

THE
DEEPLY INTERESTING STORY

OF

GENERAL PATCHIN

OF SCHOHARIE COUNTY

STOLEN WHEN A LAD

BY BRANT AND HIS INDIANS

"Who will spin a story of that savage war?"

BY

JOSIAH PRIEST

LANSINGBURG

PRINTED BY W. HARKNESS

1840

TARRYTOWN, N. Y.

REPRINTED

WILLIAM ABBATT

1918

BEING EXTRA NUMBER 64 OF THE MAGAZINE OF HISTORY WITH NOTES AND QUERIES

THE FAMOUS CAPTIVITY AND SUFFERINGS
OF FREEGIFT PATCHIN, AMONG THE INDIANS,
AS RELATED BY HIMSELF

IN the year 1780 myself as well as the whole population about the region of old Schoharie were held in readiness by Col. Peter Vrooman, as minute-men, to be ready at a moment's warning, as the Tories and Indians were a watchful and cruel enemy. Around the region of the head of the Delaware river, it was suspected there were persons who favored the cause of the British; a small company of men therefore were sent out as spies upon them; and also if possible, to make a quantity of maple sugar, as an abundance of maple grew there.

Of this little company Captain Alexander Harper had the command. Fourteen persons were all that were sent out, among whom was myself, Isaac Patchin my brother, Ezra Thorp, Lieutenant Henry Thorp and Major Henry.

It was early in the month of April—the second day of the month—when we came to the place of rendezvous, a distance from the Forts of Schoharie of about thirty miles. A heavy snow storm came on, during which about three feet of snow fell, in addition to that which was on the ground before.

We were not in the least apprehensive of danger, as the nearest Fort of the enemy was at Niagara; knowing also that Sullivan, the year before, had scoured the Chemung and Genesee countries, killed or driven the Indians to Canada; also as it was winter and the snow very deep, we supposed were circumstances of sufficient magnitude to prevent marauding parties effectually from approaching from that quarter at that peculiar time.

We had tapped, as the sugar making phrase is, a great number of trees, finding the proper utensils at hand, as they had been before occupied in the same way, by the inhabitants, who were fled to other places for safety. A few hundred pounds of maple sugar

would have been a great acquisition, as the inmates of the Forts were in want of all things; having been compelled to flee from their homes to Schoharie and other places of safety.

We had proceeded in our enterprise of sugar making as merrily as the fatiguing nature of the business would permit, a few days, when, on the 7th of April, 1780, at about two o'clock in the afternoon, we were suddenly beset and surrounded by forty-three Indians and seven Tories. The names of the Tories I forbear to mention, except two or three, of whom the reader will hear in the course of the narrative, the rest I have thought proper not to name, as their descendants are not chargeable with the misguided acts of their fathers; and it is not my wish at this time of day to cast reflections and grieve the innocent.

So silent had been the approach of the enemy, that three of our number lay weltering in their blood before I, or any of the rest knew they were among us, as we were scattered here and there, busy with our work. I was not far from our captain when I saw the Indians first, who was accosted by Brant, their leader, as follows:—"Harper, I am sorry to find you here." "Why," said Harper, "Captain Brant, are you sorry?" "Because," he rejoined, "I *must* kill you, though we were school mates in youth." When he lifted and flourished his tomahawk over his head, ready to execute the deed, but suddenly, as if paralyzed by a stroke of magic, stopped this act of murder, as if some new and important thought had crossed his mind—when he gazed at Harper with an eye as keen and deadly as a serpent, saying, "Are there any troops at the Forts in Schoharie?" Harper perceived in a moment, that the answer to this question would either save their lives or procure their instant death; for if he should say *No*, which would have been the truth, the Indians would have instantly killed them all, and then proceeded to Old Schoharie, massacring as they went, and cut off the whole inhabitants before help could have been had from any

quarter, and the enemy, as a wolf, when the morning appears flees with the shades of night.

Accordingly he answered, "There are three hundred continental troops now at the Forts, who arrived there about three days since." But the whole of this statement was untrue; yet who will condemn the captain and say the act would need much repentance, ere it should have obtained forgiveness?

On hearing this the countenance of Brant fell, when he waved his hand, a signal to the chiefs; stopped the massacre, and called a council of war; all of which, from the time Brant had brandished his hatchet over the head of Harper, had been but the work of a moment.

The eleven survivors were seized, pinioned, and turned altogether into a hog pen, where they were kept till morning. A guard of Tories, with one Becraft by name at their head, was set over them in the pen, a bloody villain, as will appear in the course of this account.

All night Brant and his warriors, with the Tories, were in fierce consultation whether the prisoners should be put to death, or taken alive to Niagara. The chiefs appeared swayed by Brant, whose influence prevailed over the whole opposition of the murderous crew; there was a reason for this, as will appear by and by.

While this question was pending, we could see plainly their every act through the chinks of the pen, as a monstrous fire was in their midst, and hear every word, though none of us understood their language but our captain, whose countenance we could perceive, by the light of the fire, from time to time changing with the alternate passions of hope and fear, while the sweat ran copiously down his face, from the mere labor of his mind, although it was a cold night. And added to this, the sentry, the bloody Becraft, who was set as a guard, would every now and then cry out to us, "You will all be in *hell* before morning." But there we were, tied

neck and heels, or we would have beat the pen about his head; our captain whispered to us that his word was doubted by the Indians and Tories, who were for killing us, and proceeding without delay to Schoharie.

At length the morning came, when Brant and his associate chiefs, five in number, ordered that Harper be brought before them. Here the question was renewed by Brant, who said, "We are suspicious that you have lied to us"; at the same time he sternly looked Harper in the face to see if a muscle moved with fear or prevarication. To which our captain answered with a smile, expressive of confidence and scorn, and at the same time descriptive of the most sincere and unvarying honesty, that every word which he had spoken, respecting the arrival of troops at Schoharie, was wholly *true*. His answer was believed; at which moment not only their own lives were saved, but also those of hundreds of men, with helpless women and children, who have not known to this day, except to the few to whom the story has been told, that so great a Providence stepped in between them and servitude, tortures and death.

It was extremely mortifying to Brant to be compelled to relinquish, at the very moment when he was ready to grasp the utmost of his wish, in the glory and riches he would have acquired in the completion of his enterprise. He had fed the hopes and wishes of his associate chiefs, warriors and Tories with the same prospects; having calculated, from information long before received, that Schoharie was in a defenceless state, and dreaded no evil, which rendered it extremely difficult to restrain them from killing the prisoners, out of mere fury at the disappointment. A few moments of consultation ensued, when the rest were ordered out of the pen. Brant now disclosed the whole plan of the expedition in English, expressing his regret at its failure, stating that he and the other chiefs had with difficulty saved them from being scalped. And that he did not wish to kill them in cold blood now,

they had been together a day and a night, and if they chose to go with him to Niagara as captives of war, they might, but if they failed on the way through fatigue or the want of food, they must not expect to live, as their scalps were as good for him as their bodies.

They had no provisions with them, neither had they eat any thing as yet while we had been their prisoners, except what they had found in our sap-bush, which they had at first devoured with the rapacity of cannibals. We now took up our line of march, with our arms strongly pinioned, our shoulders sorely pressed with enormous packs, our hearts bleeding at the dreadful journey before us, and the servitude we were exposed to undergo among the Indians; or if *bought* by the British, imprisonment by sea or land was our certain fate, at least till the end of the war, if we even survived the journey.

The snow was then more than three feet deep, and being soft, rendered it impossible for us prisoners to travel, as we had no snow shoes, but the Indians had: a part, therefore, went before us, and a part behind, all in Indian file: so by keeping their tracks we were enabled to go on, but if we happened to fall down the Indians behind would cry out, "*waugh Bostona.*" We had travelled about ten or twelve miles, when we came to a gristmill, situated on the Delaware, the owner of which welcomed this band of infernals, and gave them such refreshment as was in his power; but to us poor prisoners he gave nothing, while we were made to sit apart on a log by the side of the road.

I shall never forget the cruelty of three or four daughters of this man, whose name I forbear to mention, out of pity to his descendants. These *girls* insisted that they had better kill us *then*, for if, by any means, we should ever get back, their own lives would be taken by the Whigs; their father also observed to Brant that he had better have taken more scalps and less prisoners. When

we were ready to proceed again, the miller gave Brant about three bushels of shelled corn, which was divided into eleven equal parts, and put upon our backs, already too heavily burdened. This corn was all the whole body of Indians and ourselves had to subsist upon from there to Niagara, except that which accidentally might fall in our way, a distance of more than three hundred miles, entirely a wilderness.

From this mill we travelled directly down the river; we had not, however, gone many miles, when we met a man who was a Tory, well known to Brant, by name Samuel Clockstone; who seeing us the prisoners was surprised, as he knew us, when Brant related to him his adventure, and how he had been defeated by the account Captain Harper had given of the troops lately arrived at Schoharie. "*Troops!*" said Clockstone; "there are no troops at that place, you may rely upon it Captain Brant. I have heard of none." In a moment the *snake* eyes of Brant flashed murder, and running to Harper, said in a voice of unrestrained fury, his hatchet vibrating about his head like the tongue of a viper; "How came you to lie to me so?" When Harper, turning round to the Tory, said, "You know, Mr. Clockstone, I have been there but four days since; you know since our party was stationed at the head of the river, at the sap-bush, that I have been once to the Forts alone, and there were troops, as I have stated, and if Capt. Brant disbelieves it he does it at his peril."

That Harper had been there, as he stated, happened to be true, which the Tory also happened to know; when he replied, "Yes, I know it." All the while Brant had glared intensely on the countenance of Harper, if possible to discover some misgiving there, but all was firm and fair; when he again believed him, and resumed his march.

There was a very aged man by the name of Brown, who had not gone on with the rest of the families who had fled the country. This miserable old man, with two grandsons, mere lads, were

taken by Brant's party, and compelled to go prisoners with us. The day after our meeting with the Tory, as above noticed, this old old man, who was entirely bald from age, became too weary to keep up with the rest, and requested that he might be permitted to return, and alleged as a reason, that he was too old to take part in the war, and therefore could do the king's cause no harm.

At this request, instead of answering him, a halt was made, and the man's pack was taken from him,—when he spoke in a low voice to his grandsons, saying, that he should see them no more, “for they are going to kill me!” this he knew, being acquainted with the manners of the Indians. He was now taken to the rear of the party, and left in the care of an Indian, whose face was painted entirely black, as a token of his office, which was kill and scalp any of the prisoners who might give out on the way. In a short time the Indian came on again with the bald scalp of the old man dangling at the end of his gun, hitched in between the ramrod and muzzle. This he often flapped in the boys' faces on the journey. The place at which this was done was just on the point of a mountain not far from where Judge Foot used to live, on the Delaware, below Delhi. There he was left, and doubtless devoured by wild animals; human bones were afterwards found on that part of the mountain.

We pursued our way down the Delaware till we came to the Cook-house, suffering very much night and day, from the tightness of the cords with which our arms were bound. From this place we crossed through the wilderness, over hills and mountains, the most dismal and difficult to be conceived of, till we came to a place called Ochquage, on the Susquehannah river, which had been an Indian settlement before the war. Here they constructed several rafts out of logs, which they fastened together by withes and poles passing crosswise, on which, after untying us, we were placed, themselves managing to steer. These soon floated us down as far as the mouth of the Chemung river, where we disembarked

and were again tied, taking up our line of march for the Genesee country.

The Indians we found were more capable of sustaining fatigue than we were, and easily out-travelled us, which circumstance would have led to the loss of our lives, had not a singular Providence interfered to save us; this was the indisposition of Brant, who, every other day, for a considerable time, fell sick, so that the party were compelled to wait for him; this gave opportunity for to rest ourselves.

Brant's sickness was an attack of the fever and ague, which he checked by the use of a preparation from the rattlesnake. The rattlesnake he caught on the side of a hill facing the south, on which the sun shone, and had melted away the snow from the mouth of their dens; when, it appears, one had crawled out, being invited by the warmth. The reader will also observe that about a fortnight had now elapsed from the time of their captivity, so that the season was farther advanced; and added, to this, the snow is sooner melted on the Chemung, in Pennsylvania, being farther south by about three degrees, than the head of the Delaware, yet in places even then there was snow on the ground, and in the woods it was still deep. Of this snake he made a soup, which operated as a cure to the attack of the ague.

The reader will remember the three bushels of corn given at the mill; this they fairly and equally divided among us all, which amounted to two handfuls a day, and that none should have more or less than another, while it lasted, the corns were counted as we received them; in this respect Brant was just and kind. This corn we were allowed to boil in their kettles, when the Indians had finished theirs; we generally contrived to pound it before we boiled it, as we had found a mortar at a deserted wigwam left by the Indians the year before, who had been driven away by Gen. Sullivan. While in the neighbourhood of what is now called Tioga Point,

we but narrowly escaped every man of us being butchered on the spot; a miracle, as it were, saved us. The cause was as follows:— At this place, when Brant was on his way down the Chemung, on this same expedition, but a few days before, he had detached eleven Indians from his company to pass through the woods from Tioga Point to a place called the Minisink. It was known to Brant that at this place were a few families, where it was supposed several prisoners might be made, or scalps taken, which at Niagara would fetch them eight dollars apiece. This was the great stimulus by which the Indians in the Revolution were incited by *Butler*, the British agent, to perpetrate so many horrid murders upon women, children, and helpless old age, in this region of country.

This party made good their way to the Minisink, when lying concealed in the woods, they managed to get into their possession one after another, five lusty men, and had brought them as far as to the east side of the Susquehannah, opposite Tioga Point. Here they encamped for the night, intending in the morning to construct a raft in order to float themselves over the river, as they had done on their way toward the Minisink a few days before, and so pursue their way up the Chemung, which course was the great thoroughfare of the Indians from the Susquehannah country to that of the Genesee.

Here while the eleven Indians lay fast asleep, being greatly fatigued, and apprehending no danger, as the prisoners were securely bound, and also sleeping soundly, as the Indians supposed, before they laid themselves down; but as the soul of one man, the prisoners were ever watching some opportunity to escape.

But this was not possible, even if they could have made their escape, unless they should first have effected the death of the whole of the party of Indians. This object therefore was their constant aim. This night, by some means unknown, one of the prisoners got loose, doubtless either by knawing off his cord or by chafing it in two as he lay on it, or during the day had managed to hitch

it as often as he could against the snags of the trees, till it had become fretted and weak, in some place, so that at last he got it in two. When this was effected, he silently cut the cords of his fellows, the Indians sleeping exceedingly sound; when each man took a hatchet, and in a moment nine of them received their blades, to their handles, in their brains; but the sound of the blows, in cutting through the bone of their heads, awaked the other two, who sprung upon their feet as quick as thought, when one of them as they fled, received the blade of a hatchet between his shoulders, which, however, did not kill him nor prevent his escape—yet he was terribly wounded. These men, who had so heroically made their escape, returned, as was supposed, to their homes to relate to their families and posterity the perils of that dreadful night.

After they had gone the two Indians returned to the spot, where lay their ruthless but unfortunate companions, fast locked not only in the sleep of the night but that of death, never more to torment the ear of civilized life with the death yells of their sepulchral throats. They took from the feet of their slaughtered friends their mocasins, nine pair in number, and then constructed a float of logs, on which they crossed the river, and had proceeded a little way up the Chemung, where they had built a hut, and the well Indian was endeavoring to cure his wounded companion.

When the whooping of the party of Indians to whom we were prisoners struck his ear, he gave the *death yell*, which rung on the dull air as the scream of a demon, reverberating in doleful echoes up and down the stream; at which the whole body made a halt, and stood in mute astonishment, not knowing what this could mean; when directly the two Indians made their appearance, exhibiting the nine pair of moccasins, and relating in the Indian tongue, which Harper understood, the death of their companions. In a moment, as if transformed to devils, they threw themselves into a great circle around us, exhibiting the most horrid gestures, gnashing their teeth like a gang of wolves ready to devour, brandishing

their tomahawks over us, as so many arrows of death. But here let it be spoken to the praise of a Divine Providence,—at the moment when we had given ourselves up as lost—the very Indian, who was a chief, and had been the only one of the eleven who had escaped unhurt, threw himself into the midst of the ring, and with a shake of his hand gave the signal of silence, when he plead our cause by simply saying, “these are not the men who killed our friends, and to take the life of the innocent in cold blood *cannot* be right.”

As it happened, this Indian knew us all, for he had lived about Schoharie before the war, and was known as an inoffensive and kind-hearted native, but when the war came on had seen fit to join the British Indians; his words had the desired effect, arrested the mind of Brant, and soothed to composure the terrific storm that a moment before had threatened to destroy us.

Again we resumed our course, bearing with considerably more patience and fortitude the anguish of our sufferings, than it is likely we should have done, had our lives not been preserved from a greater calamity, just described. We soon came to Newtown, where we were nearly at the point of starvation, Indians and all, as we had nothing to eat, except a handful or two of corn a day; and what the end would have been is not hard to foresee, had not the amazing number of wolf tracks remaining directed us to the carcass of a dead horse. The poor brute had been left to take care of itself the summer before, by Sullivan, in his march to the Indian country, being unfit for further service as a pack horse. Here, on the commons of nature, which during the summer and fall, it is likely produced an abundance of pasturage, but when winter came on, and rendered it impossible for the poor wornout animal to take care of itself, death came to its relief. That it had lived till the winter had become severe was evident, from its not being in the least degree putrescent, but was completely frozen, it having been buried in the snow during the winter.

The wolves had torn and gnawed the upper side quite away, but not being able to turn the carcass over, it was sound and entire on the under side. This we seized upon, rejoicing as at the finding of hidden treasures; it was instantly cut to pieces, bones, head and hoofs, and equally divided among the whole. Fires were built, at which we roasted and eat, without salt, each his own share, with the highest degree of satisfaction.

Near this place we found the famous *Painted Post*, which is now known over the whole continent, to those conversant with the early history of our country; the origin of which was as follows. Whether it was in the Revolution or in the Dunmore battles with the Indians, which commenced in Virginia, or in the French war, I do not know; an Indian chief, on this spot, had been victorious in battle, killed and took prisoners to the number of about sixty. This event he celebrated by causing a tree to be taken from the forest and hewed four square, painted red, and the number he killed, which was twenty-eight, represented across the post in black paint, without any heads, but those he took prisoners, which was thirty, were represented with heads on, in black paint, as the others. This post he erected, and thus handed down to posterity, an account that here a battle was fought, but by whom, and who the sufferers were, is covered in darkness, except that it was between the whites and Indians.

This post will probably continue as long as the country shall remain inhabited, as the citizens heretofore have uniformly replaced it with a new one, exactly like the original, whenever it has become decayed.

Nothing more of note happened to us till we came to the Genesee river, except a continued state of suffering. We passed along between the Chemung and the heads of the lakes Cayuga and Seneca, leaving the route of Sullivan, and went over the mountains farther north. These mountains, as they were very steep

and high, being covered with brush, our bodies weak and emaciated, were almost insurmountable; but at length we reached the top of the last and highest, which overlooks immeasurable wilds, the ancient abode of men and nations unknown, whose history is written only in the dust.

Here we halted to rest, when the Tory Becraft took it in his head to boast of what he had done in the way of murder, since the war began. He said that he and others had killed some of the inhabitants of Schoharie, and that among them was the family of one Vrooman. These, he said, they soon despatched, except a boy of about fourteen years of age, who fled across the flat, toward the Schoharie river. "I took after the lad," said the Tory, "and although he ran like a spirit, I soon overtook him, and putting my hand under his chin, laid him back on my thigh, though he struggled hard, cut his throat, scalped him, and hung the body across the fence." This made my blood run cold; vengeance boiled through every vein, but we dare not say a word to provoke our enemies, as it would be useless. This man, however, got his due, in a measure, after the war was over: which will be related at the end of this account.

Another of them, by the name of *Barney Cane*, boasted that he had killed one Major Hopkins, on Dimon* Island, in Lake George. A party of pleasure, as he stated, had gone to this island on a sailing excursion, and having spent more time than they were aware of, before they were ready to return, concluded to encamp and remain all night, as it would be impossible for them to return to the fort.

"From the shore where we lay hid, it was easy to watch their motions; and perceiving their defenceless situation, as soon as it was dark, we set off for the island, where we found them asleep by their fire, and discharged our guns among them. Several were

*Diamond.

killed, among whom was one woman, who had a sucking child, which was not hurt. This we put to the breast of its dead mother, and so we left it. But Major Hopkins was only wounded, his thigh-bone being broken; he started from his sleep to a rising posture, when I struck him, (said Barney Cane), with the butt of my gun, on the side of his head, he fell over, but caught on one hand; I then knocked him the other way, when he caught with the other hand; a third blow, and I laid him dead. These were all scalped except the infant." In the morning, a party from the fort went and brought away the dead, together with one they found alive, although he was scalped, and the babe, which was hanging and sobbing at the bosom of its lifeless mother.

Having rested ourselves and our tantalizing companions having finished the stories of their *infamy*, we descended the mountains toward the Genesee, which we came in sight of the next day about two o'clock. Here we were met by a small company of natives, who had come to the flats of the Genesee for the purpose of *corn planting*, as soon as the waters of the river should fall sufficiently to drain the ground of its water. These Indians had with them a very beautiful horse, which Brant directed to be cut to pieces in a moment, and divided equally, without dressing, or any such fashionable delay, which was done; no part of the animal whatever, being suffered to be lost. There fell to each man of the company but a small piece, which we roasted, using the *white* ashes of our fires as salt, which gave it a delicious relish; this Brant himself showed us how to do.

On these flats were found infinite quantities of ground nuts, a root in form and size about equal to a musket ball; which, being roasted, became exceedingly mealy and sweet. These, together with our new acquisition of horse flesh, formed a delicious repast.

From this place Brant sent a runner to Niagara, a distance of about eighty miles, in order to inform the garrison of his approach,

and of the number of prisoners he had, their name and quality. This was a most humane act of Brant, as by this means he effected the removal of all the Indian warriors in the two camps contiguous to the fort.

Brant was in possession of a secret respecting Harper, which he had carefully concealed in his own breast during the whole journey, and, probably, in the very first instance, at the time when he discovered that Harper was his prisoner, operated by influencing him, if possible, to save his life. This secret consisted in a knowledge that there was then in the fort a British officer who had married a *niece* of Harper, Jane More, whose mother was the sister of Captain Harper. This girl, together with her mother and a sister, had been captured at the massacre of Cherry Valley, and taken to Niagara. This information was conveyed by the means of the runner, to the husband of Jane More, Captain Powell, who, when the girl was first brought by Butler and his Indians, a prisoner to the fort, loved, courted, and honorably married the girl.

Now, if Powell wished to save the life of his wife's uncle, he had the opportunity, by doing as Brant had suggested—that was, to send the warriors of both camps down the lake to the Nine Mile Landing, with the expectation of meeting Brant there, whose prisoners would be given into their hands, to be dealt with as the genius of their natures and customs might suggest. Accordingly, Powell told his wife that her uncle was among the prisoners of Brant, who had sent him word, and that the warriors *must* be sent away; to whom he gave a quantity of rum as they thought, to aid in the celebration of their infernal powwows, at the Nine Mile Landing, having obtained the consent of his superior, Col. Butler, to do so.

Brant had concealed, from both his Indians and Tories, as well as from the prisoners, that Powell, at the fort, was Harper's relative, or that he had made the above arrangement. The reader

may probably wish to know *why* the warriors in those two camps *must* be sent away; in order to save the lives of the prisoners. All persons acquainted with Indian customs, in time of war, know very well that the unhappy wretch who falls into their hands at such a time, is compelled to run what is called the gauntlet, between two rows of Indians, composed of warriors, old men, women and children, who, as the prisoner flies between, if possible, to reach a certain point assigned, called a council house, or a fort, receives from every one who can reach him, a blow with the fist, club, hatchet, or knife. and even wadding fired into their bodies, so that they generally die with their wounds before they reach the appointed place, though they struggle with all the violence of hope and despair.

We had now, on the fourth day after the runner had been sent, arrived within about two miles of Niagara, when the Tories began to tell us the danger we soon were to be exposed to, in passing those two Indian encampments, which till then, we knew nothing of; this difficulty they were careful to describe in the most critical manner; so that every step, although so near our journey's end, when we hoped at last to have our hunger satisfied was as the steps of the wretch condemned to die. But on coming to the *first* encampment, what was our surprise and joy at finding there capable of injuring us, but a few old women and children, who had indeed formed themselves as before described.—However, one old squaw coming, up in a very friendly manner, saluted *me*, by saying, poor *shild*, poor *shild*, when she gave me a blow which, as I was tired, could not be parried, that nearly split my head in two.

But now the desired fort, although it was to be our prison house, was seen through the opening woods. I had come to within about five rods of the gateway, still agonizing under the effects of the old squaw's blow, when a young savage, about twelve years old, came running with a hatchet in his hand, directly up to me, and

seizing hold of the *plumbline*, or cord by which I was tied, twitched me round so that we faced each other, when he gave me a blow exactly between my eyes on the forehead, that nearly dropped me dead, as I was weak and faint; the blood spouted out at a dreadful rate, when a soldier snatched the little demon's hatchet and flung it into the lake. Whether Brant was rewarded over and above the eight dollars, (which was the stipulated price per head) for Harper, or not, I cannot tell; but as was most natural to suppose, there was on the part of himself and niece, great joy on so unexpectedly falling in with friends and relations in the midst of enemies, and on the part of Powell respect and kindness was shown to Harper, on account of the lovely Jane, who had become a talisman of peace between them.

We had scarcely arrived when we were brought to the presence of a number of British officers of the crown, who blazed in all the glory of military habiliments; and among them, as chief, was the bloated, insolent, unprincipled, cruel, infamous *Butler*, whose name will *stink* in the recollections of men to the latest page of American history; because it was him who directed, rewarded, and encouraged the operation of the Indians and Tories all along from Canada to the state of Delaware. This man commenced, in a very abusive manner, to question us respecting the American affairs; and addressing me in particular, probably because nearer me than any of the rest whether I did not think that, by and by, his Indians would compel a general surrender of the Yankees? I replied to him in as modest a manner as possible, not feeling in a mood of repartee, as the blood from the wound in my forehead still continued to trickle down my face, covering my vest and bosom with blood, that I did not wish to say any thing about it, nor to give offence to any one. But he would not excuse me; still insisting that I should say whether I did not think so; to which I firmly replied —feeling what blood and spirit there were yet remaining in me, to rouse a little—that if I *must* answer him,

it was to say No; and that he might as well think to empty the lake of its waters at a bucketfull a time, as to conquer the Yankee in that way. At which he burst out in a violent manner, calling me *dam'd rebel*, for giving him such an insolent answer, and ordered me out of his sight; but here, when ready to sink to the floor, (not from any thing the huge bulk of flesh had said to me, but from hunger, weariness, and the loss of blood,) a noblehearted officer interposed, saying to Butler, "The lad is not to blame, as you have compelled him to answer your question, which no doubt he has done, according to the best of his judgment. Here, poor fellow, take this glass of wine and drink." Thus the matter ended. [Here the old General wept, at the recollection of so much kindness, where he expected none.]

We were now given over to the care of a woman, Nancy Bundy by name, who had been ordered to prepare us a soup, made of proper materials, who was not slow to relieve our distress as far as she dare, as she was also a prisoner. But taking off the belt which I had worn around my body, as the manner of the Indians is, to keep the wind out of the stomach, it appeared that I was ready to disown my own body, had I not been convinced by my other sense that there was no mistake.

I will just give the reader a short account of this woman, as I received it from herself. She stated that herself, her husband and two children were captured at the massacre of Wyoming, by the Butlers, Indians, and Tories, and brought to the Genesee country, then entirely inhabited by the natives. There she had been parted from her husband, the Indians carrying him she knew not where, but to some other and distant tribe. She had not been long in the possession of the tribe with whom she had been left, after her husband was taken from her, when the Indian who had taken her prisoner, addressed her, and was desirous of making her his wife; but she repulsed him, saying very imprudently, she had one husband, and it would be unlawful to have more than one.

“This seemed to satisfy him, and I saw him no more for a long time; but after a while he came again, and renewed his suit, alleging that now there was no objection to her marrying him, as her husband was dead, for,” said the Indian, “I found where he was, and have killed him.” I then told him “if he had killed my husband he might kill me also, for I would not marry a murderer. When he saw I was resolute, and that his person was hateful in my sight, he took and tied me, and brought me to this place, and sold me for eight dollars. But where my husband is buried, or whether he is buried at all, or where my children are, I cannot tell;” but whether she ever returned to the States again, is beyond my knowledge.

From this prison, after being sold to the British garrison for eight dollars a head, we were sent across the lake to Carlton Island, from this place down to the Cedars, from the Cedars we were transported from place to place, till at length were permanently lodged in the prison at Chamblee. Here we were put in irons, and remained two years, suffering every thing but death, for want of clothes, fire, food, medicine, exercise and pure air. At length, from the weight and inconvenience of my irons I became so weak that I could not rise from the floor, when my fellow sufferer, Thorp, who was not as badly off as myself, used to help me up.

The physician appointed to have the care of the prisoners, whose name was Pendergrass, paid but little attention to his charge, seldom visiting us, but never examining closely into our situation; consequently a description of my horrid condition would afflict the reader, on which account I forbear it. At length however, this physician was removed, and another put in his place, of an entirely contrary character; he was humane, inquisitive, industrious and skilful.

When he came first to that part of the prison where myself and about twenty others were confined, the captain of the fort came with him, when the doctor proceeded, one by one, to examine

us, instead of giving us a general look only, as the other had done. The place where I sat was quite in one corner. I had chosen it, because it was the darkest and served to hide me from observation more than other parts of the room. I had contrived to get into my possession an old rug of some sort, which partly hid my naked limbs; this I kept over my lap, in the best possible manner.

After a while, it became my turn to be examined; when he said, "Well, my lad, what is the matter with you?" From shame and fear lest he would witness the loathsome predicament which I was in, I said, "Nothing, sir." "Well, then," said he, "get up." "I cannot sir," said I. He then took the end of his cane, and putting it under the blanket that was partly over me, and served to hide me from my waist downward, and threw it quite from me, when a spectacle of human suffering presented itself, such as he had not dreamed of seeing. I had fixed my eyes steadily on his face, to see if aught of pity moved his breast; which I knew I could trace in his countenance, if any appeared. He turned pale; a frown gathered on his brow, the curl of his lip denoted wrath; when he turned round to the captain of the fort, whose name was Steel, and, looking sternly at him, said, in a voice of thunder, "You infamous villain, in the name of God, are you murdering people alive here?; send for your provost sergeant in a moment, and knock off that *poor fellow's* span shackles, or I will *smash* you in a moment!"

O, this language was balm to my wound; was oil to my bleeding heart; it was the voice of sympathy, of determined mercy, and immediate relief. I had a soldier's heart, which shrunk not; a fountain of tears; I had none in the hour of battle; but now they rushed out amain, as if anxious to behold the man who by his goodness had drawn them from their deep seclusion.

An entire change of situation now took place; our health was recovered, which rendered my imprisonment quite tolerable. From this place, after a while, we were sent to Rebel Island, or

Cutodelack, or Cutthroat Island, where we remained a year, when peace was declared. We were now sent to Montreal; then to Quebec; and then put on board a cartel ship, and sent round to Boston; though before we reached that place we were driven out to sea in a storm and nearly shipwrecked, suffering exceedingly; but at last arrived at the desired haven; where I once more set foot on my native land, and rejoiced that it was a land of liberty and Independence.

As fast as possible we made the best of our way to Old Schoharie, which was our home, after an absence of three years, during which I suffered much, as well as my companions, for the love of my country; which under the blessing of heaven, I have enjoyed these many years.

The reader will recollect *Beraft*, the Tory, who stood sentry over us during the first night of our captivity, in the sap bush, who boasted he had cut the throat of a boy of the Vrooman family—this man had the audacity to return after the war to Old Schoharie, the scene of his villainies.

As soon as it was known, a number of persons properly qualified to judge his case;—having, during their captivity tasted a little of his ability to distress and tantalize unnecessarily; and remembering his deeds, which he had confessed boastingly on the mountains of the Genesee—hastened there and surrounded the house where he was. Two or three of the number, who were deeply indebted to his “philanthropy,” as need be, knocked at the door, and were bidden to come in; when the redoubtable gentleman arose, respectfully inquiring after their health and offering his hand; the compliment was returned by a hearty and determined clench of his shoulders, by which he had the opportunity of making progress without the use of *hydraulic* or locomotive power, as far as to a very ominous *staddle*, which stood not far off, in a beautiful grove of hickory. There were ten persons in number,

who composed this jury, and though they lacked two of the legal quantum, understood the case equally well nevertheless; and as five of them happened to be left handed, and five who could swing the *right* honorable arm full as adroitly, were an assortment of kind and character.

Becraft was stripped of the habiliments that covered a skin which shrouded a heart in which dwelt a spirit as bad as the devil's worst, and tied him to this clean smooth staddle, as fair an one as grew in the forest. Ten fine excoriators (gads,) were taken from the generous redundancy of the axe-handle tree, (hickory) and given to each of those right and left-handed gentlemen; who, after binding the culprit, to save him the trouble of running away from the said staddle, began, after dividing themselves in due form, so that a circle was formed quite around him, to do as the spirit of the occasion might lead their minds.

Fifty lashes were declared by them a suitable expiation, to be placed upon the bare back, in such a manner as strength, and the exigency of the case, most rigorously demanded. Now, in the hour of judgment, a tenfold apparatus, that had the *pliancy* of examining the subject quite around, endeavored to awake into life a *conscience* that had died an unnatural death, some years before.

A very commendable care in resuscitating this invaluable principle, was taken, at the dawn of its opening into life, to inculcate what *particular* crime it was that had operated with such deleterious influence; and now, through the smarting medium of what is esteemed a *corrective*, as well as a *coercive*—an attempt was making not only to enliven the *conscience*, but to fix the affrighted *memory* on the horrible points *most* prominent in his life of depravity.

Now commenced the work of retribution. The first *ten* lashes played around him like the fiery serpents of the Great Sahara, hissing horror, when they said, "Becraft, it is for being a

Tory, when your country claimed the services of those it had nurtured on its bosom, *you*, like a traitor, stabbed it to the heart, as far as your arm had power." The second *ten* lashes came with augmented violence, as if the arrows of vengeance were drinking deep of life's keenest sensations: "Becraft! it is for aiding in the massacre of those who were your neighbors, the Vrooman family." A third series of *ten* lashes at a time, lapped their doleful hissing around his infamous body, as if Vulcan, from the infernal regions, had supplanted the hickory rods with tissues of red hot iron; "Becraft, it is for the murder of that helpless boy, the son of Vrooman, whom you scalped and hung on the fence."

A fourth quantum of ten lashes at once, played around him as if the lightnings of some frowning cloud, streaming its direful fury at one selected victim, tearing anew, and entering deep into the quivering flesh; "Becraft, it is for taunts jeers, and insults, when certain persons well known to you were captives among a savage enemy, which marked you as a dastardly wretch, fit only for contempt and torture, such as is *now* bestowed on your infamous body."

Fifth and last series, of ten lashes at a time, as if the keen sword, hot from the armory of an independent and indignant people had sundered the wretched body, one part to the zenith, the other to the nadir: "Becraft, it is for coming again to the bosom of that country upon which you have spit the venom of hate, and thus added insult to injury, never to be forgotten."

Here they untied him, with this injunction—to flee the country, and never more return, to blast with his presence so pure an atmosphere as that where liberty and independence breathe and triumph. With which, it was supposed, he complied, as he has never been known in these parts since. He expressed his gratitude that he had been so gently dealt with, acknowledging his conduct to have been worthy of capital punishment.

It is proper to state that General Patchin, whose narrative the reader is now acquainted with, is no more, having died at his estate in Blenheim, Schoharie county, a very short time after this account was written, 1830. He was a man of amiable manners, beloved and respected by his neighbors and a numerous acquaintance. He had acquired, in a fair and laudable manner, a genteel competency of this world's goods; and also some small portion of its honors, as he had been sent a representative of the county of Schoharie to the State Legislature; which place, it is said, he filled with propriety, and usefulness to his constituents, when Dewitt Clinton was Governor of the State of New York.



