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Martha

ays of your fath-  
our children tell  
er generation.

JOEL.

Vt.  
AUTHOR.  
r,







THE  
INDIAN CAPTIVE;  
OR A  
NARRATIVE  
OF THE  
Captivity and Sufferings  
OF  
ZADOCK STEELE.  
—  
RELATED BY HIMSELF.  
—  
TO WHICH IS PREFIXED AN ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
BURNING OF ROYALTON.

Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and THEIR children another generation.

JOEL.

MONTPELIER, Vt.  
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.  
E. P. WALTON, Printer,  
1818.







## ADVERTISEMENT.

The Author of this work, neither seeks, nor expects praise. To preserve in memory the sufferings of our fathers, is the principal object of its publication. As no particular account of the burning of Royalton, had ever before been published, it was thought advisable that it should be prefixed to the "Narrative," which was about to be printed.

The great confusion which prevailed on that dreadful day; the long lapse of time since the event; the disadvantages resulting from the frailty of human recollection, and the writer's inexperience, is the only apology he offers for the imperfections of the work.

For the information respecting this tragical scene, he is indebted to the goodness of General Stevens, Colonel Edson, and others, who were eye-witnesses.







## BURNING OF ROYALTON.

AS an union of interest always strengthens the bonds of affection; so a participation in extreme sufferings will never fail to produce a mutual sensibility. Prompted by a generous glow of filial love and affection, we generally take delight in surveying whatever gave our forefathers joy; and are ready to drop a sympathetic tear, when we review the sufferings which they have undergone. But, contrary to the laws of sympathy, and justice, the attention of the public is often engrossed with accounts of the more dreadful conflagrations of populous cities in foreign countries, or the defeat of armies in the field of carnage; while the destruction of small frontier settlements, by the Indian tribes, in our own country, is, at the same time, little known, if not entirely forgotten. Thus, the miseries of our neighbors and friends around us, whose bitter cries have been heard in our streets, are too often suffered to pass unnoticed down the current of time into the tomb of oblivion.

The burning of Royalton was an event most inauspicious and distressing to the first settlers of that town. Nor is it a little strange, that, among the numerous authors, who have recorded the events of the American revolution, some of them have not given place in their works to a more full detail of that afflictive scene.

Laboring under all the difficulties and hard-



slips to which our infant settlements were generally subject; and striving by persevering industry to soar above every obstacle, which might present itself to obstruct their progress; they had filled their barns with the fruits of the land; their store-houses were crowded with the comforts of life, and all nature seemed to wear a propitious smile. All around them promised prosperity. They were far removed from the noise of war, and, though conscious of their danger, fondly hoped they should escape the ravages of a savage foe.

Royalton was chartered in the year 1779. A considerable settlement, however, had taken place previous to that time; and the town was in a thriving condition. Large stocks of cattle, which would confer honor upon the enterprise of farmers in old countries, were here seen grazing in their fields.

United by common interest; living on terms of friendship, and manifesting that each one in a good degree "loved his neighbor as himself," harmony prevailed in their borders; social happiness was spread around their firesides; and plenty crowned their labors. But, alas! the dreadful reverse remains to be told! While joys possessed, were turned to sorrows, their *hopes* for joys to come, were blasted. And as the *former* strongly marked the grievous contrast between a state of prosperity and affliction; the *latter* only showed the fallacy of promising ourselves the *future*.

On the morning of the 16th of October, A.



D. 1780—before the dawn of day, the inhabitants of this town were surprised by the approach of about three hundred Indians, of various tribes. They were led by the Caghnewaga tribe, and had left Canada, intending to destroy Newbury, a town in the eastern part of Vermont, on Connecticut River. A British Lieutenant by the name of Horton, was their chief commander, and one LeMott, a Frenchman, was his second. Their pilot or leader, was a despicable villain, by the name of Hamilton, who had been made prisoner, by the Americans at the taking of Burgoyne, in 1777. He had been at Newbury and Royalton the preceding summer, on parole of honor, left the latter place with several others under pretence of going to survey lands in the northern part of this State, and went directly to the enemy. He was doubtless the first instigator of those awful depredations which were the bitter fruits of this expedition, and ought to stamp his name with infamy and disgrace.

On their way thither, 'tis said, they came across several men from Newbury, who were engaged in hunting, near the place where Montpelier Village now stands, and made them prisoners. They made known their object to these hunters, and enquired of them whether an armed force was stationed at Newbury. Knowing the defenceless state of that town, and hoping they should be able to induce the Indians to relinquish their object and



return to Canada, they told them that *such an* armed garrison was kept at Newbury, as would render it extremely *dangerous* for them to approach. Thus artfully dissembling by ambiguity of expression, the true condition of their fellow townsmen, and like Rahab the harlot, saved their father's house from destruction.

Unwilling, however, that their expedition should prove wholly fruitless, they turned their course to Royalton. No arguments which the prisoners could adduce, were sufficient to persuade them from that determination.

Following up Onion River as far as the mouth of Stevens' branch, which empties into the river at Montpelier, they steered their course through Barre, at that time called Wildersburgh; proceeded up Gaol branch, which forms a part of Stevens' branch, and travelled over the mountains, through Orange and Washington; thence down the first branch of White River, through Chelsea and Tunbridge to Royalton. They laid in their encampment at Tunbridge, not far distant from Royalton, during the Sabbath, the day preceding their attack upon the latter place, for the purpose of concerting measures, to carry into effect their atrocious and malignant designs. Here were matured those diabolical seeds of depredation and cruelty, from which sprang bitterness, sorrow, and death!

As they entered the town before day light



appeared, darkness covered their approach, and they were not discovered till Monday morning, at dawn of day, when they entered the house of Mr. John Hutchinson, who resided not far from the line, separating Royalton from Tunbridge. He was totally ignorant of their approach, and wholly unsuspecting of danger, till they burst the door upon him.

Here they took Mr. John Hutchinson, and Abijah Hutchinson his brother, prisoners, and plundered the house; crossed the first branch, and went to the house of Mr. Robert Havens, who lived at a small distance from Mr. Hutchinson's. Mr. Havens had gone out into his pasture in pursuit of his sheep; and having ascended a hill about forty rods from his house, hearing his neighbor Hutchinson's dog bark, halted, and stood in pensive silence. Here he listened with deep anxiety to know the extent of the evil he feared. But alas! he little expected to find a herd of savage men. It was his only fear that some voracious animal was among his sheep, which so disturbed the watchful dog. While he listened in silence, with his thoughts suspended, he heard a noise, as of sheep or cattle running, with full speed, through the water. Casting his eye to the west, towards his own dwelling, he beheld a company of Indians, just entering the door! Seeing his own danger, he immediately laid down under a log, and hid himself from their sight. But he could not hide sorrow from his



mind. Here he wept! Tears trickling down his withered cheeks, bespoke the anguish of his soul, while he thought upon the distress of his family. With groanings unutterable he lay awhile; heard the piercing shrieks of his beloved wife, and saw his sons escaping for their lives.

Bath'd in tears the hoary sage  
 In sorrow lay conceal'd; while death  
 In frightful form, stood thick around him,  
 With bow-bent readiness, and arrows dip'd  
 In venom, promiscuous flying,  
 Vigilance with his years had fled,  
 And hope was almost out of sight;  
 Safety quite gone, and far beyond his reach.

Laden with the weight of years, decrepid and infirm, he was sensible if he appeared in sight, it would prove his death. He therefore resolved not to move until a favorable opportunity presented. His son, Daniel Havens, and Thomas Pember, were in the house, and made their appearance at the door, a little before the Indians came up. Beholding the foe but few rods distant, they run for their lives. Daniel Havens made his escape by throwing himself over a hedge fence, down the bank of the branch, and crawling under a log; although a large number of the Indians passed directly over it, in pursuit of him. Who can tell the fears that agitated his bosom, while these savage pursuers, stepped upon the log under which he lay! And who can tell the



joys he felt, when he saw them pass off, leaving him in safety! A quick transition from painful fear, and imminent danger, to joyful peace and calm retirement. They pursued Thomas Pember, till they came so near as to throw a spear at him, which pierced his body, and put an end to his existence. He run some time, however, after he was wounded, till by loss of blood, he fainted, fell, and was unable to proceed farther. The savage monsters came up, several times thrust a spear through his body, took off his scalp, and left him, food for worms! While they were tearing his scalp from his head, how did his dying groans pierce the skies and call on Him, who holds the scales of justice, to mark their cruelty, and avenge his blood!

He had spent the night previous, at the house of Mr. Havens, engaged in amorous conversation with a daughter of Mr. Havens, who was his choice companion, the *intended* partner of his life.

“—————What jealous cares  
Hang on his parting soul to think his love  
Expos'd to wild oppression and a herd  
Of savage men:” while himself lay  
With his eyes uplifted, fainting, doom'd  
To wait, and feel the fatal blow.

By imagination we view the fair survivor, surrounded by the savage tribe, whose frightful aspect threatened ruin; her soul o'erwhelm-



ed with fear, and stung with grief, bereft of her dearest friend. Hear her exclaiming, with sorrowful accents, in the language of the Poet :

“ You sacred mourners of a nobler mould,  
 Born for a friend whose dear embraces hold  
 Beyond all nature's ties ; you that have known  
 Two happy souls made intimately one,  
 And felt the parting stroke ; 'tis you must feel  
 The smart, the twinges, and the racks, I feel ;  
 This soul of mine, that dreadful wound has borne  
 Off from its side its dearest half is torn,  
 The rest lies bleeding, and but lives to mourn.” }

They made the house of Mr. Havens their rallying point, or post of observation, and stationed a part of their company there to guard their baggage, and make preparations for retreat, when they had completed their work of destruction. Like the messenger of death, silent and merciless, they were scarcely seen till felt. Or if seen, filled the mind with terror, nor often afforded opportunity for escape. Moving with violent steps, they proceeded down the first branch to its mouth, while a number armed with spears, led the van, and were followed by others, armed with muskets and scalping knives. The former they called *runners*, who were directed to kill all those who should be overtaken in an attempt to escape, while the latter were denominated *gunners*, took charge of the prisoners, and scalped those who were killed.



They had not proceeded far before a young man by the name of Elias Button, being ignorant of their approach, made his appearance in the road, but a few rods from them. Espying his danger, he turned and ran with the greatest possible speed in his power, to escape their cruel hands. The savage tribe pursued him with their usual agility; soon overtook the trembling youth; pierced his body with their spears; took off his scalp, and left him weltering in his gore! Young, vigorous, and healthy, and blest with the brightest hopes of long life, and good days; he was overtaken by the merciless stroke of death, without having a minutes warning. Innocence and bravery were no shield, nor did activity secure him a safe retreat.

That they might be enabled to fall upon the inhabitants, unawares, and thereby secure a greater number of prisoners, as well as procure a greater quantity of plunder, they kept profound silence till they had arrived at the mouth of the branch.

After killing Pember and Button, and taking such plunder as most pleased their fancy, they proceeded to the house of Joseph Fneeland, who resided about half a mile distant from the house of Mr. Havens. Here they found Messrs. Simeon Belknap, Giles Gibbs, and Jonathan Brown, together with Joseph Kneeland and his aged father, all of whom they made prisoners. They then went to the house



of Mr. Elias Curtis, where they took Mr. Curtis, John Kent and Peter Mason. Mrs. Curtis had just waked from the slumbers of the night, and was about dressing herself as she sat upon her bed, when the savage monsters entered the door, and one of them instantly flew at her with a large knife in his hand, and seized her by the neck, apparently intending to cut her throat. While in the very attitude of inflicting the fatal wound, the murderous wretch discovered a string of gold beads around her neck, which attracted his attention and prevented the dreadful stroke of death. Thus his avidity for gold allayed his thirst for human blood. His raging passions were suddenly cooled; curiosity restrained his vengeance, and spared the life of the frightened object of his cruelty. He had put the knife to her throat, and eternity seemed open to her view, but instead of taking her life, he only took her beads, and left her rejoicing at her deliverance. The barbarous looks of the wicked crew bespoke their malignant designs, and caused horror and dismay to fill the minds of all who beheld them. But alas! who can tell what horror thrilled the bosom of this trembling woman! What fearful pangs were made to pierce her soul! Behold the tawny wretch, with countenance wild, and awful grimaces, standing by her bed-side, holding her by the throat, with one hand, and the weapon of death in the other! See, standing around her a crowd



of brutal savages, the sons of violence; foul tormentors. In vain do I attempt to paint the scene. Nor will I pretend to describe the feelings of a kind and tender mother, who, reposing in the arms of sleep, with her infant at her bosom, is roused from her slumbers by the approach of a tribe of savage Indians, at her bed-side.

“No dangers seen; no fear to raise a sigh;  
 No dangers fear'd; and yet was ruin nigh.  
 Dark was the night, and scarce a trembling breze  
 Was heard to whisper thro' the neighboring trees,  
 When to sleep's arms the household was withdrawn.  
 To rest in safety till the morrow's dawn:  
 The morrow dawns and blushes at the sight  
 Of bloody scenes, that shun detecting light;  
 Urg'd by a nameless thirst for human prey.  
 A savage band approach'd where beauty lay;  
 Where innocence, and youth, and age reclin'd  
 In sleep, refreshing as the southern wind.  
 The sire, though bending with a load of years,  
 To save his daughter—every danger dares;  
 By some rough hand this ancient hero dies——  
 The trembling mother for her husband sighs;  
 Sighs and entreats to spare her infant's life.  
 Her sighs they hear, and spare him—with the knife.  
 Pleas'd with the charm of beauty drench'd in tears,  
 The savage tribe to gloomy desarts bears  
 The weeping mother, void of all defence,  
 Save what she hop'd from Heav'n and innocence.”

To prevent an alarm from being sounded abroad, they commanded the prisoners to keep silence, on pain of death. While the afflicted inhabitants beheld their property wasted, and their lives exposed to the arrows of death, it caused their hearts to swell with grief. But



they were debarred the privilege of making known their sufferings to their nearest friends, or even to pour out their cries of distress, while surrounded by the savage band, whose malevolent appearance could not fail to spread fear and distress in every bosom. They plundered every house they found till they arrived at the mouth of the branch. Here the commander, a British officer, took his stand with a small party of Indians, while some went up, and others down, on each side of the river, to complete the work of destruction. They had already taken several horses, which some of them rode, to facilitate their march and enable them to overtake those who attempted to make their escape. Frightened at the horrible appearance of their riders, who were in no way qualified to manage them, the horses served rather to impede, than hasten their progress.

Instigated by "the powers of darknes;" fired with rage; eager to obtain that booty which they acquired by the pillage of houses; and fearful at the same time, that they should themselves fall a prey to the American forces, they pursued their ravages with infuriated zeal, and violence and horror attended their movement.

"Uproar, revenge, and rage, and hate appear  
In all their murderous forms; and flame and blood,  
And sweat, and dust array the broad campaign  
In horror; hasty feet, and sparkling eyes,  
And all the savage passions of the soul,  
Engage in the warm business of the day."



Gen. Elias Stevens, who resided in the first house on the river above the mouth of the branch, had gone down the river about two miles, and was engaged at work with his oxen and cart. While busily employed in loading his cart, casting his eye up the river, he beheld a man approaching, bare-headed, with his horse upon the run; who, seeing Gen. Stevens, cried out "for God's sake, turn out your oxen, for the Indians are at the mill."\* Gen. Stevens hastened to unyoke his oxen, turned them out, and immediately mounted his horse, and started to return to his family, filled with fearful apprehensions for the fate of his beloved wife, and tender offspring! He had left them in apparent safety, reposing in the arms of sleep. Having proceeded on his return, about half way home, he met Capt. Joseph Parkhurst, who informed him that the Indians were but a few rods distant, in swift pursuit down the river, and that unless he returned immediately he would inevitably fall into their hands.

Apprized of his danger, he turned, and accompanied the Captain down the river. Conjugal and paternal affection alone can suggest to the imagination of the reader, what were the feelings of Gen. Stevens, when compelled for his own safety, to leave the wife of his bosom, and their little ones, to the mercy of a savage

\*The mills to which he referred, owned by a Mr. Morgan, were situated on the first branch near its mouth.



foe! What pains did he feel when he found himself deprived of all possible means to afford them relief! Nor could he expect a more favorable event, than to find them all sacrificed at the shrine of savage barbarity! Who, not totally devoid of sympathy, can refrain to drop a tear, as he reflects upon those painful emotions, which agitated the General's breast, when he was forced to turn his back upon his beloved family, while thus exposed to danger! Indeed, it was his only source of consolation, that he might be able to afford assistance to his defenceless neighbors. And as they soon came to the house of Deacon Daniel Rix, he there found opportunity to lend the hand of pity. Gen. Stevens took Mrs. Rix and two or three children with him upon his horse; Cap<sup>t</sup>. Parkhurst took Mrs. Benton, and several children upon his horse with him, and they all rode off as fast as possible, accompanied by Deacon Rix and several others on foot, till they arrived at the place where the General first received the alarm. Filled with anxiety for his family, and not having seen any Indians, Gen. Stevens, here concluded again to return, hoping he should be able to reach home in time to secure his household from danger, before the Indians arrived. Leaving Mrs. Rix and children in the care of a Mr. Burroughs, he started for home and had proceeded about half a mile, when he discovered the Indians in the road ahead of him, but a few rods dis-



tant. He quickly turned about; hastened his retreat; soon overtook the company he had left, and entreated them immediately to leave the road and take to the woods to prevent being taken. Those who were on foot jumped over the fence, hastened to the woods, out of sight of the Indians, where they remained in safety, undiscovered by the savage foe, who kept the road in pursuit of General Stevens. He passed down the road about half a mile, and came to the house of Mr. Tilly Parkhust, his father in law. Seeing his sister engaged in milking by the barn, he "told her to leave her cow immediately or the Indians would have her," and left her to secure her own retreat.— They were now in plain sight, not more than eighty or an hundred rods off. The road was full of them, running like blood-hounds.— The General rode to the house, told them to run for their lives, and proceeded to warn others who lived contiguous. By this time the way was filled with men, women and children, and a large body of Indians in open view, but just behind them. The savage tribe now began to make the surrounding wilderness re-echo with their frightful yells. Frightened and alarmed for their safety, children clung to their parents, and half distracted mothers, filled with fearful apprehensions of approaching destruction, were heard to make the air resound with their cries of distress! Gen Stevens endeavored to get them into the woods, out of



sight of the Indians. Fear had usurped the power of reason, and wisdom's voice was drowned in the torrent of distraction. There was no time for argument. All was at stake. The enemy hard by, and fast approaching.— Defenceless mothers, with helpless infants in their arms, fleeing for their lives! Despair was spread before them, while the roaring flood of destruction, seemed rolling behind them! Few could be persuaded to go into the woods, and most of them kept the road till they arrived at the house of Capt. E. Parkhurst, in Sharon. Here they halted a moment to take breath, hoping they should not be pursued any farther. The Indians being taken up in plundering the houses, had now fallen considerably in the rear. But the unhappy victims of distress, had not long been here, when the cruel pursuers again appeared in sight.

Screaming and crying, now witnessed the horrors of that dreadful scene. Groans and tears bespoke the feelings of a heart agitated with fear, and swollen with grief! There was no time to be lost. While they waited, they waited for destruction. Children hanging to their mother's clothes; mothers enquiring what they should do, and calling for assistance; floods of tears, and piercing shrieks, all presented to view a most painful scene.— Seeing the Indians approaching with heinous yells, that thrilled the heart of every one, Gen. Stevens put his mother and his sister



upon his own horse; Capt. Joseph Parkhurst put Mrs. Rix and three of her children upon another horse, without a bridle, and ordered them to hasten their flight. There yet remained the wife of Capt. E. Parkhurst, who stood in the most critical situation, in which a woman can be placed; begging and crying for help; surrounded by six small children, clinging to her clothes, and pleading with her for protection; Alas! how awful was the spectacle, how affecting the scene! To see a woman in this deplorable condition, pleading for succour, when none could help; when safety and support had fled; and dangers rushing upon her! a heart not devoid of sympathy, could not fail to weep! - Conscious of her wretched situation; feeling for her dear children; being told there was no probability for her escape; gathering her little ones around her she wept in bitterness of soul; tears of pity ran down her cheeks, while she waited the approach of the savage tribe to inflict upon her, whatever malice could invent, or inhumanity devise!

Her husband, to whom she fain would have looked for protection, was gone from home, when all her *woes* fell upon her! Well might she say, "Therefore are my loins filled with pain; pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth," "my heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me; the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me." While Mrs. Parkhurst saw her



friends and neighbors fleeing from her; and beheld the Indians approaching with impetuous step; her bosom throbed with anguish; horror seized her soul; and death! immediate death, both to her and her children, "stood thick around her," threatening to thrust his dagger into her aching heart. There was no time to decide on the priority of claims to pity, or the demands of justice. Those who were nearest at hand first received assistance; not however, without regard to that affection which arises from consanguinity or matrimonial connexion. And these relations not only unite the hearts, but connect the hands in scenes of distress.

• At the time Gen. Stevens put his mother and his sister upon his horse, the Indians were not eight rods from him. They, in company with Mrs. Rix and her children, rode off as fast as possible. The General followed with several others on foot. Part of the Indians pursued them, while others entered the house, and plundered it of its furniture. They took her eldest son from her, then ordered her, with the rest of her children, to leave the house. She accordingly repaired into the fields back of the house, with five of her children, and remained in safety till they had left the place. Soon after Gen. Stevens started, his dog came in his way, and caused him to stumble and fall; which so retarded his progress that he was obliged to flee to the woods for safety, leaving



the women and children to make the best of their retreat. The Indians pursued down the road after them, with frightful yells, and soon overtook those who were on foot. They took Gardner Rix, son of Deacon Rix, a boy about fourteen years old, just at the heels of his mother's horse; while she was compelled to witness the painful sight. Alas! what distress and horror filled her bosom, when she, with three of her children, no less dear than herself, fleeing from the savage foe, mounted upon a horse, snorting with fear, having nothing but a pocket handkerchief in his mouth for a bridle, saw her wearied son, faint for want of breath, fall a captive to this barbarous crew! Cruel fate! The trembling youth, overwhelmed with fear, and bathed in tears, was now torn from his tender parents, and compelled to roam the wilderness to unknown regions! Nor was the disconsolate mother, with her other little ones, left in a much more safe condition.

Exposed, and expecting every step to fall to the ground, which, if it proved not their death, would leave them a prey to the savage monsters! No tongue can tell the pains she felt, nor pen describe the horrors of her soul! To behold her little son, while fleeing for his life, fall into the hands of these sons of cruelty, what kind and tender mother, would not feel her heart to bleed!

May we not listen to the voice of imagination, and hear her say:



“Oh! infinite distress! such raging grief  
Should command pity, and despair relief,  
Passion, methinks, should rise from all my groans,  
Give sense to rocks, and sympathy to stones.”

The Indians pursued the women and children as far as the house of Mr. Benedict, the distance of about a mile. They effected their escape, though surrounded with dangers, and pursued with impetuous and clamorous steps. Here they discovered Mr. Benedict on the opposite side of a stream called broad-brook, which ran near the house. They beckoned to have him come over to them. Choosing, however, not to hazard the consequences of yielding obedience to their request; he turned and ran a short distance and hid himself under a log. He had not long been in this situation, when these blood-thirsty wretches, came, and stood upon the same log, and were heard by him to exclaim in angry tone, “if they could find him, he should feel the tomahawk.”

After standing upon the log some time, and endeavoring to espy the concealed, trembling object of their pursuit; they left him and returned to the house. Ah! what joy filled his bosom, when he saw these messengers of death pass away leaving him in safety! How must his heart have glowed with gratitude towards the “Great Preserver of men,” at this unexpected deliverance from the most imminent danger.

His joys, however, were not unmingled



with sorrow, as the fell destroyers were still at his house, committing ravages and wasting his property. But no man can be supposed to put his property in competition with his life.

The Indians pursued down the river about forty rods farther, where they made a young man, by the name of Avery, prisoner, and then concluded to return.

While they were at the house of Tilly Parkhurst, aforementioned, which was about six miles from the place they entered Royalton, his son, Phineas Parkhurst, who had been to alarm the people on the east side of the river, just as he entered the stream on his return, discovered the Indians at his father's door. Finding himself in danger, he immediately turned to go back, and the Indians just at this time happened to see him, and fired upon him. This was the first gun they fired after they entered the town. The ball entered his back, went through his body, came out under his ribs, and lodged in the skin. Notwithstanding the wound, he was, however, able to ride, and continued his retreat to Lebanon, in the State of New-Hampshire, the distance of about sixteen miles, with very little stop, supporting the ball between his fingers. He now resides in that town, and sustains the character of a useful physician, and an industrious, independent farmer.

That party of Indians, which went down on the east side of the river, extended their



ravages as far as the house of Capt. Gilbert, in Sharon, where a public house is now kept, by Capt. Dana. Here they took a nephew of Captain Gilbert, by the name of Nathaniel Gilbert, a boy about fifteen years of age.— They now resolved to return, and commenced that waste of property, which tracked their progress. As they retraced their steps, they set fire to all the buildings they found, of every description. They spread desolation and distress wherever they went. Houses filled with furniture, and family supplies for the winter; barns stored with the fruits of industry, and fields stocked with herds of cattle, were all laid waste.

They shot and killed fourteen fat oxen in one yard; which, in consequence of the inhabitants being dispersed, were wholly lost. Cows, sheep, and hogs; and indeed every creature designed by the God of nature, to supply the wants of man, which came within their sight, fell a prey to these dreadful spoilers. Parents torn from their children; husbands separated from their wives; and children snatched from their parents, presented to view an indispensible scene of wretchedness and distress. Some were driven from their once peaceful habitations, into the adjacent wilderness for safety; there to wait the destruction of their property; stung with the painful reflection that their friends, perhaps a kind father, and affectionate brother, were made captives, and compelled to travel



with a tawny herd of savage men, into the wild regions of the north; to be delivered into the hands of enemies, and undergo the fatigues and dangers of a wretched captivity: Or what was scarcely more to be deplored, learn with pain that they had fallen the unhappy victims, to the relentless fury of the savage tribe, and were weltering in their gore, where there was no eye to pity, or friendly hand to administer relief!

The third party of Indians, who went up the river, first came to the house of Gen. Stevens. Daniel Havens, whose escape I have mentioned, went directly there, and warned the family of their danger. Trembling with fear, he only stepped into the house, told them that "the Indians were as thick as the D—l at their house," and turned and went directly out, leaving the family to secure their own retreat.

Mrs. Stevens and the family were in bed, excepting her husband, who, as before stated, had gone down the river, about two miles from home. She immediately arose from her bed, flung some loose clothes over her; took up her child, and had scarcely got to the fire, when a large body of Indians rushed in at the door.

They immediately ransacked the house in search of men; and then took the beds and bedding, carried them out of doors, cut open the bed-ticks, and threw the feathers into the air. This made them sport enough. Nor did they fail to manifest their infernal gratifica-



tion by their tartarean shouts, and disingenuous conduct.

Mrs. Stevens entreated them to let her have some clothes for herself and child; but her entreaties were in vain. They were deaf to the calls of the needy; and disregarded the demands of justice. Her cries reached their ears, but nothing could excite one single glow of sympathy. Her destitute and suffering condition was plain before their eyes, but they were blind to objects of compassion. Alas! what bitterness of soul; what anguish; what heart rending pangs of fear, distressed her tender bosom! Surrounded by these pitiless, terrific monsters in human shape, with her little offspring in her arms, whose piercing shrieks and tender age called for compassion; exposed to the raging fire of savage jealousy, unquenchable by a mother's tears; anxious for the safety, and mourning the absence of her bosom friend, the husband of her youth; it is beyond the powers of imagination to conceive, or language to express the sorrows of her heart!

At one moment securely reposing in the arms of sleep, with her darling infant at her breast; the next, amid a savage crew, whose wicked hands were employed in spreading desolation and mischief; whose mortal rage, exposed her to the arrows of death! After plundering the house, they told Mrs. Stevens, to "be gone or they would burn." She had



been afraid to make any attempt to escape; but now gladly embraced the opportunity.—

She hastened into the adjacent wilderness carrying her child, where she tarried till the Indians had left the town.

“Strangers to want! can ye, presumptuous say,  
 No cloud shall rise to overcast your day?  
 Time past hath prov'd how fleeting riches are,  
 Time future to this truth may witness bear;  
 By means no human wisdom can foresee,  
 Or power prevent, a sudden change may be  
 War in its route may plunder all your store  
 And leave you friendless, desolate and poor.”

NOYES.

A boy by the name of Daniel Waller, about fourteen years old, who lived with Gen. Stevens, hearing the alarm given by Mr. Havens, set out immediately to go to the General, and give him the information. He had proceeded about half a mile, when he met the Indians, was taken prisoner, and carried to Canada.

They left the house and barn of General Stevens in flames, and proceeded up the river as far as Mr. Durkee's, where they took two of his boys prisoners, Adan and Andrew, and carried the former to Canada, who died there in prison.

Seeing a smoke arise above the trees in the woods adjacent, the hostile invaders directed their course to the spot, where they found a young man by the name of Prince



Haskell, busily engaged in chopping for the commencement of a settlement. Haskell heard a rustling among the leaves behind him, and turning around beheld two Indians, but a few feet from him. One stood with his gun pointed directly at him, and the other in the attitude of throwing a tomahawk. Finding he had no chance to escape, he delivered himself up as a prisoner, and was also carried to Canada. He returned in about one year, after enduring the most extreme sufferings, in his wanderings through the wilderness, on his way home.

A Mr. Chafee, who lived at the house of Mr. Hendee, started early in the morning to go to the house of Mr. Elias Curtis to get his horse shod. On his way he saw Mr. John Kent ahead of him, who was upon the same business. Wishing to put in his claim before Mr. Chafee, he rode very fast, and arrived at the house first. He had scarcely dismounted from his horse, when the Indians came out of the house, took him by the hair of his head, and pulled him over backwards. Seeing this, Mr. Chafee immediately dismounted, jumped behind the shop, hastened away, keeping such a direction as would cause the shop to hide his retreat. Thus he kept out of sight of the Indians, effected his escape, and returned to the house of Mr. Hendee. On receiving the alarm given by Mr. Chafee, Mr. Hendee directed his wife to take her little boy about



seven years old, and her little daughter, who was still younger, and hasten to one of their neighbors for safety, while he should go to Bethel, the town west of Royalton, and give the alarm at the fort.

Mrs. Hendee, had not proceeded far, when she was met by several Indians upon the run, who took her little boy from her. Feeling anxious for the fate of her child, she enquired what they were going to do with him. They replied that they should *make a soldier of him*; and then hastened away, pulling him along by the hand, leaving the weeping mother with her little daughter, to witness the scene, and hear the piercing shrieks of her darling son.

This leads me to notice one instance of female heroism, blended with benevolence, displayed by Mrs. Hendee, whose name deserves ever to be held in remembrance by every friend of humanity.

She was now separated from her husband, and placed in the midst of a savage crew, who were committing the most horrid depredations, and destroying every kind of property that fell within their grasp. Defenceless, and exposed to the shafts of envy, or the rage of a company of despicable Tories and brutal savages, the afflicted mother, robbed of her only son, proceeded down the river, with her tender little daughter hanging to her clothes, screaming with fear, pleading with her mother to keep away the Indians!



In this condition, possessing uncommon resolution, and great presence of mind, she determined again to get possession of her son. As she passed down the river, she met several to-ries who were with the Indians, of whom she continued to inquire what they intended to do with the children they had taken, and received an answer that they should kill them. Still determined not to part with her son, she passed on, and soon discovered a large body of Indians, stationed on the opposite side of the river. Wishing to find the commanding officer, and supposing him to be there, she set out to cross the river, and just as she arrived at the bank, an old Indian stepped ashore. He could not talk English, but requested by signs to know where she was going. She signified that she was going to cross, when he, supposing she intended to deliver herself up to them as a prisoner, kindly offered to carry her and her child across on his back ; but she refused to be carried.— He then insisted upon carrying her child, to which she consented. The little girl cried, and said, “ she did’nt *want* to ride the old Indian.” She was however persuaded to *ride the old Indian*, and they all set out to ford the river.

Having proceeded about half way across, they came to deeper and swifter water, and the old Indian, patting the mother upon the shoulder, gave her to understand that if she would tarry upon a rock near them, which was



not covered with water, till he had carried her child over, he would return and carry her also. She therefore stopped, and sat upon the rock till he had carried her daughter and set it upon the opposite shore; when he returned and took her upon his back, lugged her over, and safely landed her with her child.

Supported by a consciousness of the justice of her cause, braving every danger and hazarding the most dreadful consequences, not excepting her own life and that of her children, she now sat out to accomplish her object.

She hastened to the Commanding Officer, and boldly inquired of him what he intended to do with her child. He told her that it was contrary to orders to injure women or children.—“Such boys as should be taken, he said, would be trained for soldiers, and would not be hurt.”

You knew said she, in reply, that these little ones cannot endure the fatigues of a march through the vast extent of wilderness, which you are calculating to pass. And when their trembling limbs shall fail to support their feeble bodies, and they can no longer go, the tomahawk and the scalping knife will be the only relief you will afford them! Instead of falling into a mother's arms, and receiving a mother's tender care, you will yield them into the arms of death, and earth must be their pillow, where the howling wilderness shall be their only shelter—truly a shelter, from a mother's tears, but not from the jaws of wild



beasts, nor a parent's grief. And give me leave to tell you, added she, were you possessed of a parent's love—could you feel the anguish of a mother's heart, at the loss of her "first born," her darling son, torn from her bosom, by the wicked hands of savage men, no entreaties would be required to obtain the release of my dear child!

Horton replied that the Indians were an ungovernable race, and would not be persuaded to give up any thing they should see fit to take.

You are their commander, continued she, and they must and will obey you. The curse will fall upon you, for whatever crime they may commit, and all the innocent blood they shall here shed, will be found in your skirts "when the secrets of men's hearts shall be made known;" and it will then cry for vengeance on your head!

Melted into tears at this generous display of maternal affection, the infamous destroyer felt a relenting in his bosom, bowed his head under the weight of this powerful eloquence and simple boldness of the brave heroine: and assured her that he would deliver her child up, when the Indians arrived with him. The party who took him had not yet returned. When he arrived, Horton, with much difficulty, prevailed on the Indians to deliver him up. After she had gained possession of him, she set out, leading him and her little girl, by the hand,



and hastened away with speed, while the mingled sensations of fear, joy and gratitude, filled her bosom. She had not gone more than ten rods, when Horton followed, and told her to go back, and stay till the scouting parties had returned, lest they should again take her boy from her. She accordingly returned and tarried with the Indians till they all arrived and started for Canada. While she was there, several of her neighbor's children, about the same age of her own, were brought there as captives. Possessing benevolence equal to her courage, she now made suit for them, and, by her warm and affectionate entreaties, succeeded in procuring their release. While she waited for their departure, sitting upon a pile of boards, with the little objects of charity around her, holding fast to her clothes, with their cheeks wet with tears, an old Indian came and took her son by the hand and endeavored to get him away. She refused to let him go, and held him fast by the other hand, till the savage monster, violently waved his cutlass over her head, and the piercing shrieks of her beloved child filled the air. This excited the rage of the barbarous crew, so much as to endanger her own, and the life of the children around her, and compelled her to yield him into his hands. She again made known her grievances to Horton, when, after considerable altercation with the Indians, he obtained her son and delivered him to her a



second time; though he might be said to "fear not God, nor regard man." Thus, like the importunate widow who "troubled the unjust judge," this young woman\* obtained the release of nine small boy's from a wretched captivity, which doubtless would have proved their death! She led eight of them away, together with her daughter, all hanging to her own clothes, and to each other, mutually rejoicing at their deliverance. The other, whose name was Andrew Durkee, whom the Indians had carried to the house of Mr. Havens, was there released according to the agreement of Horton with Mrs. Hendee, and sent back, on account of his lameness.

Being told that the great bone in his leg had been taken out, in consequence of a fever sore, an old Indian examined it, and cried out "*no boon! No go!*" and giving him a blanket and a hatchet, sent him back.

Mrs. Hendee carried two of the children across the river on her back, one at a time, and the others waded through the water, with their arms around each other's neck. After crossing the river, she traveled about three miles with them, and encamped for the night, "gathering them around her as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings." The names of the children who were indebted to her for their release from the savage tribe,

\*Mrs. Hendee was at this time aged 27 years.



were Michael Hendee, Roswell Parkhurst, son of Capt. Ebenezer Parkhurst, Andrew and Sheldon Durkee, Joseph Rix, Rufus and ——— Fish, Nathaniel Evans, and Daniel Downer. The latter received such an affright from the horrid crew, that he was ever afterwards unable to take care of himself, wholly unfit for business: and lived for many years, wandering from place to place, a solemn, tho' silent witness of the distress and horror of that dreadful scene.

Mrs. Hendee, now (1818) lives in Sharon, where the author visited her, and received the foregoing statement of this noble exploit from her own mouth. It is also corroborated by several gentlemen now living, who were eye-witnesses.

She has buried her first, and second husband; and now lives a widow, by the name of Moshier. Her days are almost gone. May her declining years be crowned with the reward due to her youthful deeds of benevolence. She has faced the most awful dangers for the good of mankind, and rescued many from the jaws of death!

In view of the exceeding riches of that mercy which has protected her through such scenes of danger, may she devote her life to the service of the Mighty God, and, at last, find a happy seat at the right hand of Him, "who gave himself a ransom for all." And thus let the children, who are indebted to her



bravery and benevolence, for their lives, "rise up and call her blessed." Gratitude forbids their silence. For, to maternal affection and female heroism alone, under God, they owe their deliverance from savage cruelty. The boldest hero of the other sex, could never have effected what she accomplished. — His approach to the savage tribe to intercede in behalf of those defenceless children, most surely would have brought upon himself a long and wretched captivity, and perhaps even death itself!

The Indians having accomplished their nefarious designs, returned to the house of Mr. Havens, with their prisoners, and the plunder of houses which they had devoted to destruction. Here was the place where they had commenced their ravages. The old man, as before observed, having concealed himself under a log, at the time he espied the Indians in the morning, while hunting for his sheep, still remained in sorrowful silence undiscovered. — He had considered it unsafe to move, as a party of the crew had continued there during the day, and had twice come and stood upon the log, under which he lay, without finding him.

After collecting their plunder together, and distributing it among them, they burnt the house and barn of Mr. Havens, and started for Canada. It was now about two o'clock in the afternoon. They carried off twenty-six



prisoners from Royalton, who were all delivered up to the British, as prisoners of war.

They all obtained their release and returned in about one year, excepting Adan Durkee, who died in camp at Montreal.

Twenty one dwelling houses, and sixteen good new barns, well filled with hay and grain, the hard earnings of industrious young farmers, were here laid in ashes, by the impious crew. They killed about one hundred and fifty head of neat cattle, and all the sheep and swine they found. Hogs, in their pens, and cattle tied in their stalls, were burnt alive. They destroyed all the household furniture, except what they carried with them. They burnt the house of Mr. John Hutchinson, and giving his wife a hatchet, and a flint, together with a quarter of mutton, told her to "go and cook for her men." This, they said to aggravate her feelings, and remind her of her forlorn condition.

Women and children were left entirely destitute of food, and every kind of article necessary for the comforts of life; almost naked, and without a shelter. Wandering from place to place, they beheld their cattle rolling in their blood, groaning in the agonies of death; and saw their houses laid in ruins.—Disconsolate mothers and weeping orphans, were left to wander through the dreadful waste, and lament the loss of their nearest friends, comfortless and forlorn.

The Indians took away about thirty horses,



which were however of little use to them, but rather served to hinder their progress. Their baggage was composed of almost every article commonly found among farmers; such as axes, and hoes, pots, kettles, shovels and tongs, sickles, scythes, and chains; old side saddles, and bed-ticks emptied of their feathers, warming pans, plates and looking-glasses, and indeed nearly all kinds of articles, necessary for the various avocations of life.

On their return, they crossed the hills, in Tunbridge, lying west of first branch, and proceeded to Randolph, where they encamped for the first night, near the second branch, a distance of about ten miles. They had, however, previously dispatched old Mr. Kneeland, a prisoner whom they considered would be of the least service to them, with letters to the militia, stating that, "if they were not followed, the prisoners should be used well—but should they be pursued, every one of them would be put to death."

The alarm had by this time spread thro' the adjacent towns, and the scattering, undisciplined militia, shouldered their muskets, and hastened to pursue them. They collected at the house of Mr. Evans in Randolph, about two miles south of the encampment of the Indians. Here they formed a company, consisting of about three hundred in number, and made choice of Col. John House, of Hanover, N. H. for their commander. They supposed



the Indians had gone to Brookfield, about ten miles from that place, up the second branch. With this expectation they took up their march about twelve o'clock at night, hoping they should be able to reach Brookfield, before light, and make them prisoners. They had scarcely started, when the American front guard, to their utter surprise, were fired upon by the rear guard of the enemy. Several fires were exchanged, and one of the Americans wounded, when Col. H——, through cowardice, or want of skill, commanded them to halt, and cease firing. He then ordered them to make a stand, and kept them in suspense till the Indians had made their escape. To hasten their flight, the savage tribe were compelled to leave at their encampment a considerable quantity of their plunder; nearly all of the horses, and made good their retreat.

Here they killed two of the prisoners, by the name of Joseph Kueeland, and Giles Gibbs. The former was found dead, with his scalp taken off, and the latter with a tomahawk in his head.

At day light, Col. H—— courageously entered the deserted camp, and took possession of the spoil, but alas, the enemy were gone, he knew not where! Urged by his brave soldiers, who were disgusted at his conduct, he proceeded up the second branch as far as Brookfield in pursuit of the enemy, and not finding them, disbanded his men and returned.



Had Col. H—— possessed courage and skill adequate to the duties of his station, he might have defeated the enemy, it is thought, without the least difficulty, and made them all prisoners. His number was equal to that of the enemy, well armed with muskets and furnished with ammunition. The enemy, though furnished with muskets, had little ammunition, and were cumbered with the weight of much guilt, and a load of plunder. They had encamped upon a spot of ground which gave the Americans all the advantage, and their only safety rested in their flight. The American force consisted of undisciplined militia, who promiscuously assembled from different quarters, but were full of courage, animated by the principles of justice, and determined to obtain redress for the injuries they had received from the barbarous crew.

Many of them likewise had friends and connexions, then in possession of the Indians, to obtain whose freedom, they were stimulated to action. But alas! their determination failed, their hopes were blasted! They were forced to relinquish the object, and suffer their friends to pass on, and endure a wretched captivity.— They however forced the Indians to leave the stream, and take their course over the hills, between the second and third branch, which brought them directly, and unexpectedly, to the house of Zadock Steele, whom they made prisoner, and took to Canada.



To his "captivity and sufferings," as related by himself, in the following pages, the reader is referred for a further account of the expedition of the Indians, and its dreadful consequences.







## INDIAN CAPTIVE.

**BEFORE** the mind of the indulgent reader is engaged in a perusal of the sufferings of my maturer years, it may not be improper to direct the attention to scenes of nativity and youth.

The day of my birth, and the events which transpired to bring upon me the miseries I have undergone, will not be uninteresting, I think, to those who may feel disposed to read the following pages.

As in the evening of a tempestuous day, with solemn yet pleasing emotions, we look back on the dangers through which we have been preserved; so, when man has passed through scenes of fatigue; endured the hardships of a savage captivity, as well as the pains of a prison, and again obtained his freedom; it is a source of pleasure to cause those scenes to pass in review before his imagination; and cannot fail to excite his gratitude to the power that afforded him relief.

I was born at Tolland, Connecticut, on the 17th day of December, A. D. 1758. In 1776 my father, James Steele, Esq. moved from Tolland to Ellington, a town adjoining, where



he kept a house of entertainment several years. During the years of my childhood, the American Colonies were put in commotion, by what is generally termed the *French war*.

The colonies had hardly recovered from the convulsions of that war, when the American revolution commenced. My father had been actively engaged in the former war, and now received a Lieutenant's commission, in the revolutionary army. The importance of the contest, in which the colonies were engaged, called upon every friend to the rights of man, to be actively employed. Being in my eighteenth year, in May 1776, I enlisted into the army for one year, as waiter to my father. Soon after I enlisted, he was visited with a severe fit of sickness, which prevented him from entering the army, and compelled me to go into the ranks, leaving him behind. My two older brothers, Aaron and James, also enlisted the same year. Aaron died in March following, at Chatham, New-Jersey, in the twenty third year of his age. Bereft of a brother whom I held dear, after serving the term of my enlistment, I returned to Ellington.

The next year, I served one campaign in the militia, and the year following as a teamster, which closed my services in the army.— I was now about nineteen years of age. I had been favored with very little opportunity, as yet, to acquire an education; as the infan-



tile state of the colonies, and the agitation of public affairs, at that time, afforded little encouragement to schools, and caused a universal depression of literature in general.

I however acquired an education, sufficient to enable me to transact the business of a farmer, and regulate my own concerns, in my intercourse with mankind. But long have I deeply regretted the want of that knowledge of letters, requisite to prepare for the press, a narrative of my own sufferings, and these of my fellow captives, which should be read with interest, and receive the approbation of an indulgent public.

No hope of pecuniary gain, or wish to bring myself into public notice, has induced me to publish a narrative of my sufferings.— A desire that others, as well as myself, might learn wisdom from the things I have suffered, is the principal cause of its publication. The repeated instances of my deliverance from threatened death, in which the ~~finger~~ <sup>finger</sup> of God was visible, call for the deepest gratitude, and have made an impression upon my mind, which, I trust, will remain, as long as the powers of my recollection shall endure. I was sensible it might also furnish a lesson of instruction to my fellow men, and to future generations, dutifully to prize the privileges, and blessings, they may enjoy, by observing the dreadful contrast, which is brought to view in this narrative.

Desirable, however, as it might be, I had



long since relinquished all idea of ever seeing an account of my sufferings in print. But by the earnest solicitations, and friendly, though feeble assistance of others, I have thought fit at this late period of my life, yet with humble deference to the good sense of an enlightened public, to give a short narrative of what I have endured, in common with many of my fellow men, who were my fellow prisoners.

Among the evils resulting from the destruction of Royalton, my own captivity was far from being the least. That event was the precursor of all my sorrows—the fountain from which sprang streams of wretchedness and want. Nor will the channel be forgotten, though the raging flood cease to roll. As small streams are swallowed up by larger ones, so, many serious, and sore trials, are doubtless lost in that dreadful current of distress, through which I was called to pass.

The attention of the reader, is, however, requested to a simple statement of facts, as they occur to my mind, while I relate the circumstances of my captivity by the Indians; the treatment I received from them; my privations while a prisoner to the British; my wonderful escape from their hands, and extreme sufferings in the wilderness on my way home. Truth will not easily permit, nor have I any desire, to enlarge or exaggerate, upon the things I suffered. Guided by the principles of jus-



tice, and wishing no ill to any man, or set of men, I hope I shall not be found disposed to calumniate or reproach.

It is not my intention to speak of any individual or nation, with less respect than is due to their true character and conduct.

I shall, however, be under the necessity of noticing many cruelties that were inflicted upon the prisoners, by men, who enjoyed the advantages of civilization, which were sufficient to put the rudest savage to the blush.

But the long lapse of time, and the effects of old age, have, no doubt, blotted from my memory, incidents which would have been no less, and perhaps more interesting, and instructive, than many circumstances which I shall be able to recollect. This, together with the inexperience of the writer, must be the only apology for the imperfections of the following pages.

In April, 1780, being in my twenty second year, I started from my father's house, in Ellington, leaving all my friends and relatives, and came to Randolph, in the State of Vermont, a town south of Brookfield, a distance of nearly two hundred miles. I there purchased a right of land, lying in the north part of the town, on which was a log-house, and a little improvement. Suffering the privations and hardships common to those who dwell in new countries, I spent the summer in dilligent labour, subsisting upon rather coarse fare, and sup-



ported by the fond hopes of soon experiencing better days.

The young man who drove my team from Connecticut, with provisions, farming utensils, &c. labored with me through the summer, and fall season, till October, when he returned to Ellington, just in time to escape the danger of being taken by the Indians.

A small settlement had commenced in the south-westerly part of Randolph, on the third branch of White River, about six miles from my own settlement. A little settlement had also commenced on the second branch of the same river, in Brookfield, in the easterly part of the town, and at about an equal distance from my abode. As there were in Randolph a number of families situated in different parts of the town, and our country being engaged in a war, which rendered our frontier settlements exposed to the ravages of an exasperated foe, we had taken the necessary precaution to establish alarm posts, by which we might announce to each other the approach of an enemy.

But our Brookfield brethren, though in a town adjoining, were beyond the hearing of the report of our alarm guns.

On the 16th day of October, we were apprized of the arrival of the Indians at Royalton, a town about ten miles south of Randolph. They entered that town on the morning of the 16th and were committing ravages, taking



and killing the inhabitants, sparing the lives of none whom they could overtake in an attempt to escape; destroying property, burning all the buildings that they discovered, killing the cattle, pillaging the houses, and taking captives.

It was expected they would follow up either the second or third branch, on their return to Canada, as these two branches run to the south, and nearly parallel to each other; the former of which empties itself into the river at Royalton, and the latter a few miles west.

I was employed during the 16th day, till nearly night, in assisting the settlers on the third branch in Randolph, to move their families and effects into the woods, such a distance as was thought would render them safe, should the Indians pursue that stream up, on their return.

I then requested that some one of them should accompany me to go and notify the Brookfield settlers of their danger. Being unable to persuade any to go with me, I started alone. I had only time to arrive at my own dwelling, which was on my direct course, before I was overtaken by the approach of night. As there was no road, and nothing but marked trees to guide my way, I tarried all night. Having prepared some food for breakfast, I lay down to sleep, little knowing what awaited my waking hours. At the dawn of day, on the morning of the 17th, I set out to



prosecute the object for which I started, though in a violent tempest, attended with snow. I had not proceeded far, before the storm greatly increased, which I found would not only much endanger my life, but so retard my progress, that I could not arrive in time seasonably to warn my friends of their danger, or escape myself from the hands of the enemy, should they follow the second branch, instead of the third. I therefore returned to my house. Soon after I arrived within doors, filled with anxiety for the unsuspecting inhabitants of Brookfield, I heard a shocking cry in the surrounding woods; and trembling for my own safety—I ran to the door, when, to my utter astonishment, (and the reader may judge my feelings) I beheld a company of Indians, consisting of not less than three hundred in number, not ten rods distant, approaching with hideous cries and frightful yells!

“O how unlike the chorus of the skies.”

There was no way of escape. I had only to stand still, wait their approach, and receive my miserable destiny. Indeed I could now say with David, “the sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.” I had no where to flee but to the “great Preserver of men, who was my only *hiding-place* ;” “my goodness, and my



fortress ; my high tower, and my deliverer ; my shield, and he in whom I trust."

"They came upon me as a wide breaking of waters ; in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me."

Their leader came up, and told me I must go with them. They asked me if any other persons were to be found near that place ; I told them it was probable there were none to be found. They then enquired if any cattle were near, to which I answered in the negative. But they seemed to choose rather to take the trouble to search, than to confide in what I told them.

After taking every thing they found worthy to carry with them, and destroying all that was not likely to suffer injury by fire, they set the house on fire, and marched on. One of them took a bag of grass seed upon his back, and cutting a hole in the bag, scattered the seed as he marched, which took root, stocked the ground, and was for many years a sad memento of my long captivity.

The chief, who came up to me, could talk English very well, which was a circumstance much in my favor, as he became my master, under which name I shall have frequent occasion to speak of him in the course of this narrative.

They took all my clothes, not excepting the best I had on, and distributed them amongst themselves. They however furnished



me with blankets sufficient to defend against the cold, but deprived me of my own property; the bitter consequences of which, I felt in my subsequent confinement with the British, and on my return to resume my settlement, at Randolph.

The Indians had encamped, the night preceding, on the second branch in Randolph, on which the Brookfield settlers lived, and not more than ten miles below them. But during the night, had been put to route by a party of Americans, consisting of about two hundred and fifty in number, who were commanded by Col. John House, of Hanover, New-Hampshire. To make their escape they left the stream, and took a course which brought them directly to my dwelling.

Had they not been molested, but permitted to pursue their intended course up the stream, the defenceless inhabitants of Brookfield, would doubtless have shared the miserable fate of the inhabitants of Royalton; themselves taken prisoners, and doomed to suffer a long and wretched captivity; and their property destroyed by the devouring element. This prevention, which, however, was the cause of my captivity, the subject of the following narrative, was probably the only good that Col. H—— effected; and this he did unwittingly, for which he can claim no thanks.

Soon after we started from my house, my master, who was the principal conductor, and



chief of the whole tribe, discovered that I had a pair of silver buckles in my shoes, and attempted to take them from me, but by promising to let him have them when we arrived at our journey's end, I persuaded him to let me keep them. But we had not travelled far, before another Indian espied them, and crying out "Wah stondorum," *ah there's silver!* took them from me, and furnished me with strings for my shoes, as substitutes.

We travelled the first day to Berlin, and encamped on Dog river, not many miles from the place where Montpelier Village now stands. They built a fire of some rods in length, to which opportunity was afforded for all to approach. They then placed sentinels around, which rendered it impossible for any one to move unnoticed. But this precaution was not sufficient to satisfy their minds, to prevent the escape of their captive prisoners.—Therefore, to render our escape less easy to be effected, as we lay down upon the ground, they tied a rope around our bodies, and extending it each way, the Indians laid upon it on our right, and on our left, not suffering any two prisoners to lie next each other. I could, however, crawl so far out of the rope as to be able to sit upright, but always found some of the Indians sitting up, either to prepare their clothing for the following day's march, or intentionally to set as additional guards, and I



never found the favored moment when all were at rest.

As they had told me before we encamped, that if they were overtaken by the Americans, they should kill every prisoner, I felt the more anxious to make my escape; and they seemed, in view of their danger, more desirous to keep us within reach of the tomahawk, and secure us against a flight, in case the Americans should approach. I watched with trembling fear and anxious expectation during the night we lay at Berlin, seeking an opportunity to escape, which I found utterly impossible, and looking every moment for the arrival of a company of Americans, whose approach I was assured would be attended with death to every prisoner.

They compelled many of the prisoners to carry their packs, enormous in size, and extremely heavy, as they were filled with the plunder of pillaged houses, and every thing which attracted their curiosity, or desire to possess. Looking glasses, which by the intention or carelessness of the prisoners became broken in a short time, pots, spiders, frying pans, and old side saddles, which were sold on their arrival at St. Johns for one dollar, composed a part of their invaluable baggage.

On the morning of the 18th they first ordered me to eat my breakfast, urging me to eat as much as I wanted, while, on account of the loss of their provisions at Randolph, they



had scarce half an allowance for themselves. I knew not whether to attribute this conduct to their feelings of charity and generosity, a desire to secure my friendship, or a wish to preserve my life under a prospect of procuring gain, or to some other cause.

Indeed they seemed at all times to be willing to "feed the hungry," not even seeing one of the prisoners leisurly to pick a berry by the way, as they passed along, without offering them food; considering this as a token of our hunger.

Their food, however, was very unsavory, insomuch that nothing but extreme hunger would have induced me to eat of it, though I always had a share of their best.

Habituated to a partial covering themselves, and excited by curiosity, they took from me all my best clothes, and gave me blankets in exchange. They often travelled with the utmost celerity in their power, to try my activity, viewing me with looks of complacency, to find me able to keep pace with them.

We this day passed down Dog River, till we came to Onion River, into which the former empties itself, and then kept the course of the latter during the day, steering nearly a north-west direction. At night we came to a very steep mountain, which was extremely difficult of access, not far from the place, now called Bolton, in the county of Chittenden. Upon the top of this mountain the In-



dians, on their way to Royalton, had secreted a number of bags of fine flour, which they brought with them from Canada, and now regained. This greatly replenished their stores, and afforded a full supply of wholesome bread. The manner of making their bread is curious, and exhibits useful instruction, to those who may be called to make their bread in the wilderness, without enjoying the privilege of household furniture.

They took their dough, wound it around a stick in the form of a screw, stuck it into the ground by the fire, and thus baked their bread, without receiving injury by the smoke, or rendering it more filthy than it came from their hands.

Their fear that they should be overtaken by the Americans had, by this time, greatly abated, and this was considered by the prisoners grounds for less apprehension of the danger of being put to death by the Indians. Till now, however, it is beyond the power of language to express, nor can imagination paint the feelings of my heart, when, torn from my friends, and all I held dear on earth, compelled to roam the wilderness to unknown parts, obliged to ford rivers and then lie down at night upon the cold ground with scarcely a dry thread in my clothes; having a rope fastened around my body; surrounded by a tribe of savage Indians, from whose very friendship I could expect nothing but wretchedness and



miser; and whose brutal rage would be sure to prove my death!

Nor was this rage only liable to be excited by a sense of real danger; but from conscious guilt, equally liable to be put in force, by the most slight, false, and trifling alarm.

'Tis a prime part of happiness to know  
How much unhappiness must prove our lot;  
A part which few possess!

YOUNG.

On the fourth day, we arrived at Lake Champlain. We here found some batteaux, in which the Indians had conveyed themselves thither, on their way to Royalton. On their arrival at the Lake, and regaining their batteaux, they gave a shout of exultation, and laughter, manifesting their joy and triumph.

My master, who was about to take a different route from the rest of the tribe, took me aside, and in a dissembling tone, told me, with great professions of friendship, with little credit, however, that I had better take off my coat, and let him have it, for which he would give me a blanket in exchange, assuring me that the Indians would take it from me if I did not do it. Dreading the consequences of a refusal, more than the loss of the coat, I let him have it, and received a blanket in return. We crossed over, and encamped on Grand Isle that night. The next morning we re-embarked in our batteaux, and



safely landed at the Isle-Aux-Noix before night. Here the Indians found a supply of rum, which gave them an opportunity to make market for a part of their plunder, and satiate their thirst. Nor indeed was the opportunity unimproved. Irritated by the force of intoxication, they were all in confusion; savage yells, and shrill out-cries, filled the surrounding atmosphere; and death seemed to stare every captive full in the face!

“So sung Philander, as a friend went round  
In the rich ichor, in the generous blood  
Of Bacchus, purple god of joyous wit.”

At length, however, their senses became drowned in the torrent of inebriety; they sunk into a helpless state, and reposed in the arms of insensibility. As we had now arrived within the dominions of the British, and were not only guarded by a number of the Indians, who were not under the power of intoxication, but watched by the enemy's subjects, resident at that place, we could find no opportunity to make our escape.

The next morning, which was the sixth day of our march, we started for St. Johns, and arrived there that day. At this place likewise, the Indians found a plenty of ardent spirits, by a too free use of which, they became more enraged, if possible, than before.

They now began to threaten the lives of all



the captives, whose faces were not painted, as the face being painted was a distinguishing mark put upon those whom they designed not to kill.

As I was not painted, one of the Indians, under the influence of intoxication, and brutal rage, like many white people, more sagacious than humane, came up to me, and pointing a gun directly at my head, cocked it, and was about to fire, when another old Indian, who was my new master, knocked it aside, pushed him backwards upon the ground, and took a bottle of rum and putting it to his mouth, turned down his throat a considerable quantity, left him and went on.

The punishment seemed in no way to displease the criminal, but wished he would continue to punish him through the day, in the same manner; regarding the momentary gratification of appetite, more than all other blessings of life, or even life itself.

They now procured some paint, and painted my face, which greatly appeased the rage of those, who, before had been apparently determined to take my life. I now received their marks of friendship, nor felt myself in danger of becoming the subject of their fatal enmity. Clothed with an Indian blanket, with my hands and my face painted, and possessing activity equal to any of them, they appeared to be willing I should live with them, and be accounted as one of their number.



We arrived at Caghnewaga on the seventh day of our march. Thus, I found myself within the space of seven days, removed from my home, and from all my relatives, the distance of about three hundred miles; almost destitute of clothing; entirely without money; with no other associates, than a race of savage Indians, whose language I could not understand, whose diet was unsavory, and unwholesome; whose "tender mercies are cruel;" barbarism their civility; no pardon to an enemy, their established creed; and presented with no other prospect for the future, than a captivity for life; a final separation from all earthly friends, and situated in an enemy's country!

In short, striped of every comfort that sweetens life, except the "one thing needful," "which the world can neither give, nor take away," my temporal prospects were banished, and lost forever. No *earthly* friends to administer consolation, or with whom to sympathize, nor hope of escape to feed upon; *truly*, humble submission to the will of Heaven, and an entire "trust in the Lord," was the only balm afforded me.

A soul prepar'd for such a state as this,  
Is heir, expectant, to immortal bliss.

Some days after we arrived at Caghnewaga, an old man by the name of Philips, whose



silver locks bespoke the experience of many winters; whose visage indicated the trials, sorrows, and afflictions, of a long and wretched captivity; whose wrinkled face, and withered hands, witnessed the sufferings of many hardships, and presented to me a solemn and awful token, of what I myself might expect to suffer; came and told me that I was about to be adopted into one of the Indian families, to fill the place of one whom they had lost on their expedition to Royalton.

Mr. Philips was taken prisoner in the western part of the State of New-York, by the Indians, in his youthful days, and having been adopted into one of their families, had always lived with them. He had retained his knowledge of the English language, and served as an interpreter for the tribe.

The ceremony of my own adoption, as well as that of many other of the prisoners, afforded no small degree of diversion. The scene presented to view a spectacle of an assemblage of barbarism, assuming the appearance of civilization.

All the Indians, both male and female, together with the prisoners, assembled, and formed a circle, within which, one of their chiefs, standing upon a stage, erected for the purpose, harrangued the audience in the Indian tongue. Although I could not understand his language, yet I could plainly discover a great share of native eloquence. His speech was of



considerable length, and its effect obviously manifested weight of argument, solemnity of thought, and at least human sensibility. I was placed near by his side, and had a fair view of the whole circle. After he had ended his speech, an old squaw, came and took me by the hand, and led me to her wigwam, where she dressed me in a red coat, with a ruffle in my bosom, and ordered me to call her *mother*. She could speak English tollerably well, but was very poor, and therefore unable to furnish me with very sumptuous fare. My food was rather beneath a savage mediocrity, though, no doubt my new mother endeavored as far as lay in her power to endear the affections of her newly adopted, yet ill-natured son.

I found the appellation of *mother*, highly pleased the tawny jade, which proportionably increased my disgust, already intollerable, and instead of producing contentment of mind, added disquietude to affliction and sorrow.

As I was blest with an excellent voice for singing, I was the more beloved by, and on that account received much better treatment from my new mother, as well as from other Indians.

I was allowed the privilege of visiting any part of the village, in the day time, and was received with marks of fraternal affection, and treated with all the civility an Indian is capable to bestow.



A prisoner by the name of Belknap, was set about hewing some poles for a stable floor, while his Indian master held them for him.— As he hewed, the Indian, sitting upon the pole, suffered it gradually to turn over, though unperceived by him, which occasioned the workman, who saw its operation, laughing in his sleeves, to hew quite round the stick, in hewing from end to end, Thinking that Belknap knew no better, the Indian endeavored to instruct him. After trying several poles, with the same success, the Indian, filled with impatience for this untractable pupil, with his eyes on fire, left him, and called his interpreter, to make his wishes more distinctly known; to whom Belknap declared that he did well understand the wishes of the Indian, and was determined to avoid doing his will.

After remaining in this condition a few weeks, finding the prisoners very incorrigible and wishing for the reward they might obtain for them, information was given the prisoners, that they might be delivered over to the British at Montreal as prisoners of war, or continue with the Indians, as they should choose.

We sought the advice of an English gentleman, by the name of Stacy, resident in the Village of Cagnewaga, who had married a squaw for his wife, and was extensively acquainted, not only with the affairs of the Indians, but with the citizens of Montreal. He appeared to be a man of integrity and veraci-



ty; was employed in merchandise, and also served as one of their interpreters.

I was advised by Mr. Stacy to be delivered into the hands of the British. He said I might doubtless obtain leave to dwell in some family of a private gentleman, until I should be exchanged.

Encouraged by the prospect of enjoying the company of civilized people, and flattered with the idea of being soon exchanged, and thereby enabled to return, once more to see my friends in Connecticut, I made choice to be given up to the British. All the captives did likewise.

We were all conducted to Montreal by the Indians, in the latter part of November, A. D. 1780—and there “sold for a half Joe,” each. Most of the captives were young, and remarkably robust, healthy and vigorous. I <sup>pl</sup> <sup>inf</sup> <sup>a</sup> as now almost twenty two years of age.— To be compelled to spend the vigour of my days in useless confinement, was a source of grief, and pain, to my mind. But I could see no way of escape. The wisdom of God, I found to be unsearchable indeed. I felt, however a good degree of submission to the Providence of the Most High, and a willingness to “accept of the punishment of mine iniquities.”

We found at the city of Montreal, about 170 prisoners, some of whom were made captives by the Indians in different parts of Amer-



ica, and others had been taken prisoners of war in forts, by capitulation, and by conquest. Here we could see women and children, who had fallen the victims of savage captivity, weeping and mourning their fate, whose tears trickling down their cheeks, bespoke the language of their hearts! It was enough to melt the heart of stone, with grief, to behold the bosom of the "poor widows" heaving with sighs, and to hear their groans! While the companions of their youth, their bosom friends, and partners in life, were no more; having spilt their blood, and laid down their lives in defence of their country, their families, and their fire-sides.

Here I beheld the orphan, fatherless and motherless, whose tender age called for compassion, and required the kind protection of an affectionate mother; whose infantile mind, rendered it incapable of telling his name, the place of his birth; or giving any information respecting himself or his parents.

This led me to consider my own sufferings comparatively small; and a sense of my own wretched condition, became lost in the feelings of compassion, for these unhappy widows and orphans!

We were put into a large building called "The old regal Church," with the other prisoners, in which we were kept several days, when we were removed into a large stone building fitted up for the purpose, in the suburbs of the



city, oupon the shore of the river St. Lawrence.

I often made application for liberty to take quarters in the family of some private gentleman, where I might enjoy the advantages of a common slave, until I should be able to procure a ransom, or be exchanged; urging the manner of my being taken, and my destitute situation as arguments in my favor, having been stripped of all my property by the Indians, and deprived of all my change of clothes. But all my efforts proved only a witness to myself, and my fellow sufferers, of that deafness to the calls of humanity, which is always the characteristic of tyranny and despotism.

Many of the prisoners, as well as myself, had only one shirt, and were obliged to go without any, while we washed that. Indolence and disregard for cleanliness, prevented many from doing this, which may be reconed among the many causes, that brought our subsequent evils upon us. We were allowed, or rather *said* to be allowed, one pound of bread, and one pound of fresh beef per day. But through the injustice and dishonesty of the person who delt out our allowance, we were robbed even of a part of this humble pittance. Had we been able to obtain our full allowance, in provisions of good quality, we should have been able to have furnished ourselves with other necessary articles; but now we were de-



prived of the privilege, by the curtailment of our rations. We were obliged by the calls of hunger to pound up the beef bones, (which composed no small share of our rations of meat) and boil them for broth. We had no butter, cheese, flour, nor any kind of sauce, during the winter. We were kept almost totally without fire-wood, having scarcely enough to enable us to cook our meat. Our beds consisted principally of blankets, which they brought from the hospital, in all their filth. This was an apparent manifestation of their disregard at least, for the prisoners, if not a malevolent design to introduce that contagion, which should spread disease, desolation and death throughout our camp.

Pinched with hunger, half naked, and chilled with the cold, we were forced to have recourse to our beds, and occupy them a great part of the time; though they were the habitations of filthy vermin, tainted with the infections of mortal distempers, and scented with the nauseous smell of the dying and the dead.

The complicated collection of people of different habits, comprising almost every kind of foul and vicious character; and the combination of so many events, either of which should seem alone sufficient to create disease, caused a general, and universal prevalence of the itch.

Our close confinement was, to some of the prisoners, a source of grief; to others, a cloak



of indulgence in laziness ; while to all it was the mother of disease, the harbinger of pain.

We suffered so much with hunger, that we should have thankfully “fed upon the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table;” and so great were our afflictions, that we should have gladly caressed the “dog that had come and licked our sores.”

While I was a captive with the Indians, I was in sorrow, and “desired a better country.” And I had not experienced the “trial of cruel mockings and scourgings--of bonds and imprisonment,” sufficiently to enable me to say with Paul, “I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” When we were put into the hands of the British, “we looked for peace, but no good came ; and for a time of health, and beheld trouble !” Indeed it may justly be said of them, “they turned the needy out of the way—they caused the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold—they pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor, they cause him to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheef from the hungry.\* I plead that they would “make me as one of *their* hired servants,” but they would not.

In the spring, after being “brought low, through oppression, affliction, and sorrow,” we

\*Job 24:h,—4,—7, & 10.



were supplied with salt-pork, bread, oat-meal, and pease, in abundance. As we had long been almost starved, our avidity for the food, which was now before us, may more easily be imagined than described. Let it suffice us to say, that none ate sparingly, but all greedily. Indeed some seemed, not only anxious to satisfy hunger, but determined to revenge for their past sufferings. This sudden repletion of our wants, produced the scurvy among the prisoners, which threatened death to every one.—Reiterated sighs and dying groans, now filled our camp.

To such an alarming degree, did this dreadful disease prevail, that many were obliged to be removed to the hospital for relief; distress and anguish pervaded the whole body of the prisoners; and the citizens of Montreal, alarmed, perhaps for their own safety, seemed to feel anxious for our relief. But justice requires I should state, that we received, at this time, all that kind attention, which was due to our wretched condition, and every favor in the power of our keepers to bestow; while the inhabitants manifested a humane disposition, and displayed the generous feelings of pity, and tender compassion. In short, conscious that they in truth, had all partially contributed to increase our miseries, they seemed to feel a relenting for their past misconduct, which excited them to use their utmost exer-



tion, to exonerate themselves from guilt, by their subsequent good offices for our relief.

They furnished us with green herbs, and every thing which was adapted to our disorders, or calculated for our comfort, and recovery. By these means, our health was fully restored; gratitude and joy set smiling on every countenance; and songs of deliverance dwelt on every tongue. Pain now gave place to pleasure, sorrow fled as happiness approached; murmurs and complaints, which had long been the universal cry, now were heard no more; and quietude was felt in every breast.

After our recovery we were allowed the privilege of a yard of some rods square, in extent, by which we were enabled to exercise for the preservation of our health. But at length, some of the prisoners made their escape, which occasioned all the rest to be put into close confinement, and kept under lock and key. We were supplied however, with all the comforts of life, so far as our close confinement would permit.

In October, A. D. 1781, all the prisoners were removed to an Island in the river St. Lawrence, called "Prison-Island," about forty-five miles above the city of Montreal, and opposite to a place called Cateau du Lac.

Here we were furnished with a full supply of wholesome food during our confinement on the Island.



This Island is situated a little below the lake St. Francis, which is formed by a large swell in the river St. Lawrence, and was considered a very eligible place for the confinement of the prisoners. Indeed it was thought impossible that any person, destitute of boats, should be able to escape without being drowned, as the water run with the utmost velocity, on each side of the Island. We were, therefore, allowed the liberty of traversing the whole Island, which contained about twenty acres.

Guarded by a company of refugees and tories, possessing as little humanity as patriotism; and having long been the miserable sufferers of a wretched captivity, and painful imprisonment, many of the prisoners attempted to make their escape by swimming down the current the distance of three miles. But few succeeded, while some were drowned in the hazardous attempt. The captain of the guard, whose name was Mc'Daniel, was a tory, and as totally devoid of humanity and generosity, as the Arab who traverses the deserts of Africa. His conduct towards the prisoners, was such as ought to stamp his character with infamy and disgrace. Cruelty to the prisoners, seemed to be his greatest delight. I once saw one of the prisoners plunge into the river, in the-day time, and swim down the current the distance of three miles, but was discovered by Mc'Daniel, soon af-



ter he started, who ordered him shot before he should ever reach shore; but a British soldier, possessing more humanity than his commander, waded into the river, and took hold of the trembling prisoner, almost exhausted, declaring "if the prisoner was shot, he would be likewise."

The malignant disposition of Mc'Daniel, and the invidious character of the guard, induced the prisoners to seek opportunity, and confront almost every danger, to effect their escape. But time soon rolled away, till winter approached, without bringing to our view that propitious moment, which could afford the slightest hope of success in the attempt.— On the one hand, the eye of an implacable foe was upon us, with rancour, malice and revenge in his bosom, and the implements of destruction in his hand; and on the other, the rapid current of the stream, threatened us with death if we approached, while the foaming billows, roaring in a voice like thunder, bid us beware!

Desperate, indeed, must be the attempt, for any one, knowingly to plunge himself into the jaws of death, to escape from trouble.

At the approach of winter, the ice below the Island, rendered it visibly and utterly impossible to escape alive. We were, therefore, now forced into submission, and had only to consult together upon those measures, which



should be most likely to promote our own happiness, while we waited the return of spring.

In January, we were ordered by Mc'Daniel to shovel the snow for a path, in which the guard were to travel, while on their duty.

Regarding the proverb of Solomon, as worthy of our notice, that "it is an honour for a man to cease from strife," we complied with the demand; thus sacrificing our rights on the altar of peace. But now finding by ocular demonstration, the verity of a like proverb of the same wise man, that "every fool will be meddling," we unanimously agreed to disobey all similar orders, and every command which should be afterwards given, contrary to right. We were not insensible that the prisoner, though unable to defend, was possessed of certain inalienable rights, which we resolved to assert, and refuse obedience to the tyrant who should attempt to encroach upon them. The time soon arrived, when duty called us boldly to assert our rights; and manly firmness forbid submission.

We were again commanded by Mc'Daniel to shovel the snow to make a path for the guard to travel in; while they themselves had nothing to do, but to wait our toil. Disdaining to become slaves, we had universally determined to reject their unauthorised servitude. I therefore informed the infamous Mc'Daniel, what was our unanimous resolution, and told him, I feared less what he should dare to do,



than I did the consequences of yielding to the lawless requisitions of a petty tyrant. Enraged at the opposition of the prisoners, to his arbitrary commands, and more highly exasperated against me as the organ, he directed me to be put in irons, and carried to the guard-house. After uttering the most dreadful threats, and horrid imprecations, and finding I was not easily terrified, nor readily forced to abandon my rights, he carried his order into execution, took me to the guard-house, put me in irons, and kept me there during the whole day, till night, when he came and repeated his threats, of torture and death, in case I continued to refuse compliance. But still finding me unmoved in my determination, and that "hatred stireth up strifes," he ordered me to be kept in irons till nine o'clock at night, without food, and then sent back to my barrack.

This was accordingly done, tho' some Dutchmen, terrified at my fate, consented to his requirements, and performed the service, while I was confined in the guard-house. In consequence of our refusal to comply with his unjust and illegal demands, the most severe punishments and barbarous cruelties were inflicted upon the prisoners.

"To revenge upon," he said, "no prisoner should be allowed to have a fire another night while they remained on the Island."



Accordingly the guard came into our barracks every night, with large quantities of snow, and put out all the fires, using as much caution not to leave a spark unquenched, as though the lives of thousands, and the wealth of a metropolis were at stake.

“Tho’ seen, we labour to believe it true.”

What malice is manifest in the breasts of those, who labour with diligence, and toil with pains, to increase the misery of those who are already wretched, and groaning in sorrow!

Here we beheld the depravity of man.— Here we could see the fulfilment of that passage of Holy writ, which declares, that “because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of man is fully set in him to do evil.”

Here we could behold a full display of the seven abominations in the sight of God; “a proud look; a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood; an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations; feet that be swift in running to mischief; a false witness that speaketh lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren.”\*

Here we could see monsters in human shape, feeding upon revenge. For the labour which they unjustly required of us, was not a tenth



part of what they performed every night by putting out our fires to punish us for noncompliance with their tyrannical demands. But possessing the spirit of freemen, we "chose rather to suffer affliction," than to become the slaves of a set of despicable refugees and tories, feeling assured that our affliction would afford us more consolation in the hour of reflection, than could be found in a servitude imposed upon us by an infamous renegado.

As our barracks were very cold, and open; and being scantily clothed, we suffered greatly for want of fire, to support which we were willing to get wood ourselves. But our keepers chose rather to suffer pain themselves, than to permit us to enjoy comfort.

Mc'Daniel, however, was called away, and succeeded by one Mc'Kelpin, in command.— He was also a refugee, the son of a tory, and had the appearance of a raw boy, not more than eighteen or nineteen years old, whose very vissage portended evil, and bid the prisoners prepare for trouble.

His father, he said, had received very ill treatment from the American army, and he had also shared with his father in the abuse, for not engaging in the rebellion against the British government. As "the rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding," we doubted not the truth of his statement, nor felt disposed to question, but that he received very severe treatment. And more especially, when



the station in which he was found, was taken into consideration ; for this, together with the littleness of his mind, and the malignity of his temper, will forever prove his want of patriotism, and stamp his indignant character with infamy and disgrace, as long as evil shall be had in remembrance.

His immature age can be no palliation of his crimes, nor admit of much hope of his reformation, by repentance ; for like all other fools, “ he hated knowledge, and was wise in his own conceit.” Inheriting from his father, all the qualities of a knave, and the cowardice of a western Savage, who looks for security from danger, in his own flight only, or in the strength of his allies, he perverted the power put into his hands to do good, used it as a weapon of revenge, and an instrument of cruelty. His paternal education, was, at the best, toryism, perfectly congenial to his natural disposition. In short, “ he was wise to do evil, but to do good, *he had no knowledge.*” His first steps towards tyranny and oppression met no opposition, as we wished to enjoy peace, and were willing to yield a portion of our rights to the enjoyment of so invaluable a blessing. But our indulgence served only to stimulate him in the course of revengeful tyranny, and he seemed the more angry, as if “ coals of fire were heaped upon his head.”



Manifesting a desire to meet with opposition, by using every exertion to provoke to rage, he ordered the prisoners to shovel the snow from the door of his own house. As the prisoners discovered in him a settled determination to pursue compliance with greater and more grievous burdens, until he could meet a refusal to comply, we resolved to reject all farther encroachments upon our rights. We therefore refused to obey his arbitrary commands any longer. As there was a fort directly opposite the Island, where a company of soldiers were stationed, we feared the consequences of a revolt, and could only refuse our obedience, without making any actual resistance. The prisoner to whom he addressed himself, possessed courage equal to the most trying scene; and choosing rather to suffer an honorable death in defence of his rights, than to endure an ignominious life of captive slavery, he met the infamous Mc'Kelpin with firmness and intrepidity, altho' he had no prospects of any thing but to endure extreme torture, if not death itself. And this he was the more inclined to do, since it was the avowed object of the infamous villain, "to wreak his vengeance upon the unhappy prisoners, for injuries," which he said he had received from men, who were entire strangers to us, and in which abuse he well knew we took no agency, or even had any knowledge.



When the prisoner refused compliance, Mc'Kelpin came up with a bayonet, pointing directly at him, and thrust it within a few inches of his breast, threatening to run him through the heart if he did not immediately comply.— But the prisoner, continuing firm in his obstinacy, replied with dauntless courage and deliberate coolness, “run me through if you dare; I fear you not.” Enraged at this reply, Mc'Kelpin repeated his threats with redoubled vehemence, and infuriated madness, and again rushed at the prisoner with the greatest violence; thus endeavoring to terrify him into submission to his will. But the prisoner, with all the appearance of a full sense of death, and supported by the rectitude of his motives, met Mc'Kelpin with manly firmness, and true heroism; putting his hand upon his breast, and telling the impertinent fugitive that “he had resolved to die, before he should yield obedience to the arbitrary commands of one whose name was synonymous with disgrace, and whose very visage bespoke the corruptions of a heart, loaded with every thing that is requisite to fit a soul to become an inhabitant of the regions of blackness and darkness forever.” After repeating his threats and menaces, several times, and each time receiving the most unqualified denials from the prisoner, he proceeded to punish all such as refused compliance with his request. He associated with threats, the most daring oaths, and awful imprecations;



as if he would endeavor to establish his own authority by manifesting to the world his want of the fear of God, and a disregard of every thing that is good.

Like many of the present day, he appeared to imagine that he should be thought to possess uncommon courage, and power unlimited, if he dared, openly, and without fear, to blaspheme the name of Him, who is the ruler of all people, of every language, tongue and nation. Finding all his threatenings in vain, and discovering that no one would yield obedience to his requirements, forgetting or disregarding the injustice of his claim, and lost in the torrent of anger and revenge, he came with a guard of soldiers, possessing feelings in perfect coincidence with his own, and took the defenceless, yet dauntless prisoner, whom he had threatened to run through with his bayonet, conveyed him to the barrack, which was used for an ash-house, put him in irons and left him to suffer in the cold, the malicious gratification of his malignant and revengeful disposition, telling the innocent and unfortunate victim of his relentless fury that "he was glad he refused to comply with his demands, because he had long wanted, and had anxiously sought opportunity to wreak his vengeance on him, and gave the order to shovel the snow from his own door, for no other purpose but to excite the opposition of the prisoners, and thus find occasion to pun-



ish them, and at the same time take revenge on them, for the abuse he had received from the Americans." He then proceeded to order others to shovel the snow, and being still refused compliance, he threatened and confined, in the same manner as he did the first, until he had collected together, and confined in that cold barrack, the number of twenty one, who were all hand-cuffed, and chained to the posts of the Barrack. This was in January, 1782, when the cold was exceeding severe, and hardly permitted a comfortable seat by the fire-side, or admitted of a lodging free from suffering in our closed barracks, with a large quantity of blankets.

Here they were ordered to be kept, in this barrack, with the windows and doors open to the wind and snow, all that day and the next night. But most of them made their escape to their own barracks before the next morning, some with frozen hands and feet, others with their ears and faces frozen; and indeed all having some part of their bodies frozen, and bearing the miserable tokens of their wretched sufferings.

But their escape, notwithstanding the visible and abiding marks of their pain and distress, only exasperated the mind of the unfeeling Mc'Kelpin, and so enraged the desperate villain, that he, the next day morning, selected the same prisoners, and with a heart harder than adamant, and hands more cruel



than the grave; again confined them all in irons, and ordered them put into the *chamber* of one of the barracks, there to be kept during that day, the next night, and the following day, without provision, any food, or even a quid of tobacco!

Destitute of any clothing, excepting their wearing apparel, which was poor; confined in irons, in a small cold room, having no food of any kind; deprived of a luxury which habit had rendered necessary to preserve health, and groaning under the severe pains of their frozen bodies, their sufferings can not easily be imagined, far less described!

It was my happy lot, however, not to fall into this number of miserable sufferers of human depravity, who were put into the ash-house, and in the chamber. But the sufferings which I have mentioned, were only a prelude to more painful torments, and greater barbarities. They were taken from the barrack chamber, one by one, carried to the guard-house, and tortured in the most cruel manner. Some were surrounded with soldiers, armed with guns and bayonets, pointing directly at them, and so near as to render the prisoners unable to move without being pierced with the bayonets; while the infamous Mc'Kelpin, whipped the prisoners, and caned them, till he had glutted his vengeance. Who can describe the inhuman scene! to see a prisoner, the victim of cruelty and wretchedness;



guiltless and defenceless; confined in irons with his hands behind him; ready to faint for want of food; groaning under the excruciating pains of his frozen limbs; bathed in blood which gushed from his mangled body; tears flowing from his eyes, in streams which bespoke, in language more forcible than a voice like thunder, as they trickled down his frozen cheeks, the sorrows of a heart swollen with grief and racked with pain; I could say with Job, "mine eye is also dim, by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow."

Others of this unhappy number were hung up by the neck till nearly dead, while their hands were confined in irons, and their faces black with death; when they were taken down, and the irons, which had bound their hands, jammed into their mouths till they were filled with blood! Who could behold this, and not weep and mourn for the depravity of man left to himself! Who can witness a scene like this, without acknowledging, with self application, the truth of those words which fell from our Saviour's lips, to the unbelieving Jews, "ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." After enduring these horrid barbarities, and inhuman tortures, inflicted by men, professing the principles of humanity, the unhappy sufferers were sent back to their barracks, there to weep and bewail their miserable fate. Often have my cheeks been wet with tears of



commisseration, while my heart ached within me, for these unfortunate sufferers of the unrestrained vengeance of a depraved villain.— Nor was I left to be reminded of their torture and distress, only by a recollection of the past; but my eyes could witness the scars of wounds; and behold the pale-faced visage of death, abiding on the countenance of many, which were received by the cruelties of this horrid scene. And, alas! I needed only to look at myself, and all around me, to remind me of the woeful case of those, whose lot it is, to fall into the hands, and become the victims of a revengeful tyrant; and suffer the wrath of a man totally devoid of mercy; unrestrained either by the authority of a superior, the laws of his country, or the fear of God.— Doubtless, many will wear the marks, and thus bear witness of his cruelty to their graves.

Emaciated countenances, scars, and impediment of speech, were the visible marks of the savage and inhuman treatment, which they received from the hand of Mc'Kelpin.— Let detestation be written upon his character, as legibly as the marks of depravity are to be seen in his visage, and it shall be a lesson to his posterity to flee from iniquity, and follow the path of virtue. He excelled in nothing but cruelty and inhumanity; and was superior to none, except in the most nefarious acts of iniquity, tyranny and oppression. His high-



est ambition appeared to be, to "heap up wrath against the day of wrath," and prepare himself to receive "vengeance due to them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction." He appeared, involuntarily, to verify the truth of the proverb, "he that is soon angry, dealeth foolishly, and a man of wicked devices is hated." Out of the abundance of the heart, he publicly declared, "that he had taken more comfort in afflicting the prisoners four days, than he had four years time previous." This declaration requires no additional proof to convince every mind susceptible of the least sympathetic affection, that he was possessed of no better disposition than the infernal spirits; and must be sufficient to stamp his name with infamy; and at the same time, excite commiseration, in the heart of every person who realizes it is by grace, and not by works, that he is saved from falling into the like wickedness. Nor let any man boast of his good works, knowing it is the gift of God to possess charity.

When we review this awful, though faint description of the conduct of Mc'Kelpin, who enjoyed the advantages of civilization, and was favored with the joyful tidings of "peace on earth, and good will towards men;" filled with anger and revenge, nature cries within us "curse the wretch." But when the meekness



and pity of the Saviour, in his dying agonies upon the shameful and accursed tree, are suffered to find a place in our bosoms, we are led to cry with him "Father forgive." And though the conflict between revenge and forgiving mercy, be strong; yet the latter will surely prevail, whenever she is properly commanded, and led by the spirit of truth.

I would not intimate that I have the power of necromancy; nor pretend to possess a spirit of divination; but from the authority of Holy writ, "this is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty. If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword; and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread. Those that remain of him shall be buried in death; and his widows shall not weep. Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay; he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver." I shall therefore leave this great disturber of peace, and oppressor of the afflicted, to receive from the hand of "Him, who does all things well," the punishment due to his wickedness; or share in the mercy offered to the truly penitent; hoping that he may have already, by deep repentance, found forgiveness; or will before his death, if he is yet living, taste the sweetness of redeeming grace.



He tarried not long on the Island, though much longer than he was desired, when another took his office, whose name I do not recollect, who manifested a disposition for peace; established good order; appeared to have a regard to the laws of justice, humanity, and benevolence; restored tranquility among the prisoners, and reconciliation between them and the guard.

Could I recollect the name of this person, I would present him to the public as a character worthy of imitation; and as "peace-makers shall be called the children of God," I think I am authorised by the Holy scriptures to call him by that dignified and honorable title.

In the spring, complaint was made to the British provincial government, against the base Mc'Kelpin, which resulted only in his exclusion from the service of the army, with disgrace. The long and successful rebellion of the Colonies, had greatly exasperated the British; and Mc'Kelpin being a strong adherent to their government, loyal to his majesty; and having been harshly treated for his toryism, doubtless the Court, by which he was tried, was strongly, though unjustly biased in his favor, which greatly ameliorated his punishment.

In seed time, we were allowed the privilege to sow garden seeds, and plant corn. This gave us a prospect of being furnished with not



only a more full supply, but a greater variety of food, if it should prove our unhappy lot to be kept in confinement another winter.— It also gave the prisoners an opportunity to use proper exercise to preserve health, and prevent disease, a consideration of no small importance. But, disaffected by our former treatment, and fearing that the afflictions we had once received, would again be laid upon us, many chose to hazard their lives by an attempt to swim down the rapids. Some thus succeeded in making their escape, while others only plunged themselves into the jaws of death!

This caused the confinement of all who were left behind. The British now set about encompassing our barracks with pickets, or barricades, by setting posts in the ground adjoining each other, and fastening them together.

Discovering what they were about to do, several of the prisoners, among whom I was myself one, resolved to make our endeavors to effect our escape, before they had completed the barricade, and encircled our camp, which would deprive us of the liberty of the Island. We accordingly collected some logs together on the lower part of the Island for a raft; carried some provisions for our sustenance on the way home; secreted it near the logs; and at an hour when we supposed all were at rest, we started, but had not gone far, when we es-



plied one of the soldiers upon the bank of the river, employed in dressing some fish. We then returned to our barracks. Our attempt to escape now became known to some of our fellow prisoners, by discovering our absence, who betrayed our object to our keepers; thus courting favor by the deeds of treachery.— Having these suspicions, we improved an opportunity to bring back our provisions; and the next day gave proof that our suspicions were well founded; as they then went and rolled all the logs off that part of the Island.

We still were determined to use every exertion, and watch for an opportunity to effect our escape from confinement, while we saw their labors to prevent us. We sought, but sought in vain. Time rolled away till we found ourselves inclosed with pickets, which rendered it almost impossible to make our escape; as we were not allowed to go without this inclosure, unattended by the guard, and that too in the day time only.

We were allowed to go in the day time, attended by one or two of the guard, and hoe our corn and garden roots. But this afforded us no opportunity for escape, as it was impossible to swim the current on either side of the Island, undiscovered by the guard or the soldiers stationed in the fort opposite the Island. The prisoners, as may well be supposed, had long been very uneasy, and discontented; but as is usually the case, a



sense of being confined caused still more disquietude in their minds, and excited an eager desire to be freed from bondage.

The yard, which was surrounded by the pickets, was about ten or fifteen rods wide, and nearly forty rods long, extending lengthways of the stream. They completed the yard, some time in the month of July, A. D. 1782—Having encouragement of receiving our discharge, by exchange, often held out to us; and seeing little prospect of succeeding in the hazardous attempt to escape from our confinement, we long waited with great impatience for the approach of that desirable event, and wholly neglected to use any exertion to gain our liberty by flight. But we at length perceived that their object in giving us repeated encouragement of being exchanged, was only to dally us with the fond hopes of soon seeing better days, and thus amuse our minds with fancied prospects, while they should be enabled to rivet our chains, or privately assassinate some undistinguished number of us. Of this design, we had abundant proof, or at least, of a disposition to abuse their power, by rendering it subservient to the most despicable actions, and wicked purposes. For finding one of the prisoners alone in the evening, a gang of them took him, put a rope around his neck, threatening to stab him to the heart if he made any noise, and were about to hang him, when one of the company, staring him



in th eface, with a tone of disappointment, cried out, "O this is not the one." They then took the rope off his neck, and let him go.

This manifested to the prisoners, either a determination among the guard to waylay some of us, or a wish to trifle with their authority, by creating fear in our minds, and thus torment the afflicted.

As we were sensible that the guard, if disposed, (which we little doubted) might assassinate one or more of the prisoners, and consigning the body to the waters of the river, keep the transaction hid from the knowledge of any person who should not be engaged in the horrid deed, we were led ever afterwards to take the precaution, never to be found alone in the dark, unarmed with a large scalping knife, which we kept in our camp, and which served as a dagger and weapon of defence against a violent attack of nocturnal enemies. Having long been flattered with the prospect of soon being set at liberty; and discovering an intention among the guard privately to assassinate some unknown number of us; we resolved to make another attempt to effect our escape, and thus free ourselves from their brutal tyranny and unhallowed pretences.

We had once paid several dollars to one of the guard to suffer us to pass through the gate, should he find an opportunity; but never had the good fortune, even to see him again.



The plan we adopted was in itself extremely precarious as to its success, and afforded so little encouragement even to those who seemed to be most anxious to obtain their freedom, that few would engage in the enterprise; believing it would be a fruitless attempt to obtain our object, which would only cost us pain, and bring upon us more sore trials, and far greater afflictions.

Had we been confined upon the main land, where liberty from the prison, would have afforded us a chance to retreat from danger, though we should be obliged even to pass the gates of a city surrounded with enemies, having our hands bound in irons, and our feet fettered with chains, yet, our prospects of success in our attempt to escape, had still been brighter than now presented to our view.— For, then, our deliverance from prison might have given us a passport to the wilderness, free from danger; but now, our freedom from those walls of wretchedness, incurred the penalty of death, which was annexed to our escape if overtaken; and brought us to “troubled waters,” which seemed to promise death inevitable to all who should attempt to pass the current, even with well fitted boats, while we had nothing in our power but logs, fastened together with ropes.

Our plan was to dig a passage under ground that should extend beyond the pickets, which stood about twenty feet from the barracks.—



It had been our practice during the summer to hang up blankets around the bunks in which we slept, to prevent the flies from troubling us, while we reposed upon our couch in the day time.

We now again hung up the blankets around one of our bunks in a corner of the room, tho' not to prevent being disturbed by flies, but to hide ourselves from the face of "serpents that will bite without enchantment; and a babler which is no better."

Fearing the consequence of making our object known to the prisoners generally, we determined to keep it a profound secret to all, except the number who belonged to our room, consisting of twelve.

Accordingly, we took up the floor, both of the bunk and barrack, and commenced digging. If any of our fellow prisoners, or the guard, happened to come in while one was at work, others would drown the noise of his digging, by making some noise with a stick, or with their feet, which was easily done—without being suspected of the design.

We dug in a perpendicular direction, deep enough to have a horizontal course leave the earth between the barracks and the pickets, of sufficient depth to render it safe for the guard to travel over the hole, without breaking through.

As they had dug a ditch along the back side of the barracks between them and the



pickets, in order to bank up the walls of the barracks, it became necessary for us to dig a perpendicular course of considerable depth, before we could dig horizontally, to prevent any person who might chance to travel in the ditch, from breaking in, and discover our plan.

We had no other tool to dig with, except a large Jack-knife; nor indeed could we use any other instrument with any advantage when we come to dig in a horizontal line. And like the animal that makes his abode in the bosom of the earth, by digging a subterraneous passage to his gloomy cell, after we had dug a quantity of earth loose, so that we had no room to dig more, we returned backwards, drawing or scraping the dirt we had dug, with our hands and arms, which we put under the floor of the barracks.

Our progress, as must readily be perceived, was very slow; though some one of us kept constantly digging, except in the hours of sleep, and time of taking refreshment; alternately following each other in our turns; having a dress prepared for the purpose, which each one wore, while at work in this dreary cavern, where we were groping in darkness at noon day.

Here we had an opportunity to reflect upon our wretched condition, while our labour itself witnessed our sufferings and discontentment. Here we could perceive the comparative state of him, who spiritually "walketh in



darkness and hath no light." Here it might indeed, with propriety be said, that silence wept! We succeeded, however, in the prosecution of our design extremely well, finding no obstacle in our way till we had dug under the ditch, before mentioned, when a heavy rain fell, and filled the ditch full of water, which soaked through the ground into our subterraneous way, and filled the hole we had dug completely full. This was truly a great misfortune, which *dampened* the feelings of every one who had been engaged in the arduous undertaking.

As we had dug considerable distance, and advanced nearly to the pickets; had toiled with diligence, and expended much labour, we were unwilling to relinquish the task, and submit to the idea of continuing in bondage another winter. And we were the more anxious to pursue the undertaking, and effect our escape, because the infamous McDaniel, of whom I have spoken, had now returned and resumed his command over us, which gave us greater reason to fear that we should again be compelled to undergo those tortures, which he had once inflicted.

But it now became impossible, any longer to keep the matter secret, as we had done. We therefore made known our object to all the prisoners, who were stationed in our line of barracks, and receiving their universal, and respective promises, not to divulge the secret



to any of the prisoners, who were stationed in the other line of barracks; although few would assist us, considering it labour in vain, we resolved to persevere in the plan, and, if possible, effect our escape.

We now commenced dipping out the water into a barrel, which we emptied into a ditch that was made to convey our wash-water from the barracks into the river. We dipped six barrel's full, and emptied it into the ditch; besides a considerable quantity which we put into a clay-pit, under the barracks, where they dug clay for their chimnies, and still there was much left in our way.

The guard, no doubt, supposed we were washing, or they would have suspected us. Nor yet can I account for their stupidity, while they saw we were in possession of such a quantity of water, which we brought out of, without carrying into, our barracks.

We were now obliged to lie half buried in mud and water, while digging, which chilled our bodies, benumbed our senses, and depressed our spirits.

To prevent being discovered, when we returned from our toil we were under the necessity of washing ourselves in a large tub of water, which we had also placed behind our blankets, that were hung up around our bunk, as we now were forced on account of the mud, to enter upon our subterraneous labour, entirely naked.



Vain would be the attempt to give a description of my feelings, while at work in this dreary cavern, twenty feet under ground, wholly without clothing, half buried in mud, and struggling for liberty.

I was removed from all my friends and relatives, the distance of more than three hundred miles, and placed upon an Island in the river, on both sides of which, the water moved over the ragged rocks, with such velocity, as to appear white to the eye, like a foaming billow, not less than three miles in length. Here I was confined within the power, and exposed to the envy, malice, and resentment of an implacable enemy. Shrouded in darkness, in the heart of the earth, where light was unapproachable, my body lay in the mire, and my mind was overwhelmed with sorrow! If we refrained from digging, we seemed to be threatened with death on every side; and if we continued to dig, our prospect appeared as melancholly as the grave! Fear and trouble were before us, while our absence from the barracks, exposed us to the danger of having our plan discovered, which would be sure to bring upon us the most awful tortures, and perhaps even death itself. We chose, however, to hazard our lives in an attempt to escape, though doubtful of success, than to risk the consequences of remaining in confinement.



When we arrived to the picket, we found it was placed upon a large stone. We then dug to the right, where we found another, which formed an angle with the first—Then turning to the left, we also found a third. All which, seemed to discourage my fellow labourers, and led them entirely to give up the object. But, being in perfect health, and in good spirits, myself, I went in with a determination to remove one of these obstacles, if possible, before I returned. We had, by this time, made quite a large cavern near the pickets, which gave me considerable chance, to work. After labouring in this cold, dismal place, during the space of two hours, I succeeded in removing one of the stones out of the way, and to my great joy, I found, that the picket was hollow up a few inches above the ground, which emitted light into this, before gloomy, but now delightful place. I could verily say with Solomon, “truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun.”

I then returned, and informed my fellow prisoners of my success, which occasioned transports of joy; raised the desponding; encouraged the faithless; confirmed the doubting; and put new vigour in every breast.

The work was now prosecuted in earnest, and soon completed. Animated at the prospect of gaining our liberty, the one who dug last, undesignedly, broke through the ground



and rendered the hole visible to any person, who should happen to pass on the outside of the pickets. It now became necessary to devise a plan to secrete the hole from the observation of the guard. To effect this, Mr. Belknap, one of our fellow prisoners, went to the guard, and in a dissembling tone, represented to McDaniel, the little prospect we had of being exchanged; that we had long been flattered, and as long waited with anxious expectation, for the approach of such a happy event; but finding ourselves disappointed, we were forced to abandon all hopes of *deliverance by exchange that fall*; that, under these considerations, the prisoners were resolved to be contented, during their confinement on the Island, till they should find themselves actually set at liberty; when all their hopes would be swallowed up in the full fruition of the object we had so long sought. Consequently we desired the indulgence of an opportunity to secure all our garden seeds, some of which, such as lettuce and mustard, were then ripe, and fit to harvest, that we might be enabled to supply ourselves with the like articles, the ensuing year, should it be our unhappy case, to remain on the Island another season.

Pleased with the idea that the prisoners were resolved to be submissive to his requirements, he readily ordered one of the guard to go and attend us while we gathered our let-



tuce and mustard, whose duty it was to see that no one absconded. Having cut, and tied up, in small bundles, these vegetables, we proceeded to hang them up, so as to fill the space between the pickets, and also place them over the hole we had dug, to hide our escape from the sight of the sentinel, who walked over the hole, between the pickets and the barracks, in which we were stationed. This, we accomplished, while our unsuspecting attendant was lounging about, at a distance from us.

Here we beheld an example of selfishness, discontentment, fear and deception, actually assuming the appearance of honesty, contentment, and submission.

Knowing that we must separate ourselves into small companies, and take different rafts, in order to render our passage down the rapids more safe; we now made choice of our associates, to pass the dangerous scene before us. I associated myself with William Clark, of Virginia, John Sprague, of Ballston New-York, and Simeon Belknap, of Randolph, Vermont. We had prepared some food for our sustenance on the way, by taking a quantity of flour, and mixing it with melted butter, which we put into a small bag, made for the purpose. We also had a little salt-pork, and bread, together with some parched corn, and black pepper.

Those of us who had been engaged in digging, had previously furnished ourselves with



ropes, by cutting our blankets into strings, and twisting them together; while those who had believed our attempt to be vain, and foolish, had neither provided themselves with provisions, ropes, or materials for a raft, and were, therefore, unable to improve the opportunity which now presented to effect their escape.

But they could not forbear collecting in small companies, and whispering together, to devise plans for escape, which raised suspicions in the minds of the guard, that the prisoners were entering into some plot, either to make their escape, or to raise a mutiny in the camp. Under these apprehensions, which took rise, from no other source, but from the conduct of those who had been made privy to our undertaking, and would neither assist us in the work, nor prepare themselves to make their escape, McDaniel ordered that "if any prisoner should be found attempting to make his escape, or be guilty of any misconduct, that night, he should not be spared alive."

We commenced digging on the twenty fourth day of August, A. D. 1782, and having dug a passage under ground, the distance of twenty two feet and a half; with no other tool but a Jack-knife; on the night of the tenth of September following, after waiting till nine o'clock, when the roll was called, and all was still, we tied our ropes to our packs, and crawled out, drawing our packs after us.



I was preceded by six of my fellow prisoners, who, after crawling through the hole, which was nearly half filled with mud, made a path in the grass, as they crawled down the banks of the river, which resembled that of a log having been drawn through the mud.

The moon shone bright. The sentinel was walking directly across the hole, just as I was about to crawl out, when he cried out, "*all's well.*" Thought I, "be it so, continue the cry if you please." My head at this time was not more than a yard from *his* feet. I crawled on, and was followed by about twenty more, who were our fellow labourers.

As we had been allowed to go out of our inclosure, in the day time, to hoe our corn, and garden roots, and get our wood, attended by one of the guard, we had improved the opportunity, and selected some logs for a raft, to which we could go without difficulty. Clark, Belknap, Sprague and myself now separated ourselves from the rest of the prisoners, and remained together, sharing equally in all the sufferings through which we were called to pass.

We took a large scalping knife with us, and a pocket compass, together with a tinder-box and fire-works. We rolled a large log into the river, on the upper part of the north side of the Island, on each side of which, we placed another, then putting sticks across both ends of them, underneath, and on the upper side, opposite each other, we tied all of them



together with our blanket-ropes; and fastening our packs thereon, which contained our provision, &c. we then sat, one on each corner, and set sail down the rapids.

Death in her most frightful form, now seemed to threaten us, and the foaming billows, pointed us to a watery grave! Guided only by the current; sometimes floating over rocks, sometimes buried in the water, with little hope of again being carried out alive; we passed down the raging stream, with the greatest rapidity imaginable; clinging to our logs respectively; sensible that, under the guidance of Divine Providence, our only ground of hope rested in our adhesion to the raft.

We passed down the river about nine miles, when we were enabled to reach shore. We landed on the north side of the river, about two hours before day, with not a dry thread in our clothes, chilled with the cold, and trembling with fear. Our bread had all washed to a jelly and rendered wholly unfit to eat. None of our provision remained fit to carry with us, except a little parched corn, which was in a small wooden bottle, some salt-pork, and our buttered flour, which we found to be water-proof. Our compass, was also rendered useless, which was indeed a great misfortune to us, as the want of it protracted our journey through the woods, many days. We marched up the river till day-



break, when we discovered that we were near the fort opposite the Island. We then turned north into the woods, which led us into a swamp, where we encamped under some old tree-tops, that had fallen together, about one mile from the fort, which formed no shelter from rain, but merely hid us from our expected pursuers. We plainly heard the report of the alarm guns, on the morning of the 11th of September, which announced to us the discovery of what had cost us great pains, and evinced, to all who should behold the place, our love of liberty, and resolution to obtain it.

We remained under these tree-tops, three days and two nights; without going ten rods from the place. Having nothing to eat but salt pork, parched corn, and our buttered flour, together with a few kernels of black pepper, for the want of which last, I think we must have perished; as it rained with a mixture of snow, every day and night, sufficiently to keep us completely wet all the time.

Having been so harshly treated by the British, and knowing that "confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble, is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint;" we resolved to make ourselves known to no one. And like the Ishmaelites of old, while we had reason to suppose that every man's hand was against us, we were determined to put our own hands against every man who should come in our way.



Destitute of food sufficient to supply us through the long woods we were to pass, to reach our homes; we were determined to replenish our stores, before we crossed the river St. Lawrence; as there were but few settlements on the south side of the river, in that part of the country. We were, therefore, under the necessity of staying about there, till they had done searching for us.

On the night of the third day after our escape, we ventured to take up our march, and travelled till we came to a stream, which we supposed emptied into the river St. Lawrence at the fort; but we afterwards found it to be only a branch of that stream. I waded into it, and found it was so deep, that we could not ford it. I therefore returned, and we encamped for the night. Our sufferings this night were almost insupportable; as it was a cold frosty night, and we were wholly exposed, having nothing about us, except what was completely wet; without a shelter, and destitute of fire.

On the morning of the 14th, benumbed, and chilled with the cold, we found a place where we forded the stream, and travelled till we came to another, and by mistaking the former, we supposed this to empty itself into the river, above the fort. We followed the current of this stream, till about dark, when we came in sight of a settlement. After waiting till about nine o'clock at night, we ventured to approach a lit-



the nearer, when to our utter astonishment, we heard the drum beat, which gave us assurance, that we were near the fort. Finding ourselves so near, we concluded to cross the stream at the nearest fording place. In passing off, we went through the commanding officer's garden, and I pulled up a hill of his potatoes, and carried them along with me.

We then went into the road, and followed up the river St. Lawrence about four miles. We had not proceeded far, however, before we came to a boat, lying at anchor, in the river, near the shore. I waded in towards it till I heard men in it, snoring in their sleep, when I quickly made my retreat. We then went on, till we came to the house of a Frenchman, as we supposed by his speech, who, just as we came up, opened the door, and hailed us. Turning into his lot, we went to his barn, and endeavored to find some creature to kill. We found one cow. As we were approaching towards her, two large dogs came at us with great rage, and barking most furiously, appeared to be determined to bite us. The old Frenchman again came to the door, and hailed us. Fearing that soldiers might be quartered there, we retreated as fast as we could, keeping an eye upon the dogs, and swinging our staves at them, to keep them from biting us, while the old Frenchman, was trying to set them on. The ground was descending as we retreated, and while we



were all moving together very fast, having our eyes partially turned upon the dogs, we ran against a fence, slightly laid up, and threw down many lengths, which made such a rattling, that it terrified the dogs, and immediately put *them* upon their retreat; as much affrighted as they had been outrageous.

Trembling for our safety, we kept in the fields, back of the street, while the dogs continued their barking, as if determined to arouse our enemies from their slumbers, and cause us to be taken. They succeeded, at least, in exciting all the dogs in the neighborhood, to engage in the general alarm; and seemed anxious to maintain a constant echo, in the surrounding atmosphere. They were busily employed, at every house, and sometimes in great earnest, as we passed along, the distance of several miles.

At length, we came to a number of cattle, in a field, not far from the road; among which, we found a two year old heifer, very tame, and in good flesh.

We had long been lurking about, waiting for the agitation of the public mind to abate; that we might have opportunity, to obtain some provision, before we entered into the wide wilderness, through which we were expecting to pass; and as the favored moment had now arrived, we agreed, that Belknap should go in search of a boat, to convey us over the Lake St. Francis, near which we found the



cattle; that Sprague should stand with our scalping knife, to defend against every foe; while Clark and myself should kill the heifer, and procure a quantity of meat. By the help of a little salt, I soon succeeded in catching the heifer; and taking her by the horns and nose, I instantly flung her down, when Clark cut her throat with a large jack-knife; and not waiting for her to die, or even spending time to skin her; we took off a gammon, and left her bleeding. Belknap had now returned, and informed us, that he had found a boat, to which we immediately resorted, carrying with us our unskinned beef, the booty we had desired for many days; leaving the owner of the heifer to seek his recompense, where he could find it; willing, however, he should share with us, in his beef, by taking what we left.

We were not insensible, that if he was a British subject, we had abundantly compensated his loss, to his government, by our own starvation; or if he were a friend to the unfortunate, he could not lament his loss, since he had thus far contributed to feed the hungry, without even knowing what his right hand did. Nor, indeed, did we trouble ourselves, while we ruminated upon the affair, concerning what might be the cogitations of the owner, since we had obtained the meat, and thus answered our own purpose.



Having entered the boat, with all our baggage; the moon shining bright; we set out upon the Lake, steering for the south shore. We had advanced but little distance, when a breeze arose from the north-west, and drifted us ahead with great violence; every wave dashing the water into our boat.

It now became necessary that two of us should dip the water from our boat with our hats, as fast as possible; while the other two, rowed for the shore with the greatest exertion. The wind increased. The boat was fast filling, in spite of all we could do. Every wave, to human view, brought us by rapid strides to the arms of death, and presented to us a watery grave. But, through the wonderful goodness of the Great Preserver of men, we succeeded in landing, just as our boat had filled with water. Having fastened it to the shore, we went into the woods, struck up a fire, skinned our beef, and cut it into thin slices, which we partially roasted on sticks by the fire, and then lay down to sleep. This was the first time we had been to any fire, after we left Prison Island. We had lain secreted in bushes, and old tree-tops; wandered in the darkness of the night, exposed to the inclemency of the weather; forded streams of water up to our necks; constantly, and completely wet; hungry, and chilled with cold; filled with fear and anxiety for our safety, during the space of four days, and five nights,



including the night in which we made our escape.

Destruction and misery, often appeared in our way. Death frequently stared us in the face, threatening to make us his prey, but seemed to be held from falling upon us, by the finger of God.

On the morning of the 15th day of September, (the 5th after we escaped;) supposing we had landed upon an Island, we began to seek how we should get off, without being discovered by the inhabitants on the northern shores of the Lake, or by those who might happen to be upon the waters. Happily, we found, by travelling into the woods, that we were upon a peninsula, joined to the main land, by an isthmus, not more than eight or ten feet wide. This was a circumstance, greatly in our favor; as we should otherwise have been under the necessity of exposing ourselves to the view of our enemies; or waited for the night to cover our escape.

We now set out, directing our course nearly south-east, for the American fort, at Pittsford, a town situated on Otter Creek, in the western part of the State of Vermont.

Our companion, Mr. Clark, had been much accustomed to traveling in the woods; having been engaged in the business of surveying, in the western part of the United States, at the time he was taken by the Indians. We therefore, chose him to be our leader through the



wilderness, and our pilot to a more favored country.

We travelled all the first day, over low, marshy land, timbered with cedar; ; but were unable to find any water to drink, either in running brooks, or by digging; for the want of which we suffered much, being thirsty, as well as hungry, and greatly fatigued. Wishing to escape the vigilance of our expected pursuers, we travelled with great speed; which, together with our living on flesh alone, doubtless occasioned a far greater degree of thirst, than we should have felt, had we been supplied with bread. The next day, we found water in great plenty. We crossed many streams of considerable size; some by fording, although of such depth as to reach to our shoulders; others we crossed by making a small raft, sufficient to bear one of us, with our baggage; while the other three stripped, and, hanging by one hand to the raft, swam by her side.

After wandering in the wilderness, during the space of ten days; sometimes progressing on our journey; sometimes lounging in suspense, doubting which course to take, and waiting for the clouds to be dispelled, that the sun might appear to enlighten our path, and guide our way; we arrived at Lake Champlain; with our clothes nearly torn from our bodies; emaciated with hunger, and fatigued with the daily toil, and long deprivation of



the comforts of civilized life. During these ten days, we saw no other human being; nor heard his voice, beheld his foot-steps, or the works of his hand. We lived almost wholly on flesh, like the carnivorous race, and like them reposed upon the ground; equally fearing the face of man; suspicious of his design, and dreading his approach, as we did the instrument of death.

While we one day, lay encamped by the fire, waiting for the appearance of the sun, we were aroused from our sleep, by the supposed report of a musket. Ignorant of the source whence it came, and fearing to make immediate flight, lest we should flee into the hands of our enemies, we prepared ourselves to march, and were endeavoring to espy the foe, when a similar noise, proceeding from the bursting of a stone, heated by the fire, relieved our minds from fear, and filled our bosoms with joy, at the happy disappointment of expected danger.

Soon after we arrived at Lake Champlain, we found a part of an old flat-bottom boat, which we fitted up for the purpose of conveying us across the Lake, by lashing a log on each side, with bark and withes.

At about sunset we went aboard, and set sail to cross the Lake. We had proceeded nearly half way across, when the wind arose against us, and baffled all our exertions to proceed farther. After labouring till about



midnight without success, and fearing we should be taken by the British, if we remained on the water till light, we concluded to row back to the shore we left, and relinquish the idea of crossing the Lake that night. We had continued upon the water, till a tempest arose, and the wind blew from various directions, shifting its course every few minutes; and our strength had become almost exhausted, being faint for want of food, insomuch that we could hardly move. We laboured with diligence, and with all our might, till day-break, having nothing to use for oars except such sticks as we found in the woods, and prepared for the purpose, with a jack-knife. We were now enabled to reach the same shore from which we started, though several miles farther north. Our clothes were completely wet, and our strength so far gone, that neither of us could scarcely go.

In this wretched state, stupified and chilled with the cold; so faint and tired that we could hardly move, we crept a few rods into the woods; built a fire, and laid down upon the ground.

I never suffered so much fatigue, in the same space of time, in my life, as I did this night; nor would I have believed I could endure as much, with so little strength, without perishing. Language is too feeble to express, nor can imagination conceive the sufferings we underwent,



We had now but little provision left, and were compelled to curtail our former allowance, so that we should be enabled to subsist, and continue our journey, till we could reach the *desired country*.

Having rested from the wearisome and fruitless labors of the night, till nearly sun-set the next day, we resolved to travel on the west side of the Lake, till we should come to a narrow place, where we could well hope for success in an attempt to cross. We resumed our march and travelled a few miles that night, then camped down, and waited for the morning.

The next day, we came to the river Saranac, which empties into Lake Champlain, at a place, now called Plattsburgh, in the State of New-York. We heard the noise of the British, engaged in chopping, a few rods up the river, while we crossed it between them and the Lake, not far from its mouth.

After we crossed the river, we travelled a small distance, and encamped for the night, in a valley, which was in the form of a bason. We followed up the Lake, upon the western shore, crossed Duck Creek, River-au-Sable, Salmon River, and Gilliland's Creek; when we came to a place, called Split Rock, where the Lake is narrow, which afforded us a prospect of succeeding if we attempted to cross. We then went to work to build a raft, and while engaged, a little before sun-set, es-



spied a British armed vessel, making toward us from the south. We went into the bushes, and lay secreted from their view, though they were so visible to us, that we could see their red coats and even count the buttons upon them, while they sailed around at a small distance from us, apparently for amusement, and then returned again to the south, out of our sight, without discovering us.

We then went to work, completed our raft, at dark, set sail across the Lake; and safely landed in a few hours at a place now called Charlotte, in the State of Vermont. We were, however, ignorant, at that time, both of the name of the place, and of its local situation. Being yet in a strange wilderness, we knew not which way to direct our course to reach inhabitants. Indeed, all that prompted us to go forward, was the information we had received, that there were settlements near some part of this Lake. But we were wholly ignorant, what way to take, that should enable us to find them. Supposing ourselves to be between the mouth of Onion River and Otter Creek, we concluded to steer a south east direction, which we supposed would bring us to Pittsford fort. We travelled into the woods a few rods, and lay down for the night. In the morning we resumed our march, and had not gone far, before we came to an old log house, which had long been abandoned, and by the long continuance of the war, had become greatly decayed.



We, however, found a few beans, which had probably been there a number of years, and were covered with mould. As our provision was mostly gone, and we were extremely hungry, we took, and parched them as we would corn by the fire, which gave some relish to the twigs, roots and berries, that had already, for some days, composed our principal food.

Our clothes were almost torn from our mangled bodies, by the bushes, logs, and trees; and the blood that gushed from our naked, and worn out feet, witnessed, in every track we made, the pains we suffered.

Parts of our stockings still remained about our feet; and having a needle, but no thread with us, we raveled off the tops of them and sewed our tattered rags together as much as possible, to defend our bodies from the inclemency of the weather.

Our *daily allowance* of the food we brought with us from Prison Island, was now reduced to about an inch square of salt pork, and as much of our buttered flour, as we could twice put upon the point of a large jack-knife. We had eaten all our beef and parched corn.

We dug roots, of various kinds, and eat them, together with birch and other twigs. Spikenard roots, which we roasted by the fire, comprised the greatest part of our subsistence. We found several small frogs, which we killed and eat, with great delight. But we could



find only a few of them, though we searched diligently. Their meat tasted exceedingly sweet and delicious. We also found means to catch several small fish, from a little rivulet, which we crossed; but could not obtain more than two or three, although we spent much time, and used every exertion in our power.

Some time after we had dressed our fish, and had advanced considerable distance, we espied a bear upon a tree, a few rods ahead of us. We hastened to the foot of the tree in view of killing her as she descended, by stabbing her with our large scalping knife. But on examination, we found the knife was left, at the place of dressing the fish, which frustrated our plan, and blighted our hopes of obtaining any meat.

Disappointment was now added to hunger and distress, and our faint, and wearied bodies, were hardly able to support the dreadful weight of sorrow, which hung over our minds.

We, however, continued to keep a south east course, till we reached the top of the mountains, lying between Onion River, and Otter Creek; when, looking back, we could see the Lake, in fair view. Being so faint for want of food, that we could hardly step; and seeing no prospect of obtaining any, it seemed as if death must be our inevitable fate. We had travelled seven or eight days, and subsisted the whole time, mostly upon the



spontaneous productions of the country. The season for berries was nearly gone, though we were able to find some.

Our natures seemed to waste away; and leave nothing but death, to stare us in the face. Winter was fast approaching, while we were almost naked, destitute, and forlorn. O the wretched condition of those whose lot it is to be cast into the wilderness, and left to wander upon the dark mountains of despair! I could feelingly adopt the language of Job, and say "Terrors are turned upon me; they pursue my soul as the wind; and my welfare passeth away as as a cloud. When I looked for good, then evil came unto me; and when I waited for light, then came darkness. I am a brother to draggons, and a companion to owls; for I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping."

Had we seen any prospect of soon finding the house of a friend, or of obtaining provision, in any other way, before we should arrive among inhabitants, we could not have denied ourselves, at once to eat the little provision we had in our packs, while we suffered so much by hunger on our way.

The barren mountains, and rocky cliffs of Bristol, Ripton and Hancock; the dismal plain of Chataugua, and the waters of Champlain, witnessed the cries of our sufferings; while our steps traced in blood the distress we endured.



We wandered from mountain to mountain, and from valley to valley, keeping at a distance from the Lake, lest we should fall into the hands of the British, who had command of the Lake at that time. Sorrow, hunger, and bitterness of soul, were our constant attendants through the day; and the approach of the night only increased our miseries, and multiplied our sighs and groanings!

Though we slept, it was for trouble; and if we continued to roam the wilderness, we found no comfort, and our strength failed. If we slumbered, it was upon the brink of the grave, and it would not feed us. While our hunger increased, our hopes of relief grew dim.

Seeing no prospect of ever finding the habitations of friends, our companions, Clark and Sprague, like the lepers of old, "said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?" If we say we will pursue our journey, "we shall die, and if we sit still here, we die also." They therefore resolved to return to the Lake, if they could get there, and deliver themselves up into the hands of the British.

They were both possessed of true courage, and a noble, generous spirit. But they were wholly ignorant of the country, east of Lake Champlain, and consequently had less to encourage them, than Belknap and myself. They "were unwilling," said they, "that we should either return, or remain with them, if we



could ever reach inhabitants. But to go forward, was apparent death, even if inhabitants might be found by two or three day's travel; as we are so weak we can hardly go, and still growing weaker." They requested us to leave them to be food for wild beasts, or a prey to an exasperated foe. But the tender feelings of human sensibility forbid us to leave them; and Belknap and myself, persuaded them to persevere, and remain with us to the end, by dealing out to them, an extra allowance of provision, on condition that I should take the lead, and be their pilot, to which I consented.

It being nearly night we encamped till morning; when we concluded to change our course, and steer nearly a south southwesterly direction. We travelled on moderately, fearful of the event, till about noon, when, being some rods forward of my companions, I was so fortunate as to come to a road. Of this I notified my languishing companions, famishing with hunger, and groaning under the weight of their wretchedness, which occasioned transports of joy, gladdened their hearts, and invigorated their bodies; yea it "shed happiness around us, and banished misery before us." For we could say, with David, that we had "wandered in the wilderness, in a solitary way; and found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty our souls fainted within us. Then we cried unto the Lord, in our trouble, and he deliver-



ed us out of our distresses, and he led us forth by the right way that we might go to a city of habitation."

Animated with the prospect of soon finding inhabitants, we travelled on the road with joy and delight. Our hopes of again seeing our friends, became brightened, and our expectations greatly strengthened our weak and trembling limbs. We soon came in sight of an old horse, and an old mare with a sucking colt by her side. As they were in a valley, some distance from the road, we concluded not to go after them, hoping soon to find inhabitants, where we should be enabled also to find friends, who would lend the hand of charity. We therefore travelled on, and soon came to a stream, but could not determine whether it was Otter Creek, or only a branch of it. If it were a branch, we knew we ought to follow the current, till we came to the Creek. But to follow the current of the Creek itself, would lead us directly to the Lake, where we should be exposed to the British.

We however, thought it most prudent to follow down the stream, soon came to its mouth and still were left in doubt, whether the stream, into which the first we discovered, emptied itself, was Otter Creek, or some other branch.

As it began to draw near sun-set, and seeing no prospect of finding inhabitants that night; we resolved to return to the place



where we came to the first stream ; having there found the walls of an old log house. Clark and myself, went and procured the horses and colt ; while Belknap and Sprague struck up a fire, and built a camp.

Having returned with the horses, and confined them in the old log house, we killed and dressed the colt ; and roasted some of the meat, upon sticks by the fire, and eat it, and surely "it was pleasant to the taste." Indeed I never ate any meat of so delicious a flavor, although without bread, salt,\* or sauce, of any kind.

The next morning we started with our old horse, and coltless mare, and travelled till after the middle of the day, when we came to the place we passed about noon, the day preceding. We were confident it was the same place, by finding some spikenard roots, which we had thrown away soon after we found the road.

Being lost, and knowing not whether to turn to the right hand, or to the left ; having obtained a new supply of meat, by which we had been much refreshed ; and as the sun had been invisible to us for several days, we concluded to tarry there through the day, and encamp for the night ; hoping the sun would rise

\*We brought a small quantity of salt from Prison Island, but lost the principal part of it, in passing down the rapids. The remainder, we gave to the heifer we killed, and took her gammon in exchange.



clear the next morning, which would enable us the better to determine what course to take.

While we were patrolling about the fields, which appeared to have been unoccupied, and but partially cultivated during the long war; we found a large yard of turnips.

We then prepared our camp, built a fire, and having procured some turnips, kept continually roasting them successively, during the night; first sleeping a little, and then eating; thus alternately refreshing ourselves by sleep, and eating colt-meat with roasted turnips, till the approach of day. As we had long lived upon the spontaneous growth of the wilderness, and had not only been almost entirely destitute of bread and meat; but wholly deprived of every cultivated vegetable; we were conscious that it would be injurious, and even dangerous, to eat immediately all we might crave for the night.

We therefore chose to satiate our hunger in a measure, by piecemeals, while we truly feasted upon that kind of fare, which was undoubtedly, of all kinds of food, the best adapted to our wretched condition, and craving appetites. In the morning, the sky was clear, and the sun rose to every one of us, directly in the *west*. We now discovered the cause of becoming lost; and feeling much refreshed and strengthened, we took our horses, and directed our course according to the sun, diametrically against our own ideas of the true point of



compass. We had not proceeded far, when we came to three other horses, which we took, leaving the old mare for the benefit of the owner.

After travelling till about noon, we came to a man, chopping in the woods. Seeing us all on horse back, with bark bridles, and no saddles; having on coats made of Indian blankets, which were all in rags; with beards an inch long, and each one of us armed with a cudgel; the trembling wood-cutter, stood in dreadful awe, with his axe raised above his shoulders; dreading our approach, but fearing to try his success in an attempt to escape; while we drew near, rejoicing that we had once more arrived where we could behold the face of one whose hand should not be against *us*; and against whom we were not compelled, for our safety to put our own hands.

We were not much surprised, though very sorry to find our friend so grievously alarmed; while we only desired his friendship. We informed him of our wretched condition; and besought him to be our friend, with tears of joy and tenderness, trickling down our emaciated cheeks. Finding we were not his enemies, but the subjects of his pity and tender compassion, bursting into tears of sympathy, at the short relation we gave him of our sufferings; he invited us to go with him and he would lead us to Pittsford fort, which was only about one mile distant; where we should



be made welcome to every thing necessary for our comfort.

We soon arrived at the fort. It was now about one o'clock in the afternoon. We were received with the greatest marks of sympathy and commiseration; and treated with every respect due to our wretchedness and want. And though justice demands, that I should acknowledge the generous display of philanthropic zeal, as well as selfish curiosity, common on such occasions; yet I could not forbear to notice, with pain, that cold indifference for the miseries of others, commonly observable in those who have long been familiar with scenes of wretchedness and wo; which was manifested by some, and *especially* by the commander of the fort, on our arrival at that place.

Not long after we arrived at the fort, the owners of the horses came up, carrying their saddles upon their backs. They had been out for the purpose of surveying land, and had turned out their horses to feed. After hearing a short account of our sufferings, and being made acquainted with our deplorable condition, they readily replied, with seeming compassion, that they were only sorry we had not been so fortunate, as to find their saddles likewise.

After wandering in the wilderness twenty two days, we arrived at the fort on the 2d day of October 1782—having forded rivers of wa-



ter up to our shoulders; traversing through dismal swamps, the habitations of beasts of prey; and climbing mountains of rocks, where no human eye could pity, or friends console us; making the earth our bed of repose for the night, and extreme anxiety our constant companion through the day; nearly starved, and almost naked; little expecting ever again to see the faces of our friends, or to behold those habitations which witnessed our juvenile years; where we enjoyed the kind embraces of a tender and affectionate mother, and the paternal care of an indulgent father; expecting every day to see the approach of that hour, when our spirits should be called to leave our bodies in a howling wilderness, to become food for wild beasts, and our friends to lament our absence, ignorant of our end. After enduring all this, yea, more than pen can describe, or language express; who can tell our joy and gratitude, when we came to behold a "city of habitation," and the abodes of plenty! What heart would not palpitate for exceeding great joy, at such an event! Who could forbear to speak forth praise to the Great Preserver of men on such an occasion? Would not every heart, susceptible of the least impression, acknowledge the hand of the Almighty in so great a deliverance?

Instead of making our bed upon the cold ground, with our clothes wet, and our bodies



benumbed; we could now enjoy sweet repose by the fire side, sheltered from storms, and surrounded with friends. Instead of feeding upon frogs, and the spontaneous growth of uncultivated nature; subsisting on roots; twigs, and bark; we could now taste the fruits of labour and industry; and feast upon the bounties of heaven. Instead of wandering through a lonely wilderness, with our cheeks wet with tears of sorrow, almost overwhelmed with despair; we could now travel through a country of civilization, free from enemies, and receive support from the hand of charity.

After sharing in the benevolence of many individuals, and receiving every token of friendship from the garrison at the fort; as they were expecting soon to be attacked by the British, we were advised to travel on still farther that night, that we might be the more safe from the grasp of the enemy.

We therefore proceeded on towards Rutland, several miles, when we obtained lodging in the house of a "poor widow," who furnished us with the best food her house afforded; of which we ate heartily. Having long been without bread of any kind, and being now furnished with a full supply of good wheat bread; it seemed as if we should die with the effect of eating it. It lay like lead in our stomachs, and caused us the most agonizing distress, for some hours; while we rolled upon the floor, with bitter groanings; al-



though we had denied ourselves the satisfaction of eating the half of what our appetites craved. But our extreme hunger prevented the exercise of prudence, and economy, in the choice of that kind of food which was best adapted to our wretched condition. Nor did we wait long to consult about the propriety, or impropriety of eating any thing we found within our reach. Our avidity for food, however soon abated, when we found no injury to result from eating all we desired.

We made our escape on the night of the 10th of September; arrived at Lake Champlain in about ten days; and came to the fort on the night of the 2d day of October following; having been in the wilderness twenty two days, without speaking to any other person, excepting our own company.\* 'Tis true, we had seen some of our species, at a distance from us, tho' with terror and dismay; fearing their approach as we should have done, that of a voracious animal, ready to devour us.

In a few days, we arrived at Bennington, in Bennington County, Vt. where we were em-

\* When the sun was invisible, having lost our compass, we directed our course by the moss upon trees, which is found only upon the north side. In passing over land timbered with cedar, which has no moss upon it, we were compelled to lie still, and wait the appearance of the sun; which protracted our journey many days.



ployed, till we had acquired, by our own labor, and the benevolence of others, some money, sufficient to enable us to prosecute our journey to Connecticut.

Having travelled many days, through the woods, almost destitute of any covering for our feet, they had become very sore, which prevented our going far in a day.

Assisted by the hand of charity, and by means of occasional labour on the way, we were enabled to reach our friends. Being destined to different places, our companions, Clark and Sprague, separated from us at Bennington. By a mutual participation of sufferings, we had acquired that affection for each other, which will remain I trust till death. Having suffered many hardships, and endured many trials together; having been rescued from many dangers and delivered out of many troubles; sharing equally in hunger, pains and distress, as well as in the joys resulting from our deliverance; we now reluctantly parted, affectionately taking our leave, perhaps never again to see each other, till we shall meet in that world, where "the weary be at rest. There the *prisoners* rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and the great are there, and the servant is free from his master!"

And may it not be the unspeakable infelicity of either of us, to fail of "entering into that rest because of unbelief."



Belknap and I continued our course together to Ellington, in Connecticut, where our friends resided. We arrived there on the 17th day of October 1782—being just two years, from the day I was taken by the Indians at Randolph. What pen can describe the mutual joy which was felt by parents and children on our arrival! Truly our fathers, “seeing us, while yet a great way off, ran and fell upon our necks, and kissed us.” Behold now the affection of a father! See him shed the tear of compassion. Hear him say “this my son was dead, and is alive again. He was lost and is found.” See him “begin to be merry;” nor think it strange that the fatted calf should be killed.

Behold a kind father in tears of joy, and a tender step-mother,\* kindly embracing the subject of her husband’s former grief, but present delight. See “the best robe” cast around him with “the ring upon his hand, and the shoes upon his feet.” See brothers and sisters surrounding the returned brother. Hear their acclamations of joy and gladness; embracing their once lost, but now living brother! What heart would not melt at the sight of such a joyful scene! And what can I say to express my own feelings on this delightful interview!

\*My own mother died while I was quite young, and my father had married again, to a woman possessing the kindest affections, and the most endearing love.



Having endured the hardships of an Indian Captivity, and the pains of the Prison; the gnawings of hunger; the tortures of the rack, and the still more dreadful distress of 22 day's wandering in the wilderness; filled with despair, anxiety and fear; almost starved, and nearly naked; full of wounds, and constantly chilled with the cold; imagine, kind reader, the feelings of my heart, when I came to behold the face of affectionate parents, and receive the tender embraces of beloved brothers and a loving sister! Think of the festivities of that evening, when I could again enjoy a seat in a social circle of friends and acquaintance, around the fireside in my father's house!

Vain is the attempt to describe my own feelings on that joyful occasion. Fruitless, indeed, must be all my endeavors, to express the mutual congratulations, manifested by all, on my return.

My long absence from my friends, together with a sense of the numerous, and awful dangers through which I have been preserved, increased our gratitude, and caused wonder and astonishment to dwell in every breast. We could now heartily unite in ascribing praise and adoration to Him, who granted me protection, while exposed to the shafts of hatred and revenge. I was treated with all that friendship, which pity could excite, or sympathy dictate; and saluted by every person I met, whether old or young, with a hearty



welcome. Every one seemed to be in a good degree conscious of the extreme sufferings I had undergone. In short, my return afforded me an opportunity to witness a display of all the tender passions of the soul.

Knowing the deplorable wretchedness of those who had the misfortune to become prisoners to the British, and consequently expecting every day, to hear of my death, my friends were little less astonished at my return, than they would have been, had they witnessed the resurrection of one from the dead.

The extreme hunger and distress I had felt, were clearly manifested, to those who beheld my emaciated countenance and mangled feet; and no one was disposed to doubt the truth of my words, who heard me relate the affecting tale of my sore afflictions. For "by reason of the voice of my groanings, my bones" it might verily be said did "cleave to my skin." I however had the satisfaction to find my deep anxiety to be delivered from bondage, and escape from the enemy; my ardent wishes to see my friends, and my hungry, craving appetite, wholly satisfied, in the full fruition of all my toils. The munificence of the wealthy was offered for my relief, and the poor approached me, with looks of tenderness and pity. All things around me, wore a propitious smile. From morning till night, instead of being guarded by a company of refugees and tories, or wandering in a lonesome wil-



derness, hungry and destitute, I could now behold the face of friends, and at the approach of night, repose my head upon a downy pillow, under the hospitable covert of my father's roof. Instead of being made a companion of the wretched, I could now enjoy the sweet conversation of a beloved sister, and affectionate brothers.

Having for more than two years been deprived of hearing the Gospel sound; surely "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." For, unto God, I could say "Thou art my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble, thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. I will be glad and rejoice in thy name, for thou hast considered my trouble, thou hast known my soul in adversity." This, I hoped would be the language of every one, who made their escape with me. For myself, I trust it was the sincere language of my heart.

Notwithstanding the prisoners, whom we left on the Island, were set at liberty, shortly after our escape, and although our sufferings in the wilderness, were exceeding great; yet, I never found cause to lament, that I improved the opportunity to free myself from the hands of those cruel tormenters, and oppressors of the afflicted. For "the *spirit* of a man will sustain his infirmity." And under this consideration, we chose rather to hazard the consequences of an escape, though it might prove



our death, than to become the menial servants, and thus gratify the infernal desires of a petty tyrant.

“ ————— Now I feel by proof,  
That fellowship in pain divides not smart,  
Nor lightens ought each man's peculiar load.”

I have never had the satisfaction to hear from either of my friends and fellow-sufferers, Clark and Sprague, since I parted with them at Bennington.

Mr. Belknap, now lives in Randolph, Vt. and from the sad experience of the like sufferings himself, and his participation in my own, can witness to the truth of my statement.

Let not the preservation of my life, through such a train of dangers, be attributed to *mere chance*. But let the praise be given to “God our Rock, and the High God, our Redeemer.”

In September, previous to my escape, a treaty of peace was concluded between Great Britain and the United States, at Paris; the glad news of which reached America, not long after my return, which occasioned the release of the remainder of the prisoners, who were confined upon Prison-Island.

As the war had now terminated, my return to Randolph, would not be attended with the danger of being again made captive by the Indians; which induced me, the spring following, to go to that place, and resume my settlement.



On my arrival there, I found my house was demolished, which recalled to mind, the confusion and horror of that dreadful morning, when the savage tribe approached with awful aspect, my lonely dwelling. I went to work and erected a house, upon the same spot, into which, my father shortly after moved his family. The grass seed, which the Indians had scattered for some distance from the house, as before observed, had taken root, stocked the ground, and remained entire, for many years a *fresh* memento of that woeful event, which proved but a faint prelude of all my direful sufferings.

Here my father lived by cultivating that soil, which had borne the brutal band to my unwelcome door; till April 1812, when he died, at the good old age of *Seventy-Six*. Here he has spent many a winter's evening, in rehearsing the mournful tale of my "captivity and sufferings," to his friends and acquaintance.

Generous and hospitable by nature, and having been taught by my sufferings to feel for the needy, he was ever ready to extend the hand of charity, to relieve their distresses—His house, always the abode of plenty, was an asylum for the naked and forlorn, an acceptable home to the poor and the wretched.

Always exhibiting a sense of what sufferings I had undergone, for want of food; he seemed in nothing, to be more delighted, than



“to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked.” My loving and aged step-mother, with one of her sons (a half brother of mine) now lives on the same farm.

In the winter of 1785—I was married to Hannah Shurtliff, of Tolland, Connecticut, and settled at Randolph, not far from my father's house, where I resided eight years, when I purchased a farm; and removed to Brookfield, a town adjoining.

Here I have resided, until the present time (1816,) and obtained my own subsistence, and that of my numerous family, by means of cultivating the soil. By a steady course of industry, and economy, I have been enabled, under the Divine blessing, to acquire a comfortable support, and enjoy the fruits of my labors, in quietude and peace. As my occupation was that of a farmer, my opportunities for information, like those of many others of my class, have been limited.

My family, not unlike Job's, consists of seven sons and three daughters; nor have I reason to think my afflictions much inferior to his. Although death has never been permitted to enter my dwelling and take any of my family, yet, my substance has once been destroyed, by worse than Chaldean hands, and that too at the very out-set of my adventures in life. Not only were my house and effects destroyed, but myself, at a most unpropitious hour, when far removed from all my friends, compelled to



leave my employment; relinquish all those objects of enterprise, peculiar to the juvenile age, and forced to enter the ranks of a savage band, and travel into an enemy's country. Thus were all my expectations cut off. My hopes were blasted, and my youthful prospects darkened! "I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came. O that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together."

When I survey my mis'ries o'er,  
The recollection wounds my heart;  
When all my steps were trac'd in gore,  
And I was doom'd to feel the smart.

When sore oppress'd by wicked hands,  
Annoy'd with hunger, rack'd with pain,  
My limbs confin'd with iron bands,  
'To die, I well might count my gain.

When filthy vermin broke my rest,  
And fed upon my languid frame;  
What pains were felt within my breast!  
But men were deaf to pity's claim.

When I was buried in the deep,  
And waters o'er my head did roll,  
My hope was strong that Christ would keep,  
And kindly save my guilty soul.

Notwithstanding that inhumanity and cruelty which characterized the conduct of the savages, yet, I think that the barbarous treatment we received from the impious commanders of



the British fort, in whose charge we were kept, might put to the blush, the rudest savage, who traverses the western wild. Their conduct illy comported with what might be expected from men, who are favored with the light of revelation.

The savage, when he does a deed of charity towards his prisoner, is no doubt, less liable to be actuated by a selfish principle, and influenced by the hope of reward, or by a fear of losing his reputation, than he is, who has been made acquainted with the gracious reward offered to those who "do unto others as they would that others should do unto them," and knows the bitter consequences of the contrary practice.

And, I think, the destruction of Royalton, and all its evil consequences, may, with less propriety, be attributed to the brutal malevolence of the savage tribe, than to the ignoble treachery, and despicable fanaticism of certain individuals of our own nation.

Scarce can that man be found in this enlightened country, who would treat his enemy with as much tenderness and compassion, as I was treated by the savage tribe; though I had abundant cause to say, that the "tender mercies of the wicked, are cruel."

Who would not shudder at the idea of being compelled to take up their abode with a herd of tawny savages? Yet, alas! when I contrasted the sufferings I endured, while with



the Indians, with those afflictions, that were laid upon me, by men, who had been from their youth favored with the advantages of civilization, clothed with authority, and distinguished with a badge of honor; I could truly say, the former chastised me with whips, but the latter with scorpions.

An Indian captivity, will hardly admit of a comparison with my wretched condition, while in the hands of the British, and under the domineering power of a company of refugees and Tories.

While with the Indians, my food was unsavory and unwholesome, my clothing, like their own, was scant, and covered with filthy vermin; and my life was always exposed to the danger of their implacable hatred and revenge. This was a most perilous condition, indeed, for any one to be placed in. But my confinement with the British, multiplied my complaints, added to my afflictions, rendered me more exposed to the danger of losing my life, increased my sorrows, and apparently brought me near the grave. My food was less filthy, but I was not allowed the half of what my appetite craved, and my nature required, to render me comfortable.

By these, and my subsequent afflictions, I have been taught a lesson, that has made an impression upon my mind, which I trust will remain as long as life shall last.



I have been taught by ocular demonstration, and sad experience, the depravity of man; and the fallacy of looking for durable happiness in terrestrial things.

My own sufferings, have implanted within my breast, that sympathy for the distressed, which is better felt than described. Nakedness and poverty have once been my companions, and I shall not readily forget to lend a listening ear to the cries of the needy.

And I would exhort myself, and all my fellow men, by the extreme sufferings I have endured, to be ready at all times to "feed the hungry, and clothe the naked;" nor ever fail to extend the hand of charity for the assistance of the unfortunate.



*Names of a part of the persons killed and taken at the Burning of Royalton.*

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Zadock Steele, taken at Randolph.

Experience Davis,

Elias Curtis,

J. Parks,

Moses Parsons,

Simeon Belknap, now living in Randolph.

Samuel Pember,

Thomas Pember, killed at Royalton.

Gardner Rix, now living in Royalton.

Daniel Downer,

Joseph Kneeland, killed at the encampment at Randolph.

Jonathan Brown, now residing in Williamstown.

Adan Durkee, died at Montreal.

Joseph Havens,

Abijah Hutchinson,

John Hutchinson, now living in Bethel,

———— Avery,

John Kent,

Peter Mason,

Giles Gibbs, killed at Randolph.

Elias Button, killed at Royalton.

Nathaniel Gilbert.

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*The following persons were released by the intercession of Mrs. Hendee.*

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Daniel Downer, jr.

Andrew Durkee,



Michael Hendee,  
Roswel Parkhurst,  
Shelden Durkee,  
Joseph Rix,  
Rufus Fish,  
——— Fish,  
Nathaniel Evans.









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