was good, and he was frank, candid and fearless. He belonged to that class of men who distinguished themselves as soldiers during our Revolutionary War, and who were in many instances the descendants of the celebrated “bold yeomanry of old England,” whose praises were commemorated by the English bard when he wrote,

“Princes and lords may flourish or may fade,  
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;  
But a bold yeomanry, their country’s pride,  
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.”

## THE FRIENDLINESS OF THE PIONEERS.

"The social relations and neighborly intercourse of the settlers were of the most kind and friendly character, and proved the truth of the common saying that 'people were much more friendly in new countries than they were in the old settlements.' It was no uncommon thing among them to comply literally with the injunction of scripture which requires us 'to give to him that asketh and from him that would borrow to turn not away.' Their kindness and sympathy to and for each other was indeed most extraordinary, and showed a degree of sensibility which we look for in vain in a more cultivated and enlightened state of society. At the commencement of the sugar-making perhaps, some one in the settlement would cut his leg badly with an axe, making a deep and ghastly wound, which would render him a cripple for weeks and perhaps for months. The neighbors would assemble, that is, make a *bee* and do all his work as far as it could be done at that time, and then, by arrangement among themselves, one man would go every afternoon and gather the sap, carrying it to the house where it could be boiled up by the settler's wife. Again, one would be taken sick in harvest time: his neighbors would make a *bee*, harvest and secure his crops, when, at the same time, their own grain very likely would be going to waste for want of gathering. In seed time a man's ox would perhaps be killed by the falling of a tree: the neighbors would come with their teams and drag in his wheat when they had not yet sowed their own. A settler's house would be accidentally burned down—his family would be provided for at the nearest neighbors, and all would turn out and build and finish a house in a day or two so that the man could take his family into it. Instances like these, in which the settlers exhibited their kindness and sympathy for each other might be extended indefinitely, but we have referred to a sufficient number to show the kindness and good feeling that existed among them."

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### A REMINISCENCE.

"For the purpose of showing how much time and labor it required in many cases for the first settlers to procure even the most common articles of food, I will state what has been related to me by one of the most respectable and intelligent of the first settlers of Dansville.\* He stated that when he first settled in

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\*The late Judge Hammond, of Hammondsport,

that town, it was very difficult to procure provisions of any kind; and there was no grain to be had any where but of the Indians, at Squaky Hill, who had corn, which they would sell for a silver dollar a bushel. In order to get some corn for bread—his supply having become exhausted—he went several miles to a place where a wealthy man was making large improvements and employed a good many hands. He chopped for him four days, for which he received two dollars. He then worked one day for another man to pay for the use of a horse, and on the next day started for the Indian Village, a distance of fifteen or twenty miles, where he got two bushels of corn for his two dollars. The corn had been kept by the Indians tied up in bunches by the husks, and hung around the walls of their cabin, and was very black and dirty, covered with soot and ashes. He took the corn home and his wife washed it clean with a good deal of labor and dried it so that it could be ground. He then got the horse another day, and carried the corn to mill, twelve or fifteen miles, and was fortunate enough to get it ground and reach home the same day. Here we see that it took seven days work of the settler to get the meal of two bushels of corn. The old gentleman's eye kindled when he related these circumstances, and he said that the satisfaction and happiness he felt when sitting by the fire and looking at the *bag full of meal* standing in the corner of his log house, far surpassed what he experienced at any other time in the acquisition of property, although he became in time the owner of a large farm, with a large stock of horses, cattle, and sheep, and all the necessary implements of a substantial and wealthy farmer."

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### THE VILLAGE OF CORNING.\*

Corning owes its existence and prosperity to no original superiority of location over neighboring villages, but has sprung up to a thriving and commanding position by having become the centre of great public improvements. The history of these is the history of the place.

By the construction of the Chemung Canal this point was made an inland termination of navigable communication with the Hudson river and the ocean. It was consequently the point from which the products of the forest, the field, and the river, for a vast extent of country were destined to seek a market. The

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\*Prepared for this volume by a correspondent.



sagaious enterprise of a few capitalists pointed to it as the future centre of an extensive commerce.

The extensive mines of bituminous coal, at Blossburgh, in the state of Pennsylvania, had early attracted attention, and shortly after the completion of the Chemung canal two corporations, one of which had been created by the state of Pennsylvania, to construct a slack water navigation from Blossburg to the state line, and the other by the State of New York, to continue the same to Elmira, were authorized by their respective states to build railroads connecting at the state line, and in this state, extending to a point at or near the termination of the Chemung canal.

The work of constructing these railroads was commenced in 1836, and at the same time an association of gentlemen now known as the Corning Company, having purchased a large tract of land on both sides of the Chemung river, and laying out streets and lots, made a beginning of the future village of Corning by the erection of a large hotel called the "Corning House." The Corning and Blossburg railroad was completed and put into operation in 1840. About the same time the work of building the New York and Erie railroad which passes through the village was commenced in the vicinity and prosecuted vigorously till the suspension of the work, in 1842. The Bank of Corning, with a capital of \$104,000, had been organized and put in operation, in 1839. So rapid was the growth of the village, that the population amounted in 1841 to 900.

Here its prosperity was for a time arrested. The commercial revolutions which paralyzed enterprise and industry everywhere were felt with peculiar severity here. The work upon the New York and Erie railroad which had drawn together a considerable population, was suspended. The property of the Corning and Blossburg railroad was seized by creditors. The price of lumber, the great staple of the country, would hardly pay the cost of manufacture. Large quantities of coal lay upon the bank of the river and in eastern markets, wanting purchasers. Bankruptcy was almost universal, and the resources of industry were almost entirely cut off.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks to the prosperity of the village, the advantages of its position and the hopeful energies of its citizens did not suffer the relapse to continue long.— After a while the demand for coal increased and the market enlarged. Improved prices of lumber stimulated its manufacture, and larger quantities were brought here for shipment. The place became the centre of a heavy trade, and capital

sought investment in manufactures. In 1848 the village was incorporated under the general law, containing at the time 1700 inhabitants.

In the mean time the work of building the Erie railroad was resumed, and on the first day of January, 1850, was opened a direct railway communication with the city of New York. The elements of prosperity seemed complete.

But there were elements to contend with of an adverse and direful character. On the eighteenth day of May, 1850, occurred a fire, more extended and disastrous in proportion to the size of the place, than has often, if ever happened elsewhere. The entire business part of the village, comprising nearly one hundred buildings, with large quantities of lumber, was in a few hours laid in ashes. Yet the disaster was so common and universal—misfortune had so many companions—there were so many to share the loss that the burden seemed to be scarcely felt. The embers had not cooled before shanties of rough boards supplied the place of stores, and for months almost the entire business was carried on in places, neither secure from summer rains or thieves. In the mean time the work of rebuilding was going on, and in no long time substantial and splendid buildings again occupied the place of the ruins.

In the year 1852 was opened the first section of the Buffalo, Corning and New York railroad, having its eastern terminus at Corning. The remainder of the line to Buffalo, will be in operation in the course of 1853. The Corning and Blossburg railroad also was relaid with a new and heavy rail and newly equipped throughout.

The annual exports of coal and lumber are forty thousand tons of the former, and fifty million feet of the latter. In its canal commerce, Corning is the fifth port in the state.

In new villages and settlements, schools and churches are apt to receive but secondary attention. In Corning its Union School of four or five hundred scholars has maintained a not inferior rank, and its five Churches give evidence of some considerable attention to morals and religion.

The population is now not far from three thousand, and the sanguine predict an increase vastly more rapid in future than it has been in former years.

### THE GREAT WINDFALL.

The first stable in the town of Bath was literally "put up by a whirlwind." In 1791, or about that time, a destructive

hurricane swept over the land. Judge Baker in after years took pains to collect information of the movements of this great "northern fanatic," and was of the opinion that its path from Lake Erie to the Atlantic was about ninety miles in breadth, and that the northern limit of its agitation in this county was at the upper town line of Urbana. A more violent "agitator" never passed through the land. Thousands of acres of forest were prostrated, and the frightful windfalls, briar-grown and tangled, which settlers afterwards found in this county were the effects of this "inflammatory appeal" to the weak brethren of the wilderness. We have met a veteran farmer who was a child at the time when the tornado passed, and happened on that day to be left by his parents to take care of still younger children, and remembers hiding in a hole in the ground with his little brothers while the forest was filled with the terrific roar of falling pines.

Mr. Jonathan Cook, an early settler at Painted Post, was driving a pack horse laden with provisions to Pleasant Valley where Phelps and Gorham's surveyors were at work; and was near the mouth of Smith's creek, on the Conhocton, when the storm struck him. He took refuge under an oak tree, while the wind, sweeping furiously up the ravine, uprooted the maples, twisted branches from the trees and scattered them in the air like wisps of hay. A whirling gust caught the cluster under which he was standing. The oak beneath which he had taken refuge was prostrated, but he himself fell with his face to the ground and escaped unhurt. His horse however met with a strange catastrophe. The whirlwind tore up several large trees and imprisoned the unfortunate animal in a cage so impregnable that the driver was unable to extricate him, but was obliged to go over to the surveyors' camp and get men to return with axes and make a breach in the walls of the stable. "This was rather a rough joke, even for a whirlwind, but the horse was but little hurt.

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### THE SETTLERS OF DANSVILLE.

(The notice of the settlement of the town of Dansville originally prepared for this work was accidentally lost. At this time it is impossible to supply the names of the settlers in the southern part of the town, furnished by Wm. C. Rogers, Esq., of Rogersville. The village of Dansville falling within the province of the author of the *History of Phelps and Gorham's*

*Purchase*, a brief notice of the settlers of that portion of the old town, formerly a part of Steuben county is condensed from that valuable and copious work.) The first settler upon the site of the village of Dansville, was Neil McCoy. He came from Painted Post and located where his step-son, James McCurdy, who came in with him, now resides. The family was four days making the journey from Painted Post, camping out two nights on the way. To raise their log-house, help came from Bath, Geneseo and Mount Morris, with Indians from Squaky Hill and Gardeau. During the first season, it is mentioned that Mrs. McCoy, hearing of the arrival of Judge Hurlburt's family at Arkport, eleven miles distant, resolved as an act of backwoods courtesy to make the first call. Taking her son with her, she made the journey through the woods by marked trees, dined with her new neighbors, and returned in time to do her milking after a walk of twenty-two miles.

Amariah Hammond Esq., a widely known pioneer of the town who died at a venerable age in the winter of 1850, "coming in to explore, slept two nights under a pine tree on the premises he afterwards purchased. Early in the spring of 1796 he removed his young family from Bath to this place; his wife and infant child on horseback, his household goods and farming utensils on a sled drawn by four oxen, and a hired man driving the cattle."

Captain Daniel P. Faulkner was an early property holder and spirited citizen of the town in the palmy days of Col. Williamson, and from his familiar appellation, "Captain Dan" the village took its name. In 1798 Jacob Welch, Jacob Martz, Conrad Martz, George Shirey and Frederick Barnhart emigrated to Dansville with their families. They came up the Conhocton valley, and were three days on the road from Bath, camping out two nights. At the arrival of this party the names of the settlers already on the ground besides those before named were Mr. Phenix, James Logau, David Scholl, John Vanderwenter, Jared Erwin, William Perine. Col. Nathaniel Rochester became a resident of Dansville in 1810.

The settlement of the southern part of this town was not commenced till about the year 1816. Of the settlers in that district we can only recall the names of Messrs. Wm. C. Rogers and Jonas Bridge. In the year 1816 (or about that time) Mr. Rogers, on arriving in the vicinity of the present village of Rogersville, found the merest handful of settlers in all that quarter. At this day the wilderness has given place to a pleasant village with an academy of substantial worth, surrounded by a thriving farming country.

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## ERRATA.

- On page 10, for Canistes read Canisteo,  
 On page 14, for Scandinavian read Scandinavian.  
 On page 21, for weary woodsmen read wary woodsmen.  
 On page 89, for Tarathmel read Jarathmel.  
 On page 84, for beating read boating.  
 On page 89, for town in 3d line read towns.  
 On page 90, for Shemokinn read Shemokam.  
 On page 94, for congars read cougars.  
 On page 199, for Ketchers read Ketches.  
 On page 218, for frugal read feudal.



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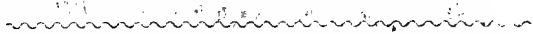
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It is unnecessary after this concatenation of expletives, to add that the Bath Bookstore is emphatically a "Curiosity Shop," where everything imaginable, rare, curious, indigenous and exotic is more likely to be found than in any place that can be designated within the extent of the domain of that ancient brother of our "paternal—Uncle Sam."

Now unto all, tottering youth, decrepit age, the glowing belle or the stately guardian of the fair, to those who court the syren, pleasure; or pursue the not less fleeting phantom wealth, we send greeting, the invitation devoid of all formality—"At Home"—the doors are cordially opened to all; drop in and spend an hour even if you do not buy—examine, read, in short—*gratify your curiosity.*

Then if you should wish to buy, you will find in one corner a choice collection of Toys; and Masters Edward and Robert; the proprietors thereof can supply you with a penny Trumpet or Ring—up to a Wax Doll or Crying baby; a China Tea Set, or a Coral necklace; in fine, a *large* stock with *small* owners. Then should you desire to gratify a friend with a present, or propitiate with a significant token of ———, you will be furnished with a book that will plainly speak that which the trembling lips refuse the utterance.

Then what worthier gift for those whom we venerate in the dignity of age or esteem in the plenitude of all that is noble, that the expressions of those high in the honor of the world for their lofty powers of intellect and reason—for the aged, the time honored writings of Baxter, Bunyan and a long list of kindred spirits, and for the mature mind what more appropriate gift than a book emanating from the brain of some master spirit, from him, the immortal Bard, whose name shall "endure to the last syllable of recorded time," down to the fledgling aspirant for fame, or instead of these, the truth portraying page of the Historian, teaching philosophy by example, or the soaring flights of a Headley, or abstrusities of a Carlyle—tempting the Icarians to melt their waxed wings in the sun of sharp criticism. For the gentler mind what more pleasing gift than the writings of Tupper, Willis, Sigourney, Hemans, or Lowell, Hawthorne, Melan-



