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# AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY.

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VOL. I.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY HARPER AND BROTHERS.
1848.

### LIVES

OF

JOHN STARK,
CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN,
RICHARD MONTGOMERY,

AND

ETHAN ALLEN.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY HARPER AND BROTHERS.
1848.

LIVES

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#### ADVERTISEMENT.

Ir is the design of this work to add something to the stock of our native literature in the department of Biography. The specimens here presented to the public will indicate, with sufficient clearness, the nature of the plan, and the manner in which it may be executed.

Our purpose is not to attempt the methodical arrangement or comprehensiveness of a dictionary, in which the number and proportional length of the articles are matters to be considered; but rather to select prominent names, to which opportunity and inclination may attract the different writers, and thus enable them to perform the task of a biographer with the more fidelity and interest in the subject. Hence the length and structure of each article will depend on the amount of materials accessible to the author, his judgment and taste in choosing from them, and his facility in narration.

The two principal objects to be attained, in biographical compositions, are accuracy as to facts and finish in the literary execution. The former demands research, the latter labor and skill. Biography is only another form of history; truth is the first requisite, simplicity of style the next. It admits of no embellishments, that would give it the air of fiction; and yet its office is but half done, unless it mingles entertainment with instruction.

The plan of this work embraces the lives of all persons, who have been distinguished in America, from the date of its first discovery to the present time. Such a scheme, if faithfully carried through, on the scale here assumed, would embrace a perfect history of the country, of its social and political progress, its arts, sciences, literature, and improvements of every kind; since these receive their impulse and direction from a comparatively few eminent individuals, whose achievements of thought and action it is the province of the biographer to commemorate. A hint of the possibility of such a result would certainly not be ventured by the Editor, if he were not permitted to rely on the aid of a large number of coadjutors, whose names might afford a pledge of its attainment.

This beginning, however, is only an experiment, which will be pursued or abandoned as future contingencies may dictate. Arrangements have been made for publishing four volumes within the compass of a year. After this trial, should there be found sufficient encouragement, the work will be continued, and a volume published quarterly. Each life will be prepared expressly for this work, except perhaps in a very few instances, where, to give completeness to the collection, it may be deemed advisable to reprint articles of standard value. which could not be amended by writing them anew. As the authors' names will be prefixed to their respective performances, the Editor will of course not hold himself responsible for any statements or opinions, except those proceeding from his own pen.

January, 1834.

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## LIFE

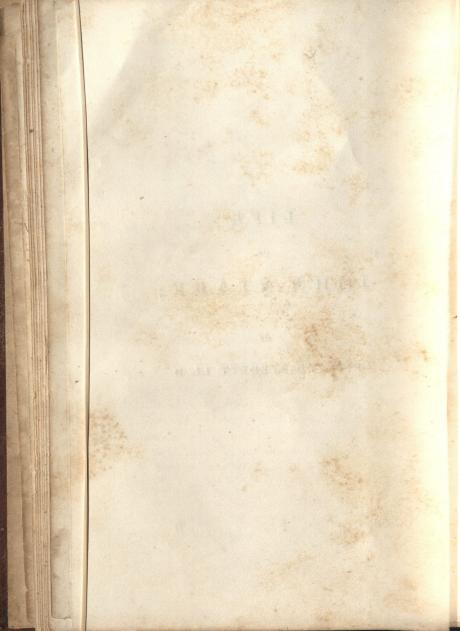
OF

# JOHN STARK;

BY

EDWARD EVERETT, LL. D

VOL. I.



### JOHN STARK.

THE great political consequences of the war of the Revolution have thrown into comparative obscurity the previous military history of the British North American Colonies. In reality, however, the military efforts made by those Colonies, not only in the Seven Years' War, but in that of 1744, were of great importance. Large forces were kept on foot; distant and important expeditions were undertaken with success; valuable conquests were achieved; and, on more than one occasion, a very decisive influence on the politics of Europe was exercised by the colonial governments. Great importance would have been attached to these transactions, but for the greater importance and interest of those, which followed so close upon them, in the war of the Revolution. But it is not the least of the reasons, why we ought to study the history of these earlier wars, that they formed in reality the great school, in which the military leaders of the Revolution were trained.

Among the eminent pupils of this school, John Stark was, by no means, the least distinguished. His character is one of original strength and resource. He would have risen to consequence and authority, however rude and uncivilized the community in which he had been thrown; and had he been trained in the discipline, and enjoyed the opportunities, of the great armies of Europe, his name would have reached posterity, as a military chieftain of the first rank. In the peculiar social and political condition of the country, allowing an almost indefinite scope for the peculiarities of individual character, the temperament of General Stark prevented his rising decidedly above the sphere of the partisan leader; but he was unquestionably a partisan of the highest character, and rendered services of an importance not easily surpassed, those of Washington out of the question, by any achievements of any other leader in the army of the Revolution. An account of the life of General Stark has been published, as it would appear, by his family, from authentic materials.\* This will be our authority for every

<sup>\*&</sup>quot;Reminiscences of the French War, containing Rogers's Expeditions with the New England Rangers under his command, as published in London in 1765; with Notes and Illustrations; to which is added an Account of the Life and Military Services of Major-General John Stark, &c. Concord, N. H., 1831."

thing which belongs to personal history in the following Memoir, and for many matters relative to the military and public career of its subject;— an acknowledgment which we wish to make in the amplest terms, in the outset, to avoid the necessity of repetition and marginal reference.

JOHN STARK was born at Nutfield, now Londonderry, in New Hampshire, on the 28th of August, in the year 1728. His life began in hardship. His father, Archibald Stark, was a native of Glasgow in Scotland, and emigrated while young to Londonderry in Ireland. In the year 1720, he embarked with a numerous company of adventurers for New Hampshire. These emigrants were descended from the Scotch Presbyterians, who, in the reign of James the First, were established in Ireland, but who professing with national tenacity a religious belief, neither in accordance with the popular faith in Ireland, nor with that of its English masters, and disliking the institutions of tithes and rent, determined to seek a settlement in America. The first party came over in 1718, and led the way in a settlement on the Merrimac river. They were shortly succeeded by a large number of their countrymen, who brought with them the art of weaving linen, and first introduced the culture of the potato in this part of America; and furnished from their families a large number of the pioneers of civilization

in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine, and some of the most useful and distinguished citizens of all these States.

The vessel, which brought over Archibald Stark and his party, arrived in Boston, about the time of the alarm of the prevalence of the smallpox. The account we follow, places it in 1720, and states that the vessel, in consequence of having the smallpox on board, was not allowed an entry in Boston. As 1721 was the year, when the smallpox committed the most formidable ravages in Boston, having been brought in a vessel from the West Indies, it is not unlikely, that the party of Stark arrived in Boston Bay, while the panic produced by the ravages of the disease was at its height. At all events, they were refused permission to land in Boston; and they passed the winter on the banks of the Kennebec in Maine, and near the spot where Wiscasset was afterwards settled. The following year they removed to Nutfield, where they had been preceded by the first emigrating company of their countrymen. Here a permanent and flourishing settlement was founded, which took the name of Londonderry in 1722, in memory of the place of their abode in Ireland.

This place was in advance of the compact settlements, and consequently was exposed to the brunt of Indian warfare, which precisely at this period was commencing for the fourth time since the first establishment of the English Colonies. A tradition is preserved, that the settlers at Londonderry were occasionally preserved from savage violence, by the interposition of Father Rasles, a French Missionary, established among the Norridgewock tribe of Indians. The particular motive, which prompted the tenderness of this French Catholic toward a settlement of Scotch Covenanters, has not been handed down with the tradition.

John Stark was the second of four sons. In 1736 his father removed from Londonderry to Derryfield, now Manchester. Here John remained in the family of his father till the year 1752. In this year he went upon a hunting excursion to Baker's River in Rumney, in the northwestern quarter of the State, and a spot at that time far beyond the range of the English settlements. The party consisted, besides himself, of his elder brother William, and of David Stinson, and Amos Eastman. On the 28th of April, they were surprised by a party of ten Indians of the tribe established at St. Francis. Stark's party had discovered the trail of the Indians two days before; and were preparing, in consequence, to leave the ground. John had separated from his companions to collect the traps; and while thus employed was surprised by the Indians. On

being questioned about his companions, he pointed in the direction opposite to that which they had taken, and thus succeeded in leading the Indians two miles out of the way. His companions unfortunately, becoming alarmed at his absence, and ignorant of its cause, fired several guns as a signal to him. This betrayed them to the savages; who, proceeding down the river below the encampment, lay in wait to intercept their boat, as it should descend. The hunters, suspecting what had happened, were moving down the river, William Stark and Stinson in the canoe, and Eastman on the bank. At sunrise in the morning, Eastman fell into the hands of the savages, who, at the same time, ordered John to hail his brethren in the boat, and thus decoy them to the shore. Instead of obeying this command, John had the courage, after explaining his own situation to his brother and Stinson, to advise them to pull for the opposite shore. They did so, and were immediately fired upon by four of the Indians. At the moment of the discharge, Stark knocked up the guns of two of the Indians; and did the same when the rest of the party fired a second volley, calling to his brother William to make his escape, as the guns were all discharged. This his brother succeeded in doing; but Stinson was killed. For his boldness on this occasion, Stark was severely beaten by the Indians, who, taking possession of the furs collected by the hunting party, retreated to Coos, near where Haverhill, New Hampshire, now is, and where two of their party had been left to collect provisions against their return. Having passed one night here, they proceeded to the upper Coos (Lancaster), from which they despatched three of their number with Eastman to St. Francis. The remainder of the party spent some time in hunting upon a small stream in this neighbourhood. Stark, confined at night and closely watched by day, was permitted by his new companions to try his fortune at hunting, and, having trapped one beaver and shot another, received the skins as his reward.

On the 9th of June, the party returned to St. Francis, where Stark rejoined his companion Eastman. They were compelled to undergo what is called the ceremony of running the gantlet; a use of that term, which modern effeminacy would hardly admit. It was the universal practice of the North American Indians, to compel their captives to pass through the young warriors of the tribe, ranged in two lines, each furnished with a rod, and, when highly exasperated, with deadly weapons, to strike the prisoners as they passed. In the latter case, the captive was frequently killed, before he could reach the council-house, at which the two lines of Indians terminated. On the present occasion, Eastman was

severely whipped, as he passed through the lines. Stark, more athletic and adroit, and better comprehending the Indian character, snatched a club from the nearest Indian, laid about him to the right and left, scattering the Indians before him, and escaped with scarcely a blow; greatly to the delight of the old men of the tribe, who sat at some distance, witnessing the scene, and enjoying the confusion of their young warriors.

Stark and his companion remained some time among the St. Francis Indians, by whom he was kindly treated. He possessed opportunities, which he did not allow to pass unimproved, of studying their manners and customs, particularly in their military excursions. At the end of six weeks, Captain Stevens of Number Four (Charlestown, New Hampshire), and Mr. Wheelwright of Boston, were sent by the General Court of Massa chusetts to redeem some of the citizens of that province, who had been carried into captivity. Not finding those of whom they were in search from Massachusetts, they liberally paid the ransom of Stark and Eastman, the former being redeemed for one hundred and three dollars, the latter for sixty. Massachusetts was in the habit of redeeming, from the treasury of the province, her citizens who were carried away captive; but Stark and Eastman were never repaid by New Hampshire, the sums advanced to them by the Massachusetts Commissioners. They returned by the way of Albany to Derryfield in New Hampshire, after an absence of about four months.

The unhappy want of political concert between the Colonies at this period is curiously illustrated by the fact, that the party of Indians, who had plundered and captured Stark and his companions, travelled with them to Albany, and there, without molestation, made sale of the very furs, which they had taken from these citizens of a sister province in time of peace; — for this adventure preceded by four years the breaking out of the war of 1756.

Stark was accustomed, throughout his life, to attach no small importance to this incident in his youthful history. During the three or four months, which he passed among the Indians, he carefully observed their manners and character; and acquired a practical knowledge on these points, of great value to a frontier partisan. He appears to have caught the humor of the Indians, and to have known how to approach them on the side of their prejudices. He was ordered by them to hoe their corn. Well aware that they regarded labor of this kind as fit only for squaws and slaves, he took care to cut up the corn and spare the weeds, in order to give them a suitable idea of his want of skill in unmanly labor. As this experiment upon their good nature did not



answer its desired object, he threw his hoe into the river, declaring "it was the business, not of warriors, but of squaws to hoe corn." This spirited deportment gained him the title of young chief, and the honor of adoption into the tribe. He never ceased to recur with pleasure to the incidents of his captivity among the St. Francis Indians, and to maintain, that he received more genuine kindness from them, than he ever knew prisoners of war to receive from any civilized nation. The practice of ransoming the captives had already taken much from the horrors of Indian warfare. Before this practice had rendered the lives of prisoners valuable to the savages, the cruelties inflicted by them on those, who fell into their hands, are known to have been of the most revolting character.

The ill success of this expedition furnished new reasons for undertaking another, the next year, to the head waters of the Androscoggin, in order to raise from the proceeds of his hunting a sum of money to enable him to discharge his debt to the Massachusetts Commissioners. The report, which he brought back from this and his former excursion to the upper Coos country, determined the General Court of New Hampshire to explore it. A company was enlisted for this purpose, under Colonel Lovell, and John Stark was engaged as the guide. They commenced

their march from Concord, on the 10th of March, reached Piermont on the 17th, and, after passing one day in making observations upon the country, returned to Concord on the 23d. This country, however, was claimed by the Indians, and had never been brought within the acknowledged limits of the English governments. Foreseeing the mischiefs which would result to the Colomes by a forcible occupation of it, on the part of the people of New Hampshire, the Governor of Massachusetts used his influence with the Governor of New Hampshire, to obtain a postponement of the measure. In the year 1754 a report reached the English settlements, that the French were building a fort in this coveted region. A party of thirty men was despatched by the Governor of New Hampshire, with a flag of truce, to remonstrate against this proceeding. John Stark was selected as the guide of the expedition, and conducted the party to the upper Coos, by way of the Little Ox-Bow, being the same route which he had travelled before, as a captive of the Indians. They found no traces of the French in the country, and were the first party from the Colonies, which explored the fertile meadows on the banks of the Connecticut, where the flourishing towns of Haverhill and Newbury are now situated.

In the year 1754, the great Seven Years' War in reality commenced. It grew out of the strug-



gle between the British and the French for the possession of North America. The British having preceded the French in occupying the better portions of the coast, the French turned their attention to the interior; and made it their object, by means of the St. Lawrence, the Lakes, the Ohio, and Mississippi, and a chain of posts judiciously established along this line of water communication, to prevent the progress of the English westward. The Ohio Company was formed in 1749, and was the first link in the chain of causes, which brought on the rupture. In the year 1754 the memorable project of a union of the Colonies with a view to their defence against the French and Indians was matured at Albany, and signed on the 4th of July; and on the same day Colonel Washington was obliged to capitulate to the French and Indians at Fort Necessity. A very extensive plan of campaign was projected for the year 1755, consisting of three parts. The first was an expedition against Fort Duquesne, to be conducted by General Braddock with troops from England; the second was an attempt upon Fort Niagara, to be made by the regular forces raised in the Colonies, and Indians; and the third was an expedition against Crown Point, to be carried on exclusively by New England troops, raised for that purpose.

A corps of rangers was enlisted in New Hampshire for service in the last expedition, by Robert Rogers, who acquired great reputation as a partisan officer in the progress of the war. Stark's experience on scouting parties obviously fitted him for this service; and his character was already so well established, that he received a commission as a lieutenant in the regiment, which was commanded by Colonel Blanchard. regiment was first ordered into the Coos country, and directed to burn the meadows, preparatory to building a fort. But at Governor Shirley's instance, before reaching their place of destination, the order was countermanded, and they were directed to repair to the army assembled against Crown Point, by the way of Number Four and Albany. At the time the troops arrived at headquarters, General Johnson was encamped on Lake George. The New Hampshire regiment was stationed by him at Fort Edward, a position which had been taken up by General Lyman, at the landing-place on the east side of the Hudson. It was the design of General Johnson, about the beginning of September, to move against Crown Point and Ticonderoga, a post about fifteen miles south of Crown Point, which, he had understood, had been fortified by the French. The movement of the Anglo-American army was, however, anticipated by the advance of the Baron Dieskau, the French general.



This officer had lately arrived at Montreal, with a body of French troops. His instructions directed him to reduce the English post at Oswego; but the news of the movement against Crown Point having reached Montreal about the time of the Baron Dieskau's arrival, and having produced alarm there, the Baron was importuned to pass up Lake Champlain with his forces, to resist the advancing Anglo-American army. This was accordingly done; the Baron transported his troops to Fort Frederic (Crown Point), and, having waited there for some time the approach of the English army, resolved to march against them. He accordingly embarked two thousand men in boats from Crown Point, and landing at South Bay marched on towards Fort Edward, where the New Hampshire rangers were stationed. When within two miles of the fort, he communicated his design of assaulting it to his troops. The Canadians and Indians in his army, dreading the effects of the cannon of the fort, were unwilling to make the attempt, but expressed their readiness to march against the main body encamped at the Lake, and, as it was understood, without lines or artillery. On this representation, the Baron changed his course and marched against the camp. Intelligence meantime had reached the camp.

that the French had landed at South Bay, and were marching upon Fort Edward. Two mes-

sengers were despatched by General Johnson to the Fort with this intelligence. One of these messengers was intercepted and killed; and the other returned to the camp with information, that he had discovered the French about four miles to the northward of the Fort. It was resolved, in council of war, to send a strong detachment to the relief of the Fort. A thousand men were detached from the army, with two hundred Indians, for this service, and placed under the command of Colonel Ephraim Williams, a brave Massachusetts officer. Baron Dieskau had posted his troops advantageously in a defile. Deceived by the small number of men apparently opposed to him, the ardor of Colonel Williams and his troops betrayed him into an ambuscade. Baron Dieskau had reserved his regular troops in the centre for the main attack, and ordered the Canadians and French to enclose the Anglo-Americans on the flanks. The Baron, with a view to a complete surprise, had ordered the Canadians and Indians to reserve their fire, till they should hear the attack of the main body in the centre. Hendricks, the Mohawk chief, attached to Colone! Williams's party, perceived the approaches of the Canadian Indians, and brought on the engagement. It was severe, and bravely contested; but the French force being nearly double of the Anglo-American, the latter was obliged to retreat,

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with the loss of Colonel Williams, the gallant officer in command, and of Hendricks, the Mohawk chief. M. de St. Pierre, the French officer in command of the Canadian Indians, was also killed. The loss was considerable on both sides.

We trust we shall be pardoned for pausing a moment in the narration, to pay a deserved tribute to the memory of Colonel Ephraim Williams.

He was a native of Newton, near Boston; but his father, Colonel Ephraim Williams the elder, was one of the earliest settlers of Stockbridge. Colonel Williams the son, being of an adventurous disposition, for several years in early life followed the seas. In his different voyages to Europe, he visited England, Spain, and Holland, and acquired the information and accomplishments of an observant traveller. Having, at the request of his father, determined to establish himself at home, and possessing a decided military taste, he entered the army enlisted for the war (that of 1744), then raging between England and France, and commanded a company raised in New England on what was called the Canada service. He was afterwards placed in command of the line of Massachusetts forts, on the west side of Connecticut river. While he held this command. his principal station was Fort Hoosac, on the bank of the Hoosac river, in the present town of Adams, about three miles and a half east of Williamstown. There was also a small fort at Williamstown, under his command. The first settlements, in this part of the country, grew up under the protection of these forts. Colonel Williams was the witness of the efforts, the hardships, and the perils of the early settlers; and, forming a just anticipation of the future importance of this part of the country, he conceived the design of making provision for the means of education in this quarter of the Commonwealth.

After the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, Colonel Williams resided chiefly at Hatfield, in the county of Hampshire. On the breaking out of the war in 1755, his high military character obtained him the command of a regiment, which was attached to the army under General Johnson, destined against Crown Point. While at Albany, on his way to head-quarters, a presentiment of his approaching fate seems to have taken possession of him, and on the 22d of July, 1755, he made his will. He fell by a musket-shot through his head, on the memorable 8th of September, in the engagement already spoken of. He was at this time scarcely passed forty years of age. His person was large and commanding. He had a strong taste for books, and habitually lamented the want of an academical education. His address and manners were remarkably engaging. In the general Court of Massachusetts, he possessed a greater personal influence than



any other individual, and in the army he was beloved by the soldiers. Having no family, he appropriated, with wise liberality, the greater part of his property to the foundation of "a Free School in a township west of Fort Massachusetts." The property bequeathed was not very large; but, by judicious management, by legislative aid, and private subscriptions, it proved adequate to the establishment of the Free School, subsequently the College, situated in Williamstown; which has long enjoyed a high character among the institutions for education in the country, and will transmit the name of its gallant, patriotic, and unfortunate founder, in grateful and enduring remembrance.

The fortune of the day, disastrous at first to the Anglo-American army, by the loss of Colonel Williams and the repulse of his detachment, was soon reversed. The retreating troops were met by a party sent out to their aid, and, falling back with them on the main body, awaited the approach of the enemy on the borders of the Lake. Johnson was advantageously posted. A deep, woody swamp covered his flanks, and in front, behind a breastwork of trees, he had mounted several cannon, opportunely received from Fort Edward two days before. This fact had escaped the observation of the French spies. The army of Baron Dieskau came to a halt; the retreating Provincials recovered their spirits, and opposed a manful resistance to

the approaching enemy. The Canadians and Indians were dismayed at the appearance of artillery within the breastwork, and, at the first discharge of the cannon, fled to the swamps. They were soon followed by the main body in a disorderly retreat. The American army instantly pursued, and completed the rout of the enemy. The Baron himself, wounded in the leg, was found leaning on the stump of a tree entirely alone, on the field where, but a few hours before, he had commanded an army flushed with success. While feeling in his pocket for his watch, to surrender it to the soldier who had surprised him, the latter, supposing him to be in search of a pistol, discharged his musket at him, and gave him a wound, which eventually proved mortal. He lived however to reach England. This soldier is believed to have been General Seth Pomroy of Northampton.

Baron Dieskau was conducted a prisoner to the English camp; and, the pursuit not being continued, the remains of his army rallied upon the precise spot, where the party of Colonel Williams had been defeated in the morning. At this juncture a detachment of the New Hampshire troops at Fort Edward, about two hundred strong, on their march to the relief of the main body, fell in with the remnants of the French army and put them completely to rout. Captain McGinnis, the brave commander of the party, unfortunately lost his life in the moment of victory.

Thus were fought on the same day, and upon the same field, three several battles, with the loss of three commanders, and an Indian chief. General Johnson himself was wounded. The hill overlooking the defile, where Colonel Williams met his fate, is still called French Mountain; and the spot on which he fell is known as Williams's Rock. Close by the road, and on its north side, is a circular pond, two or three hundred feet in diameter, shaped like a bowl, into which the dead bodies of both parties were thrown in undistinguished confusion. From that day to the present, it has borne the name of the Bloody Pond.

Such was the introduction of Stark to the perils of regular warfare; and with the momentous events of this day the campaign began and closed. The advantages gained by General Johnson, who was created a baronet for his success, were not followed up by the pursuit of the original objects of the expedition; and with the exception of six hundred men who were retained to garrison Fort Edward and Fort William Henry, which was built on the shore of Lake George and near the site of Johnson's encampment, the army was discharged. Colonel Blanchard's regiment was among those disbanded, and, with the other officers composing it, Lieutenant Stark returned home.

It was, however, but for a brief enjoyment of the repose of private life. Although the leading

operations of the war were suspended by the sea son, it was judged expedient, that a full company of rangers should be attached to the garrisons, left at the forts between Lake George and the Hudson. Major Rogers was employed by Governor Shirley to recruit such a company, which he did principally in New Hampshire; and such was his confidence in Stark, that he bestowed on him again the commission of second lieutenant. By the express directions of Governor Shirley, none were to be enlisted in this corps, but men accustomed to travel ling and hunting in the woods, and men in whose courage and fidelity entire confidence could be placed. The Journal of his service with these rangers was published by Major Rogers in 1765, at London, and presents an exceedingly interesting view of their severe and perilous warfare. Their duty was to reconnoitre the hostile posts and armies, to surprise straggling parties, and obtain prisoners, to effect diversions by false attacks, to serve as guides and couriers. They acted in a corps independent of the line of the army, under their own officers, and with their own regulations, as prescribed by their gallant leader, and still preserved in his Journal alluded to. It was made their duty, by their instructions, "from time to time, to use their best endeavours to distress the French and their allies, by sacking, burning, and destroying their houses, barns, barracks, canoes, and batteaux, and



by killing their cattle of every kind; and at all times to endeavour to way ay, attack, and destroy their convoys of provision by land and water, in any part of the country where they could be found."

Majors Rogers divided his corps. A part of it marched under Lieutenant Richard Rogers to Albany, and the other half, under his own immediate command, directed their line of march by the way of Number Four. Shaping their course from this place toward Crown Point, they pursued their way "through vast forests and over lofty mountains." On the second day of the march, Lieutenant Stark fell sick, and was obliged, with a guard of six men, to repair to Fort Edward. On their way to the fort, they fell in with and eluded a scouting party of four hundred hostile Indians.

The Journal of Major Rogers above mentioned, details the operations and adventures of his corps during the season, and cannot be perused without lively interest; but our limits compel us to pass briefly over them. So important were the services of the corps of rangers, that it was judged expedient by General Abercromby, who superseded Governor Shirley in the command, to double its numbers. A new company was accordingly raised, and placed under the command of Richard Rogers brother of the Major. The place of first lieutenant in the old company, being thus vacated, was filled by the promotion of Second Lieutenant

tenant Stark. In the month of August, a company of Stockbridge Indians, led by officers of their own tribe, commissioned by Governor Shirley, was taken into the service and acted occasionally in connexion with the rangers, whose skill as woodsmen was in no degree inferior to that, which was possessed by these natives of the forest. Early in August, the Earl of Loudoun took the command. By his direction, the rangers departed on a scouting expedition in two parties, one headed by Rogers and the other by Stark, in which they ascended Lake Champlain a considerable distance, reconnoitring the enemy's positions, and lying in wait for straggling parties. They did not return to the fort, till the end of September. From this time to the close of the season, the rangers were on continual service, exploring the woods, procuring information, and bringing in prisoners. On the 19th of November they made an excursion for six days, down the lake. Captain Abercromby, aid-de-camp and nephew of the General, had the curiosity, notwithstanding the severity of the season in this high latitude, to accompany the party. Nothing was effected in a military way, beyond obtaining a sight of the French garrison at Crown Point; but the young officer was delighted with the novelties of the scout, and with the romantic and noble scenery, through which the ran gers conducted him. At the close of the season

the troops were principally drawn off to Albany; but the rangers remained on duty at Forts William Henry and Edward. They were joined, at the end of the year, by two additional companies of rangers from Halifax, under Captains Hobbs and

Spikeman.

Early in January, 1757, a party of the rangers was detached on an expedition down the Lake, which ended in an engagement of great severity, in which we behold clear indications of the future hero of Bennington. On the 15th of January, a party consisting of Major Robert Rogers, his Lieutenant, John Stark, Ensign Page of Richard Rogers's company, and fifty privates, marched from their station at Fort Edward to Fort William Henry, where they were employed two days in preparing snow-shoes and provisions for their excursion They were joined on the 17th by Captain Spikeman, and sixteen officers and men from his company; by Ensign Rogers, with two men of Captain Hobbs's company, and a volunteer of the 44th Regiment. The party proceeded down Lake George on the ice, and at night encamped on the east side of the First Narrows. Some of the men, lamed by the exertions of the first day, were obliged to turn back; and the party was thus reduced to seventy-four men, officers included. The march was continued for the three succeeding days, on the Lake, and on the land by means of

snow-shoes. On the twentieth they encamped at night, within three miles of Lake Champlain. On the twenty-first day they marched in an easterly direction, till they reached the Lake, half way between Crown Point and Ticonderoga, when they discovered a sled, passing on the ice from the former to the latter. Lieutenant Stark, with twenty men, was ordered to intercept the sled in front. Major Rogers, with another party, threw himself in the rear, to cut off its retreat, leaving Captain Spikeman with the centre. Rogers from his position soon discovered ten other sleds passing down the Lake, of which he endeavoured to apprize Stark, before he should show himself on the ice, but without success. The moment Stark was seen, the sleds hastily turned back toward Ticonderoga. Rogers's party pursued them, took seven prisoners, three sleds, and six horses; the rest escaped. From their prisoners they learned, that there was a large body of French troops, Canadians and Indians, at Ticonderoga, who were amply supplied with provisions, and equipped for service at a moment's warning.

Not doubting, from this information, that the news of their presence in the neighbourhood would be carried by those who had escaped, and would cause them to be immediately pursued, Major Rogers gave orders to his party to retreat with all expedition to the station they had occupied



the night before, where their fires were still burning, and to prepare for battle by drying their guns,
as it was a rainy day. They commenced this
march in the rangers' manner, single file, the
Major in front and Lieutenant Stark in the rear.

In this manner they passed a mile over broken ground and crossed a valley fifteen rods in breadth, when the front, having gained the summit of the opposite hill on the west side, fell in with the enemy drawn up in the form of a crescent, with a view to surround the party of rangers. At the moment of making the discovery, Major Rogers's party received the discharge of the enemy at least two hundred strong, and at a distance of not more than five yards from the nearest and thirty yard; from the rear of the party. The first fire proved fatal to Lieutenant Kennedy and a private, and wounded several, among others Major Rogers himself in the head. Major Rogers ordered his party to retreat to the opposite hill, where Lieutenant Stark and Ensign Brewer, who commanded the rear, had already posted themselves, to cover the retreat. Rogers was closely pursued; Captain Spikeman and some others were killed, and several were made prisoners. But the steady fire, kept up by Lieutenant Stark and his men from the hill, by which a number of the enemy were killed, enabled Rogers and the survivors of his party to place themselves to advantage. A hasty disposi

tion was then made, by the reduced band of rangers. Stark with Ensign Rogers took a position in the centre; Sergeants Walker and Phillips, (the atter a half-breed,) acting on the reserve, to protect the flanks, and watch the enemy's motions. They were scarcely formed, before the French attempted to flank them; but a prompt and vigorous fire from the reserve drove back the flanking party with loss. A formidable assault was then made in front; but the rangers, having the advantage of the ground, and being sheltered by large trees, from which they kept up a continual fire, repelled the attack. Another attempt was made to surround the rangers, but without success.

In this manner the action, which began at two o'clock in the afternoon, was kept up till sunset, when Major Rogers received a wound through his wrist, which prevented him from holding his gun. It is related, on the authority of Eastman of Concord, New Hampshire, who was a private in Stark's command in the action, that when Major Rogers received his second wound, he was inclined to order a retreat. Lieutenant Stark, then almost the only officer not wounded, declared that he would shoot the first man who fled, that they had a good position, and he would fight till dark and then retreat; and that in this course lay their only chance for safety. At this moment, the lock of his gun was broken by a shot from the enemy;

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but, seeing a Frenchman fall at the same time, he sprang forward, seized his gun, and continued the action. Shute, another private in the party, of Concord, New Hampshire, lately deceased, was struck by a ball in the head and made senseless, about the time that Rogers was wounded in the wrist. On coming to himself, he perceived one of the party engaged in rather a singular operation of surgery. He was cutting off Major Rogers's queue to stop the hole in his wrist, through which the ball had passed.

The enemy used every artifice to induce the rangers to submit. He assured them, at one time, that large reinforcements were at hand, by whom they would be cut to pieces without mercy, and that if they surrendered they should be treated with kindness. He called on Rogers by name, and assured him of his esteem and friendship, and expressed his regret that his brave companions in arms should persist in maintaining the contest, at the hazard of certain death. But these blandishments were as unavailing as the superior physical nower of the enemy; and, after Major Rogers's second wound had disabled him, the contest was kept up by Lieutenant Stark with equal bravery and conduct, till at the approach of night the fire of the enemy ceased, and the rangers were able to take up their retreat in safety.

The rangers were much weakened by the loss of men killed, and they had a great number too severely wounded to travel without extreme difficulty and the assistance of their comrades. Still, however, they were so near the French fort, that it was deemed absolutely necessary to make the best of their way during the night. Perceiving a large fire in the woods, which they supposed to be that of a hostile party, they made a long circuit in the night, and found themselves in the morning six miles south of the advanced guard of the French, on Lake George. The wounded were unable to advance farther on foot, and they were still forty miles from Fort William Henry.

In this distressing state of affairs, Lieutenant Stark volunteered with two of his men, to proceed to the fort and return with sleighs for the wounded. The snow was four feet deep on a level, and could be traversed only in snow-shoes. Notwithstanding their efforts and exhaustion the preceding day and night, Stark and his companions reached the fort, at a distance of forty miles, by evening. They got back to their companions with a sleigh and a small reinforcing party by the next morning. The party, reduced to forty-eight effective and six wounded men, with the prisoners they had taken from the convoy, reached the fort in safety, the same evening.

Before the sleigh came to their relief, the party, looking back upon the ice, saw a dark object following them. Supposing it might be one of their stragglers, the sleigh, on its arrival, was sent for him. It proved to be one of their party (Joshua Martin of Goffstown, New Hampshire), whose hipjoint had been shattered by a ball, which passed through his body. He had been left for dead on the field of battle, but recovering himself, he had kindled a fire in the night; and, thus being kept from freezing, was enabled to drag himself after them to the Lake. This was the fire, which the retreating rangers had supposed to belong to a hostile camp. The loss of time occasioned by the circuitous line of their retreat enabled Martin. badly wounded as he was, to overtake them. He was so exhausted, that he sunk down the moment the relief reached him. He was transported, with his disabled comrades, to the fort, recovered from his wounds, served through the war, and died at an advanced age at Goffstown.

In this severe affair, the rangers, out of seventy-eight men, had fourteen killed, six wounded, and six taken prisoners. The force of the enemy engaged amounted to two hundred and fifty, of which, according to a statement subsequently made by the enemy to Major Rogers, one hundred and sixteen were killed or mortally wounded. A large share of the honor of the day unquestionably be-

longs to Stark. After the first partial success against the convoy, it was recommended by the council of officers to retreat, by a different route from that by which they came; a settled practice of warfare borrowed by the rangers from the Indians. Had they pursued this prudent course, they would have escaped the battle. Rogers, however, rendered confident by a long series of successful adventures, and relying on the terrors, with which his rangers had inspired the enemy, declared that they would not dare pursue him, and took the same route back. The valor and resolution of Stark and his division of the little party evidently saved the whole band from destruction, when they fell in with the overwhelming force of the enemy. After Captain Spikeman was killed and Rogers was disabled by his wounds, Stark's fortitude and perseverance prevented the party from throwing away their lives, in a panic flight before a victorious enemy; and, by volunteering to travel forty miles on snow-shoes and accomplishing the journey in a day, after the toils of the preceding days and nights, he brought off the wounded in safety. On the reorganization of the corps, Stark received the justly merited promotion to the rank of Captain, in the place of Spikeman, who was killed. The whole party were honorably noticed by the commander-in-chief.

In the month of March, 1757, Fort William Henry was saved by the forethought and vigilance of Captain Stark, then, in the absence of Major Rogers, acting commander-in-chief of the rangers. While going the rounds on the evening of the 16th, he overheard some of his rangers, planning a celebration of St. Patrick's (the following) day. A large portion of this corps were, like himself, of Irish origin. Knowing that there were also a great many Irish among the regular troops, he justly foresaw the danger, to which the post would be exposed, at the close of a day to be spent in excess and intoxication. He accordingly gave directions to the sutler that no spirituous liquors should be issued, except by authority of written orders from himself; and when applied to for these orders, he pleaded the lameness of his wrist, produced by a wound, as an excuse for not giving them. In this way he kept the rangers sober. The Irish troops of the regular army, forming a part of the garrison, celebrated the day with the usual license and excess. The French, acquainted with the Irish custom, and calculating upon the consequent disability of the garrison, planned an attack for that night. They were, however, repulsed by Stark's sober rangers, while the stupefied regulars were coming to their senses.

In the month of April, Stark's company of rangers, with several others, was ordered from

the position on the lakes, to Albany and New York, whence it was embarked for Halifax, as a part of the expedition, against that place, under the Earl of Loudoun. Captain Stark himself, being on a scouting party at the time the troops broke up from their quarters, did not rejoin his company till it reached New York. He was there seized with the smallpox, and thus prevented from proceeding to Halifax. At the close of the season, his company was again ordered to its old position on the lakes, and was rejoined by him at Albany. During the winter, he was stationed at Fort Edward. Fort William Henry had capitulated to the French in the course of the summer, and many of the unhappy prisoners of war experienced the fate, too often attending capitulation to an army composed in part of savages. They were dragged from their ranks and tomahawked, in the sight of the French officers.

The force of rangers was very much increased for the year 1758, by the enlistment of four new companies of a hundred men each, and a company of Indians to be employed in the ranging service. The four companies were promptly enlisted in New England. This increase of force formed a part of the prodigious military effort, made both by the British government and the Colonies for the approaching campaign. Bent on the acquisition of Canada, at whatever cost, the governments

on both sides of the Atlantic made exertions unparalleled in former wars. Massachusetts resolved to raise seven thousand men, Connecticut five thousand, and New Hampshire three thousand; a force which, in proportion to the population, would have been deemed very great in France, under the government of Napoleon. The Earl of Loudoun having returned to England, General Abercromby was intrusted with the command-inchief of the entire forces in the field, amounting in troops of all descriptions to fifty thousand men, the largest army, which had ever been arrayed in America.

Captain Stark remained with his company of rangers at or near Fort Edward, actively engaged in the arduous duties of that service. A severe action was fought on the 13th of March, by a detachment of about one hundred and eighty men under Major Rogers, against six hundred French and Canadians. A portion of Captain Stark's company was detached on this unequal service, but he himself was not included in it. On the retreat of the remnant of the brave but overmatched party, he was sent out with a small band, to aid their return.

The force collected for the expedition against Ticonderoga was about sixteen thousand men, and on the morning of the 5th July, 1758, it was put in motion, in batteaux, to descend Lake George

"The order of march," says Major Rogers, in his Journal, "exhibited a splendid military show." The regular troops occupied the centre, and the provincials the wings. For the advanced guard, the light infantry flanked the right, and the rangers the left, of Colonel Broadstreet's batteau-men.

In this order the army proceeded until dark, down Lake George, to Sabbath-day Point. Here it halted to refresh. On this momentous evening, in expectation of the impending battle, Lord Howe invited Captain Stark to sup with him in his tent. With that amiable familiarity which endeared him to the army, this gallant and lamented nobleman, reposing upon a bear-skin (his camp-bed), with the brave partisan from the wilds of New Hampshire, conversed with him on the position of the fort and the mode of attack. The imagination of the young and high-bred officer, fresh from the gay circles of the British court, could not but be impressed with the grandeur and solemnity of the scene, as they moved with their mighty host, beneath the darkness of night, across the inland waters of this untrodden wilderness. After a few hours of repose, the march was resumed. Lord Howe led the van in a large boat, accompanied with a guard of rangers and boat-men. Lieutenant Holmes was sent forward to reconnoitre the landing-place, and ascertain if the enemy were posted there. He returned at daybreak to the army, then off the

Blue Mountain, within four miles of the landingplace, which he reported to be in possession of the French, as he discovered by their fires. At daybreak, Lord Howe proceeded with a few officers to within a quarter of a mile of the landing, to make a personal reconnoissance. He found it in possession of the enemy, and returned to aid in

the landing of the troops below.

The landing was effected by noon of the 6th, and the rangers were posted on the left wing. After the fatal lesson of Braddock's defeat, the British generals learned the necessity of clearing the woods before the main body, by throwing out the rangers as a flank or advanced guard. On the present occasion Major Rogers was directed to open the way from Lake George to the plains of Ticonderoga. route was intersected by a creek, crossed by a bridge, which was to be passed by the advancing army. Rogers led the van of the rangers, and Stark their rear, two hundred strong. approaching the bridge, Rogers perceived it to be occupied by Canadians and Indians. He came to a halt, for a few moments, by which the rear, in full march under Stark, was thrown upon the front. Stark, not comprehending or heeding the cause of the halt, declared "it was no time for delay," and pushed forward to the bridge. The enemy fled before him, and the passage was left free to the advancing columns. Lord Howe commanded the centre. At the head of his columns, he fell in with a part of the advanced guard of the enemy, which had lost its way in the woods, on the retreat from Lake George. He immediately attacked and dispersed it; but, exposing himself with too much eagerness, he fell at the first fire of the enemy.

This gallant nobleman was in the thirty-fourth year of his age, of the most promising military talents, and greatly endeared by his estimable qualities, to both the British and provincial troops. The General Court of Massachusetts, from respect to his memory, appropriated two hundred and fifty pounds sterling, for the erection of his monument in Westminster Abbey. He was the brother of Sir William Howe, who commanded the British army, in the war of the Revolution. Stark was warmly attached to Lord Howe; and had attracted no little of his notice. They were nearly of an age, and Lord Howe had occasionally joined the midnight scouts of the rangers, to learn their modes of warfare and acquire a knowledge of the country. His death was deeply felt in the army, and by none more truly deplored than by Stark; who lived, however, to find a consolation for the untimely fate of his noble friend, in the reflection, during the progress of the revolutionary war, that, had he lived.

his talents would have been exerted against the

patriotic cause.

With this inauspicious event commenced a series of disasters to the British arms. No further progress was made on the 6th; the advanced parties of the American army were called in, and the French kept themselves within their intrenchments. On the morning of the 7th, the American army was again in motion. The rangers were ordered to the post which they had occupied the day before, and Captain Stark, with a strong detachment from the corps, was sent forward, with the aid of the general-in-chief and the chief engineer, to reconnoitre the fort. In the course of the day, the whole army was moved up to the Saw-Mills, the advanced post of the rangers. The party of Captain Stark returned from their reconnoissance in the evening, and the whole army passed the night on their arms. All the accounts, as well of the reconnoitring party, as of the prisoners, agreed in representing the force of the French, commanded by the Marquis de Montcalm, as greatly inferior to the English. It consisted of six thousand men, of which eight battalions were regular troops; the rest Canadians and Indians. They were encamped before the fort, and were busily occupied in intrenching themselves behind a breast-work of large trees, felled and piled together to the height of eight or nine feet, so as to present a front of sharpened branches and interwoven limbs, almost impervious to an advancing enemy. Three thousand men, principally Canadians and French, had been detached by the Marquis de Montcálm to the Mohawk River, to assist the operations in that quarter; but these had been recalled, on the advance of the English, and were expected every hour.

Nothing but an apathy and indecision, difficult to be conceived, sufficiently explain the tardiness of the British movements. Contemporary writers ascribe it to the incapacity of the commander-in-chief, General Abercromby. Stark was ever of opinion, that the disasters of the expedition were in no small degree owing to the fall of Lord Howe. If the British army, after a sufficient reconnoissance of the ground, had pushed on at the moment of landing, and before the French, who were without artillery, had had time to intrench themselves within a formidable breastwork of trees, the success of the attack cannot be doubted. But the delay was fatal. On the morning of the 8th, the army was again in motion. At sunrise Sir William Johnson arrived. with a party of four hundred and forty Indians. At seven the troops moved forward, Stark's division of rangers in the van. His lieutenant led the advanced guard, which, within three hun

dred yards of the intrenchments, was fired upon by a party of French of two hundred men in ambush. The remainder of the rangers came up to support their comrades, and the enemy were driven in. The light infantry now moved up to the right of the rangers, and the batteau men to the left, and continued to skirmish with the advanced parties of the enemy, but without the loss of a man.

While the rangers were thus employed, the main body of the army was forming. At ten o'clock the rangers were ordered to drive in the advanced parties of the enemy, preparatory to a general assault. This service was gallantly performed, and a party of the regular troops moved up to the breast-work. The obstacles which impeded the advance, and the height of the breast-work, did not prevent the attempt to scale it; but Major Proby, who led the pickets engaged in this perilous service, was killed within a few yards of the works. The attempt was repeated several times for four hours. But the trees, which had been piled up on their approach, broke the advancing columns; it was found impossible to carry the breast-work; and the general-in-chief ordered a retreat. It was the duty of the rangers to be the last, as they had been the first, at the post of danger; and Major Roggers and Captain Stark were employed till late

in the evening, in bringing up the rear. There fell on this disastrous and bloody day, five hundred regulars killed and twelve hundred wounded; of the provincials, one hundred killed and two hundred and fifty wounded; leaving the British army still at twice the French force. Notwithstanding this, a precipitate retreat was ordered; the attempt on the fort was abandoned; and by evening the next day, the whole army had returned to their camp, at the south end of Lake George. Here the troops received the thanks of the commanding general, for their good behavior; a compliment which certainly it was not in the power of the army to return to the Commanding General.

No further attempt was made upon Ticonderoga the present season. The disgrace of this repulse was partly redeemed by the success of an expedition against Fort Frontenac, by a party of three thousand, detached under Colonel Broadstreet to the Mohawk. No general operations were attempted by the main army, and the brunt of the service fell upon the rangers, who were engaged in their accustomed duty in observing the enemy, reconnoitring his posts, watching his movements, and waylaying his foraging parties.

Severe battles were frequently fought on these occasions. On the 8th of August an affair of more than ordinary importance took place. A

party of rangers and regulars, amounting in the whole to five or six hundred, had been employed to scour the woods. On their return, they were met by a party of the enemy of about equal force. In the progress of this action Major Israel Putnam, commanding a company of rangers, fell into the hands of the enemy. He was tied to a tree by the Indians, and for a long time was within the fire of both parties, and otherwise exposed to peril and outrage from the savage foe. The particulars of this occurrence, with the subsequent captivity and sufferings of Putnam, form one of the most extraordinary and romantic incidents in American history, and will be particularly narrated in another volume of this work. The field was obstinately contested on both sides. Four several charges were made by the enemy on the rangers; but officers and men maintained their ground with singular firmness and intrepidity, and at the end of an hour the enemy broke and dispersed. About one tenth of the Anglo-American party were killed, wounded, and miss ing; but of the latter, twenty-one came in the next day.

At the close of this campaign, Captain Stark obtained a furlough; and returning home was married to Elizabeth Page, daughter of Captain Page of Dunbarton. In the spring a new enlistment of rangers was made in New Hamp

shire, and Captain John Stark was again found at the seat of war, at the head of his company. Sir Jeffery Amherst, who, at the close of the last campaign, had distinguished himself by the capture of Louisburg, was now advanced to the chief command of the forces on the Canadian frontier. The plan of the campaign aimed at the acquisition of the entire possessions of France on the American continent. The expedition against Quebec, a leading feature of the plan, consisted of two parts. General Wolfe, with a large force assembled at Louisburg, was to move up the St. Lawrence; and Sir Jeffery Amherst, after effecting the reduction of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, was to proceed by Lake Champlain and the St. John's into Canada, and unite his arms with those of General Wolfe under the walls of Quebec.

The plan was admirably conceived, and ample means seem to have been at the command of Sir Jeffery Amherst to effect his part of it. But the evil genius of delay appeared to control his movements. It was the 22d of July, before he was prepared to cross Lake George, and move upon Ticonderoga. Captain Stark, as usual, was in the advance with his rangers. The plan of attack was pretty nearly the same as that of the preceding year; but the forces of the enemy being withdrawn to Quebec, the garrisons were

not sufficiently strong to resist the English army, and successively retreated, without a battle, from Ticonderoga and Crown Point.

Instead of pursuing his success and moving up the lake, Sir Jeffery Amherst deemed it necessary to intrench himself in this quarter, till he could be assured of a superiority on the water, and eventually went into winter-quarters, without making any effort to unite his forces with those of General Wolfe. To this failure on his part, all the embarrassments of that gallant officer's movements before Quebec were ascribed.

As soon as he had taken up the station at Crown Point, General Amherst directed Captain Stark, with two hundred rangers, to open a road from that post to Number Four, on the Connecticut River, a distance of about eighty miles, through an almost pathless wilderness. In consequence of being employed on this arduous service, he was spared the painful necessity of joining Major Rogers, in his expedition against the St. Francis Indians, in which their settlement was burned, and a large portion of the tribe destroyed. This tribe, from its position on the frontier, had, from the earliest settlement of the country, been employed by the French as instru ments of havoc and desolation, for the purpose of striking terror into the minds of the British colonists, and preventing their extension to the north and west. The whole border was filled with traditions of massacre, plunder, and captivity worse than death, suffered by the inhabitants at the hands of the St. Francis Indians; and now that it was necessary to open the road to Canada, there were no compunctious visitings of conscience, to avert the fate of this feared and hated tribe.

The expedition against them by Rogers, with a detachment of the rangers, was conducted with singular boldness and success; and the sufferings of his party, on their return, seem almost to exceed the capacity of human endurance. Captain Stark, as we have seen in the early part of this Memoir, had experienced a great deal of kindness from these Indians, during his captivity among them in his youth. His frankness and intrepidity won their favor, and he was adopted as a young warrior into their tribe. He never forgot, through life, the kindness he then received from them; and although, during the war, of which we have been narrating some of the incidents, he was continually engaged with their hostile scouting parties, he rejoiced, that his detachment upon another service spared him the painful necessity of assisting in their destruction.

After completing the road from Crown Point to Number Four, the army being withdrawn to winter-quarters, Captain Stark returned home. In the spring of 1760, he received orders from Sir

Jeffery Amherst, to direct the recruiting service in the province of New Hampshire. As he does not appear to have been attached to the corps of rangers, which was marched into Canada in the course of the campaign of this year, it is probable he was stationed during the summer at Crown Point.

The events of this year brought the war, in this part of America, to a close. A portion of the rangers were ordered to Detroit, to engage in the military operations in that quarter; but Stark, who had formed domestic relations, deemed himself justified in retiring from the service, to which he had already devoted some of the best years of his life, and of which the substantial objects had been attained, in the reduction of Canada. In addition to this consideration, discontents existed in the minds of the provincial troops. Their officers had reason to complain of the preference claimed and enjoyed by the officers of the British army. The superiority, arrogated by regular troops over colonial forces and especially militia drafts, appeared in its most offensive form on the part of the young Englishmen, who held important commands in the English army, and who manifested toward the Americans the offensive hauteur, which forms so conspicuous a trait in their national character. The rustic manners and uncouth appearance of the provincial corps, many of whom came fresh from the

plough and the workshop to the camp, furnished constant matter of ridicule to the young men, who had received their military education in the drawing rooms of London. To men like Stark, who had passed their youth amidst the hardships of a frontier life, who had served with bravery, conduct, and success, in many a severe campaign, and who felt conscious that they possessed the substantial qualities of the officer, proved in all the hardships and achievements of the actual service, this arrogant assumption of the young men, who had purchased commissions in the English army, was intolerable. He retired from the service, however, in possession of the good will of General Amherst, who, in accepting his resignation, assured him of the continuance of his protection, and promised him that he should resume his rank in the army, whenever he chose to rejoin it.

This it is very likely he would have done, had the war continued; but the restoration of peace left him to the undisturbed pursuit of his private occupations. No event is recorded of public interest, in his life, during the period, which elapsed from the close of the Seven Years' War till the commencement of the Revolution. When the controversy assumed a decided form and seemed drawing to a crisis, a portion of the American officers, who had served with success and honor

in the British army, were drawn, partly it may be supposed under the influence of habits of military subordination, to espouse the royal side. They could not, as men who had received commissions in the British army, who were still in the receipt of their half-pay on the peace establishment, and had been brought up in the habits of uninquiring acquiescence, which belong to military life, conceive of a state of things, in which they could lawfully turn their arms against their sovereign. Under the influence of these feelings, Major Rogers, the famous chief of rangers, under whose command Stark had served in the Seven Years' War, having passed the greater portion of his time in England after the peace of 1763, was induced, on the commencement of hostilities in 1775, to adopt the British side. In like manner, William Stark, the elder brother of the hero of our narrative, in no degree his inferior in courage and hardihood. but possessed of less of the moral firmness of the patriot soldier, was lost to the cause of the Revolution. He had served with reputation as an officer of rangers, had been present at the surrender of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, had assisted in the capture of Louisburg by General Amherst, and had fought with Wolfe at Quebec. At the commencement of the revolutionary war, he applied for the command of one of Assembly gave the preference to another colonel, and William Stark listened to the overtures made him by the enemy, and passed into the British service. He became a colonel in the English army, and was killed by a fall from his horse on Long Island. On the eve of his departure for New York, he communicated his intentions to his brother, to whom the same overtures had been made, and urged him to follow his example. But John steadily resisted the proposal, and parted with his brother never to meet again.

These facts are referred to, in order to show, that the course pursued by the gallant and patriotic officers who had distinguished themselves in the Seven Years' War, and who hastened to range themselves on the side of the Revolution, was not a hasty and unreflecting adhesion to the popular cause. They prove that the question was presented to the mind of Stark as one to be deliberately weighed, and that he decided for his country, against the influence of authority and temptation to which many a mind would have yielded, and with the immediate sacrifice of his emoluments as a British officer. His mind, however, was made up from the first. He uniformly maintained the popular side in the great public controversy, which commenced with the attempted establishment of a new colonial system, after

the downfall of the French power on the American continent. He formed the rallying-point of his neighbors and fellow-citizens, and gave the tone to the public sentiment in his vicinity. On the organization of the Committees of Safety in 1774, an organization whose efficiency and extent have not as yet been duly appreciated and set forth, Stark became a member of one of those bodies, for the town in which he lived. In this capacity, he exhibited the strength and wisdom of his character, signalizing his moderation as well as his firmness. He spared no pains to produce a cordial unanimity among the people, and to win over the wavering and disaffected to the popular cause. His military experience enabled him to act with effect, in preparing measures for a vigorous demonstration of strength, when the crisis should arrive.

Careful reflection upon the nature of the art of war will lead us to the conclusion, that the time, at which the revolutionary contest was brought on, was all-important to its success. If, instead of ten or twelve years from the close of the Seven Years' War, a period three or four times as long had elapsed before the commencement of the patriotic struggle, it is manifest, that all the military experience of the colonies would have passed away, and all the confidence and courage inspired by the conscious possession of tried leaders would

have vanished. It is not unlikely, that the recurrence of a war every fifteen or twenty years is absolutely necessary, to keep up the military character of a people, and prevent the traditionary portions of the military art, and that skill, which is acquired by actual service, from dying out. Whatever may be thought of this as a general principle, it is notorious that the recent experience of the Seven Years' War had a most salutary influence upon the character of the revolutionary struggle The officers who had been trained in its arduous campaigns with few exceptions espoused the patriotic cause. So great had been the numbers of those who from 1754 to 1762 had served in every part of the country, from Nova Scotia to Florida, that there was found some one, and often several, of them in every town and settlement throughout the colony, to whom the idea of war, of its alarm, its preparation, its organization, its resources, its exposures, its prizes, was familiar.

Were the records of the Seven Years' War preserved to us, as amply as those of the Revolution, they would probably disclose, to say the least, as great an amount of military service, to which we are now perhaps likely to do but partial justice, for the want of more detailed accounts, and the superior interest attached to the revolutionary annals. But facts which occasionally come to light show the prodigious number of men who were en-

gaged in the military service in that war. In a recent obituary notice of an individual of the town of Grafton in Worcester county, who served in the Seven Years' War, it is stated, that thirty persons from this town were killed in the course of that war. There is no reason to suppose, that Grafton furnished more than its share of soldiers, or that an unusual proportion of those whom it furnished were killed. The population of this town in 1820

was but eleven hundred and fifty-four.

Of those officers of the Seven Years' War, whose experience and character contributed to give the first impulse to the revolutionary struggle, Stark was among the most prompt and efficient. The existing state of things in New Hampshire, as in the other New England colonies, furnished better materials for the speedy organization of a large force, than would at first be supposed. By the old militia law, every male inhabitant, from the age of sixteen to that of sixty, was obliged to be provided with a musket and bayonet, a knapsack. cartridge-box, a pound of powder, twenty bullets, and twelve flints. Every town was obliged to keep in readiness a barrel of powder, two hundred pounds of lead, and three hundred flints for every sixty men; besides a quantity of arms and ammunition for the supply of those, who were unable to provide themselves with the necessary articles. Those persons, who by reason of dignity and station were exempt from the discharge of ordinary military duty, were obliged to keep on hand the statutory arms and ammunition. These requisitions were not strictly observed in time of peace, either by the towns or individuals. But Governor Wentworth had a few years before, by the appointment of officers and the review of the regiments, infused new life into the militia system of New Hampshire. The provincial Convention, which assembled at Exeter in January, 1775, in their address to their constituents, exhorted them, among other things, to devote themselves to exercise in the military art, that they might be ready to repel invasion. In pursuance of this exhortation, voluntary associations were formed, among the militia of the province, for the purpose of practice in military manœuvres and drilling, under the command of those whose experience in former wars qualified them for this duty. In addition to all this, the Committees of Inspection and Safety made it their duty, by personal application to every individual, to enforce his preparation for the anticipated struggle. In the discharge of all these voluntary duties, Stark was distinguished for his promptitude, zeal, and influence among his ellow-citizens.

The commencement of hostilities, on the 19th of April, 1775, can hardly be said to have taken the country unprepared. The tidings spread with

rapidity through the continent, and from every part of New England thousands of volunteers rushed to the scene of action. The greater part of the adjacent colonies received the intelligence within twenty-four hours. Within ten minutes after its reception, Stark had mounted his horse, and was on his way toward the sea-coast, having directed the volunteers of his neighborhood to rendezvous at Medford, near Boston. About twelve hundred men hastened, on the first alarm, from those parts of New Hampshire which bordered on Massachusetts, and, in pursuance of the advice of Stark, concentrated themselves at Medford. Of these a portion returned, but enough remained to constitute two regiments, which were organized under the authority of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts. Of the first of these regiments Stark was unanimously elected colonel, Isaac Wyman lieutenant-colonel, and Andrew M'Clary major. The late Major-General Dearborn commanded a company in this regiment. As soon as the Provincial Congress of New Hampshire met. they voted to enlist two thousand men for eight months, of whom the two regiments, already embodied at the theatre of war, were to make a part. The residue formed a third regiment. Colonels Stark and Reed were confirmed in the command of the first two regiments, and Enoch Poor was appointed to the third. The greater part of the two New Hampshire regiments was stationed at Medford; but a detachment from them formed a part of the left wing of the army and was posted at Chelsea, and another part, we believe, was stationed near the Inman Farm, at Cambridge. Colonel Stark's quarters were at Medford. Having left home at a few minutes' notice, he went back to New Hampshire, after the organization of the regiment, to arrange his affairs; and, after two days devoted to that object, returned to his command.

Shortly after rejoining his regiment, he was directed by General Ward to take a small escort and examine Noddle's Island, with a view to ascertain the practicability of establishing a battery there for the annoyance of the British shipping. He repaired to the island with Major M'Clary, a few other officers, and a small party, crossing over from Chelsea. While engaged in reconnoitring the ground, they perceived a party of the enemy, who had landed upon the island with the intention of cutting them off, by getting possession of their boat. After exchanging a few shots, the British party retired, and left Colonel Stark and his companions in the undisturbed possession of their boat.

On the ever memorable seventeenth of June, 1775, Stark's regiment formed the left of the American line. The part of the British troops opposed

to it consisted of the Welsh Fusileers, who had distinguished themselves at the battle of Minden, and were considered one of the finest corps in the English army. It is not our present purpose to relate in detail the entire history of this glorious battle. A fitter opportunity for this attempt may present itself, in connexion with the biography of some one of the distinguished men, who exercised the chief command of the day. But among all who stood forward at this critical conjuncture, and bore their part in a conflict, which exerted an allimportant influence upon the fate of the war, none is entitled to higher commendation than Stark. It is related, that when General Gage, reconnoiting the scene of the approaching action from Boston, before the battle commenced, was asked whether he thought the Americans would wait the assault of the royal troops, he replied, that "they would if one John Stark were among them, for he was a brave fellow, and had served under him at Lake George in 1758 and 1759."

Colonel Prescott, who commanded at Bunker's Hill, having perceived at about nine o'clock of the morning of the eventful day the necessity of a reinforcement, despatched Major Brooks to the head-quarters of General Ward at Cambridge, to make a representation to that effect. The matter was referred to a council of war, and by their advice orders were sent to Colonel Stark at Med-

ford to reinforce Colonel Prescott with two hundred men from the New Hampshire troops. This order was promptly obeyed, and the detachment required was sent under Lieutenant-Colonel Wyman to the scene of action. The men were in an imperfect state of preparation for so unexpected a call. Every man was immediately supplied with two flints and with a gill of powder and fifteen balls to make into cartridges. Nearly all of them, however, were unprovided with cartridgeboxes, and made use of powder-horns as a substitute. The guns were of different sizes, and the men were obliged in many cases to hammer their balls to a proper size. At a later hour another order arrived by express, directing Colonel Stark to repair with his whole regiment to Charlestown.

At an early period of the day, Captain Knowlton had been posted with a detachment of Connecticut troops, on the extreme left of the American line behind a rail fence, between the Mystic River and the road. The troops pulled up another fence in the neighborhood, placed it in the ground near that which covered their front, and filled the interval between them with the newmown grass. A portion of this fence had a low stone wall beneath it. The whole formed a very inadequate breast-work. On the arrival of the New Hampshire troops at the scene of action (which was after the British troops and reinforcements had

landed in Charlestown, but before their advance from the place of disembarkation commenced), a portion of them were detached by General Putnam to work upon the intrenchments of Bunker's Hill. properly so called. The residue, under their Colonels, Stark and Reed, were ordered to take post at Captain Knowlton's position just described. On receiving this order, Colonel Stark made a brief and animated address to his men, and marched them off to the station designated. He had not precipitated his march from Medford, distant about five miles from the heights of Charlestown, and accordingly brought his men to the ground unexhausted and vigorous, justly stating that "one fresh man in battle is better than ten who are fatigued."

The British right wing, consisting of the fifth regiment, a regiment of grenadiers, and one of light infantry, moved forward to the attack of the Americans behind the rail fence, a portion of the light companies at the same time attempting to turn the extreme left of the American line. General Howe commanded on this portion of the field. The general order given to the American troops, to reserve their fire till the near approach of the enemy, had been repeated and enforced by Stark. This order was strictly obeyed, so that when his men threw in their volley, the veterans of the British army recoiled before it. The same

result was produced by the destructive fire from within the redoubt and along the line upon the declivity of the hill, and compelled the enemy precipitately to fall back. A second and third charge were followed by the same effect; nor was it till the British army, strengthened by powerful reinforcements, was brought up for a fourth time to the assault, that they succeeded in forcing from the field the scanty numbers opposed to them, of whom many were exhausted by the labors of the preceding night, and of the day passed without refreshment.

In the heat of the action it was reported to Colonel Stark that his son, a young man of sixteen who had followed him to the field, had just been killed. He remarked to the person, who brought him the information, that it was not the moment to talk of private affairs, when the enemy was in force in front; and ordered him back to his duty. The report, however, proved erroneous, and his son served through the war as a staff-officer.

After the fate of the day was decided, Stark drew off his regiment in such order that he was not pursued. The following extract from a letter written by him the second day after the battle deserves preservation, as an authentic document relative to this most important event.

"TO THE HON. MATTHEW THORNTON, EXETER.

"Medford, June 19, 1775.

"SIR,

"I embrace this opportunity by Colonel Holland, to give you some particulars of an engagement, which was fought on the 17th instant, between the British troops and the Americans.

"On the 16th at evening, a detachment of the Massachusetts line marched, by the General's order, to make an intrenchment upon a hill in Charlestown, called Charlestown Hill, near Boston, where they intrenched that night without interruption, but were attacked on the morning of the 17th very warmly, by the ships of war in Charlestown River and the batteries in Boston. Upon this, I was ordered by the General, to send a detachment of two hundred men with proper officers to their assistance, which order I promptly obeyed, and appointed Lieutenant-Colonel Wyman to command the same. At two o'clock in the afternoon, an express arrived for my whole regiment to proceed to Charlestown to oppose the British, who were landing on Charlestown Point. Accordingly we proceeded and the battle soon came on, in which a number of officers and men of my regiment were killed and wounded. The officers killed were Major M'Clary by a cannonball, and Captain Baldwin and Lieutenant Scott by small arms.

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"The whole number, including officers,
killed and missing
"Wounded 45
"Total killed, wounded, and missing . 60
"By Colonel Reed's desire, I transmit the
account of those who suffered, belonging to that
portion of his regiment, who were engaged, viz.
"Killed
"Wounded . 29
"Missing 1
33
"Total in both regiments 93
"But we remain in good spirits, being well sat-
sfied, that where we have lost one, the enemy nave lost three.
"I am, Sir, with great respect,
Yours and the country's
and the country's

to serve, in a good cause,
"John Stark."

The fate of Major M'Clary demands a brief

The fate of Major M'Clary demands a brief commemoration. He was a person of commanding stature and Stentorian voice, which was heard amidst the roar of the cannon and musketry, exhorting his men to the discharge of their duty. After the retreat, he hastened to Medford to procure a supply of dressings for the wounded. Re-

turning on this benevolent errand, he crossed again over Charlestown Neck to reconnoitre the British troops, which had now taken possession of the heights. Having accomplished that object, he was on his way back to join the retreat of his regiment in company with Lieutenant-Colonel Robinson, Captain Dearborn, and other officers To some remark made on the danger of crossing the neck, he replied, "The ball is not yet cast, which is commissioned to kill me." At that moment, a shot from the Glasgow destroyed him. Captain Baldwin, another meritorious officer in Stark's regiment, who fell on this occasion, had fought in twenty battles in the former wars. On no part of the line was the execution greater, than on that, where the New Hampshire troops were stationed. In an account sent from the British army, bearing date, Boston, 5th July, 1775, and published in London, we are told that the British light infantry were moved up "in companies against the grass fence, but could not penetrate it. Indeed, how could we penetrate it? Most of our grenadiers and light infantry, the moment of presenting themselves, lost threefourths and many nine-tenths of their men. Some had only eight or nine men in a company left. some only three, four, or five." \*

<sup>\*</sup> Detail and conduct of the American War. London. 1780. p. 13.

On the retreat from Bunker's Hill, our troops took post upon the heights in the neighborhood; the regiment of Stark on Winter Hill. The night succeeding the battle and the following day were passed in the labor of intrenching; but the experience of the 19th of April and the 17th of June deterred the British troops from any repetition of the attempt to penetrate into the interior, in this portion of the country. No important movement was made, on either side, for the rest of the season. At the close of the year the term for which the men had engaged had generally expired, and a reënlistment became necessary. Colonel Stark met with extraordinary success in engaging his men to continue in the service, and in a few days his regiment was again full

While the regiment of Stark was stationed at Winter Hill, an incident occurred, strikingly illustrative of his character. It is related in his Memoirs on the authority of the late Major Dow of Hampton Falls. The person, who had been appointed paymaster of the New Hampshire line, was unfriendly to Colonel Stark, and endeavored to embarrass the payment of his men, in order to create disaffection in the regiment. The troops were marched by companies, to receive their pay, to Medford, where the paymaster had stationed himself. He refused to pay them, on Vol. 1.

the ground that their pay-rolls were not made out in proper form. The men, highly dissatisfied, returned to their encampment; and the next day marched again to Medford, with new pay-rolls, made out (it was supposed) in the strictest form, but payment was again refused. The same thing was repeated on the third day; and the soldiers returned, ripe for mutiny, to the camp. They besieged the Colonel's quarters clamoring for payment. Colonel Stark was provoked at the vexatious delays, interposed by the paymaster, and declared that "as the regiment had made him three visits, he should make them one in return." He accordingly despatched a sergeant's guard, arrested the paymaster at his quarters in Medford, and brought him to camp, to the tune of the Rogue's March. On examination he could point out no fault in the roll, and the men were paid. Colonel Stark's conduct was submitted to a court of inquiry; but the paymaster had fallen, meantime, under strong suspicion of being a defaulter, and found it advisable to quit the army. The court of inquiry deemed it inexpedient to pursue the affair.

A portion of the officers and men in Stark's regiment had, in the course of the summer of 1775, enlisted as volunteers in the expedition, which was undertaken by direction of General Washington, under the command of Arnold, to

penetrate, by the way of the Kennebec, into Canada. Dearborn (a Major-General in the war of 1812), a distinguished Captain in Stark's regiment, shared the almost unexampled hardships of this march. Colonel Stark himself remained at his station on Winter Hill, till the evacuation of Boston by the British, in the month of March, 1776.

On the occurrence of that event, a small detachment of the army was left at Boston, under the command of General Ward, to complete the erection of the works there begun; while the main body marched to New York, under the command of General Washington. The regiment of Stark was among the troops, who proceeded to New York, and their Colonel was assiduously employed on his arrival under the orders of the commander-in-chief, in strengthening the defences of that place. In the month of May, his regiment was ordered to proceed, by the way of Albany, to join the American army in Canada. Stark came up with the army at St. John's, and thence advanced to the mouth of the river Sorel. The bold and not ill-conceived expedition against Canada, one of the earliest and most favorite projects of the Continental Congress, was now drawing to a close. The utmost that could be hoped was to prevent its being precipitated to a disastrous termination. General

Thomas had died of the small-pox at Sorel, after having raised the siege of Quebec, and retreated to that place. General Sullivan succeeded him in the command, and this circumstance, with the arrival of reinforcements, which raised the entire force of the Americans to four or five thousand men, gave new hopes of retrieving the fortunes of the expedition. General Sullivan deemed it expedient to execute the project of an attack upon the enemy's post at Three Rivers, suggested by Colonel St. Clair, and approved by General Thompson, who, for a few days, during the illness of General Thomas, had the command at Sorel.\* Stark remonstrated, in a council of war, against this expedition, as one requiring for its success a naval superiority upon the river, and the concurrence of too many contingent circumstances. But, it having been decided to pursue the attack, the principles of duty, which governed him while in the service, prompted him to contribute all in his power to its successful issue. The result, as is well known, was unfortunate.

On the return to Sorel of those, who escaped from the disaster of Three Rivers, it became necessary for the American army to retire from Canada. The retreat was conducted by General Sullivan with skill, in the face of a superior and

<sup>\*</sup> St. Clair's Narrative, p. 235.

triumphant force of the enemy. In fact it had been the wish of this commander to defend the post of Sorel; but he was overruled, in this rash purpose, by the unanimous opinion of his officers. It was but a few hours before the appearance of the enemy, that he was finally prevailed upon, by a council of war, to retire. The pursuit was not continued beyond Isle-aux-Noix, the Americans having the command of Lake Champlain. But, though unmolested by the enemy, the army of General Sullivan suffered severely by the small-pox. After passing the Lake, the regiment of Stark was stationed at Chimney Point, on the side of the Lake opposite to Crown Point, where the remainder of the army was posted. Here it was the opinion of Colonel Stark, that the army should make a stand. General Schuyler, who had assumed the command of the army, and all the general officers under him, thought otherwise, and it was determined in a council of war to fall back to Ticonderoga, contrary to the advice of several of the subordinate officers, who deemed it essential, for the protection of the country on the borders of the Lake, to hold Crown Point. This opinion they set forth in a written memorial addressed to the General, but without effect. On the 6th and 7th of July, 1776, the army reached Ticonderoga. On the following day, the Declaration of Independence was received and proclaimed to the army, who hailed it with shouts of applause. The regiment of Stark was stationed on a hill, distant about two miles from the fort, and which was named Mount Independence, in honor of the memorable event, which had just been proclaimed. Thus had Colonel Stark the satisfaction, on the theatre of his former military exploits, and sixteen years after he had been present with General Amherst at the taking of Ticonderoga from the French, to hear the Independence of his country proclaimed, at the head of a patriotic army. In a short period the command of the post devolved on General Gates. Upon his arrival at headquarters, a reorganization of the army took place, and Colonel Stark was appointed to the command of a brigade, with orders to clear and fortify Mount Independence, then a wilderness.

Nothing further of importance occurred on the northern frontier, in the course of the season After the disastrous occurrences in New York, General Gates was ordered to reinforce General Washington on the right bank of the Delaware. The regiment of Colonel Stark was among the troops, detached from the northern army for this purpose; and reached the head-quarters of the Commander-in-chief on the 20th of December. By this reinforcement the army of General Washington was swelled to about seven thousand

effective men. This was a period of deep and general despondency, and Washington felt the necessity of striking a bold stroke, which might have the effect of changing the gloomy aspect of affairs, and reviving the spirits of the country. In this design, an attack on all the enemy's posts upon the left bank of the Delaware was projected. Owing to the inclemency of the weather, and the state of the river, some portions of this plan miscarried; but that part of it, which was to be executed under the direct command of Washington, the attack upon Trenton, was completely successful. In this attack, General Sullivan commanded the right wing, and Stark, with his regiment, led the vanguard, and contributed his full share to this brilliant enterprise, in which twenty of the enemy were killed, and nearly one thousand made prisoners. On the part of the Americans, two persons only were killed. and four or five wounded. But the fact, that two were also frozen to death, shows the rigor of the night, under cover of which this coup de main was executed. On the eve of this affair, Colonel Stark, in allusion to the spirit, with which the contest had hitherto been carried on, as a war of posts and intrenchments, rather than of battles, thus expressed himself to the General; "Your men have long been accustomed to place dependence upon spades and pickaxes for safety.

But if you ever mean to establish the Independence of the United States, you must teach them to rely upon their fire-arms." Washington replied, "This is what we have agreed upon. We are to march to-morrow upon Trenton; you are to command the right-wing of the advanced guard, and General Greene the left." The Colonel rejoined, that he could not have been assigned to

a more acceptable station.

Colonel Stark accompanied Washington, when, a few days afterwards, he again crossed the Delaware. He was with him in the battle at Princeton, and remained with the army till the establishment of the head-quarters of General Washington at Morristown. The term for which his men had enlisted had expired before these last brulliant efforts of the American commander-in-chief. Stark, however, proposed to them a reënlistment for a short period; and his personal influence with his regiment induced them to a man to enter into a new engagment for six weeks. It was not easy, in the critical state of affairs at the time, to render a more important service to the country.

But, as this new enlistment was but for a few weeks, it became necessary to make a more permanent provision to recruit the ranks of the regiment. He was accordingly ordered to New Hampshire to perform that service. By the month of March, 1777, he had discharged the

duty so successfully, that his regiment was full. He immediately communicated this intelligence to the Council of New Hampshire and to General Washington. He repaired to Exeter to receive instructions from the authorities of New Hampshire, who were there assembled. While there he was informed, that a new list of promotions had been made, in which his name was omitted. and those of junior officers were found. He ascribed this neglect of what he conceived his just claims, to the unfriendly interposition of some officers of high rank and members of Congress. It was impossible for a man of his lofty spirit and unbending character to acquiesce in what he considered an injurious disregard of his fair pretensions to advancement. He immediately appeared before the Council, and also waited upon the Generals Sullivan and Poor. He stated the grounds of his dissatisfaction and his determination to retire from the army. Wishing them all possible success in the service of the country, he surrendered his commission and returned home, without any expectation of entering again into the ranks of the army. But, though dissatisfied with his own treatment, he was in no degree disaffected to the cause. He fitted out for the army all the members of his family, who were old enough to join it, and continued, as heretofore, by every means except his personal services

in the field, to promote the great cause of his country.

The retirement of Colonel Stark was not viewed with indifference. Generals Sullivan and Poor endeavored to dissuade him from executing his purpose. But he declared that an officer. who would not maintain his rank and assert his own rights, could not be trusted to vindicate those of his country. At the same time he pointed out to them the dangerous situation of Ticonderoga and the necessity of immediate relief, if the northern frontier was to be protected; and he declared his readiness again to take the field, whenever his country should require his services On his resignation, the Council and House of Delegates of New Hampshire expressed their sense of the value of his services, by the following vote, passed the 21st of March, 1777. "Voted, that the thanks of both Houses in convention be given to Colonel Stark for his good services in the present war; and that, from his early and steadfast attachment to the cause of his country, they make not the least doubt that his future conduct, in whatever state of life Providence may place him, will manifest the same noble disposition of mind." On the passage of this vote, the thanks of both Houses were presented to him by the President.

The time was fast approaching, when the confidence here expressed in the patriotism of Colonel Stark was to be justified in the most signal and gratifying manner. The war on the northern frontier had thus far been little else than a succession of disasters, and the summer of 1777 seemed likely to be distinguished by calamities not less distressing than those, which had attended the invasion of Canada. A formidable army was penetrating the States from Canada, and the plan of the campaign, as far as it was developed, threatened a junction of the force of Burgoyne with that of Sir William Howe, which would have effectually broken the States into two feeble and disconnected portions. The retreat of the American army from Ticonderoga, on the approach of Burgoyne, while it filled the public mind with dismay, as the surrender of a position on which the safety of the north depended, was regarded with gloomy apprehension, as the prelude to further reverses. The mind of Washington, however, by a happy forecast perceived a gleam of hope, even in this hour of despondence, and with a sort of prophetic skill seems to have foretold, with extraordinary precision, the auspicious change of affairs which was in store. In reply to a letter of General Schuyler, of the 17th of July, communicating the unfavorable state and prospects of the army, he says, "Though our

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affairs have for some days past worn a gloomy aspect, yet I look forward to a happy change. I trust General Burgoyne's army will meet sooner or later an effectual check; and, as I suggested before, that the success he has had will precipitate his ruin. From your accounts, he appears to be pursuing that line of conduct, which, of all others, is most favorable to us, I mean acting in detachment. This conduct will certainly give room for enterprise on our part, and expose his parties to great hazard. Could we be so happy as to cut one of them off, though it should not exceed four, five, or six hundred men, it would inspirit the people and do away much of their present anxiety. In such an event they would lose sight of past misfortunes, and, urged at the same time by a regard for their own security, they would fly to arms and afford every aid in their power."

It must be confessed that it required no ordinary share of fortitude, to find topics of consolation in the present state of affairs. The British were advancing with a well-appointed army into the heart of the country, under the conduct, as it was supposed, of the most skilful officers, confident of success and selected to finish the war. The army consisted in part of German troops, veterans of the Seven Years' War, under the command of a general of experience, conduct, and

valor. Nothing could have been more ample than the military supplies, the artillery, munitions, and stores, with which the army was provided. A considerable force of Canadians and American loyalists furnished the requisite spies, scouts, and rangers; and a numerous force of savages in their war dresses, with their peculiar weapons and native ferocity, increased the terrors of its approach. Its numbers were usually rated at ten thousand strong.

On the evacuation of Ticonderoga, and the further advance of such an army, the New England States, and particularly New Hampshire and Massachusetts, were filled with alarm. It was felt that their frontier was uncovered, and that strenuous and extraordinary efforts for the protection of the country were necessary. In New Hampshire, as being nearer the scene of danger, a proportionably greater anxiety was felt. The Committee of Safety of what was then called the New Hampshire Grants, the present State of Vermont, wrote in the most pressing terms to the New Hampshire Committee of Safety at Exeter, apprizing them, that, if assistance should not be sent to them, they should be forced to abandon the country and take refuge east of the Connecticut River. When these tidings reached Exeter, the Assembly had finished their spring session and had gone home. A summons from the Committee brought them together again, and in three days they took the most effectual and decisive steps for the defence of the country. Among the patriotic members of the Assembly, who signalized themselves on this occasion, none was more conspicuous than the late Governor Langdon. The members of that body were inclined to despond; the public credit was exhausted; and there were no means of supporting troops, if they could be raised. Meantime the defences of the frontier had fallen, and the enemy, with overwhelming force, was penetrating into the country. At this gloomy juncture, John Langdon, a merchant of Portsmouth, and speaker of the Assembly, thus addressed its members;

"I have three thousand dollars in hard money; I will pledge my plate for three thousand more; I have seventy hogsheads of Tobago rum, which shall be sold for the most it will bring. These are at the service of the state. If we succeed in defending our firesides and homes, I may be remunerated; if we do not, the property will be of no value to me. Our old friend Stark, who so nobly maintained the honor of our state at Bunker's Hill, may be safely intrusted with the conduct of the enterprise, and we will check the

progress of Burgoyne."

This proposal infused life into the measures of the Assembly. They formed the whole militia of the State into two brigades. Of the first they gave the command to William Whipple, of the second to John Stark. They ordered one fourth part of Stark's brigade and one fourth of three regiments of Whipple's to march immediately under the command of Stark, "to stop the progress of the enemy on our western frontiers." They ordered the militia officers to take away arms from all persons, who scrupled or refused to assist in defending the country; and appointed a day of fasting and prayer, which was observed with great solemnity.

But it was in the selection of the commander. who was to direct these measures of protection, that the great hope of the people, under Providence, rested. Stark was now called upon, sooner than he had anticipated, to digest his private griefs and hasten to the defence of his country. Knowing the confidence reposed in his firmness, fortitude, and military experience by all classes of the community, the Assembly deemed their work of preparation unfinished, till they could hold out his name, as the rallying-point to the people. Deeply wounded by the occurrences of the spring, he refused at first to accept the command of the troops; but consented at length to assume it, on condition, that he should not be obliged to join the main army, but be allowed to hang upon the wings of the enemy in the New Hampshire Grants, and to exercise his own discretion as to his movements, accountable to no one but the authorities of New Hampshire. His conditions were complied with, and he was, in the language of the original orders, directed to repair with a separate command, "to Charlestown on Connecticut river; there to consult with a committee from the New Hampshire Grants, respecting his future operations, and the supply of his men with provisions; to take the command of the militia and march into the Grants; to act in conjunction with the troops of that new State, or any other of the States, or the United States, or separately, as it should appear expedient to him, for the protection of the people and the annoyance of the enemy."

The appearance of their favorite commander filled the people with spirits. The militia took the field without hesitation. In a few days Stark proceeded to Charlestown; and, as fast as his men came in, he sent them forward to join the troops of the Grants under Colonel Warner, who had taken post at Manchester, twenty miles to the north of Bennington. Here Stark soon joined him, and met with General Lincoln, who had been sent from Stillwater by General Schuy.er, commander of the northern department, to conduct the militia to the west bank of the Hudson. Stark communicated the orders, under which he was acting from the authorities of New Hamp-

shire, stated his views of the dangerous consequences, to the people of Vermont, of removing his force from their borders, and declined obedience to General Schuyler's command. General Lincoln made known to General Schuyler and to Congress the result of his application. On the 19th of August, 1777, that body resolved, "that a copy of General Lincoln's letter be forthwith transmitted to the Council of New Hampshire, and that they be informed that the instructions, which General Stark says he received from them, are destructive of military subordination, and highly prejudicial to the common cause at this crisis; and that therefore they be desired to instruct General Stark to conform himself to the same rules which other General officers of the militia are subject to, whenever they are called out at the expense of the United Notwithstanding this disapprobation of States." the course pursued by General Stark and the correctness of the principles involved in the resolution of Congress, the refusal of the General to march his troops to the west of the Hudson was founded upon the soundest views of the state of things, and was productive of inestimable benefits to the country, as the event soon proved.

The levy of the militia, to which we have alluded, was ordered by the Assembly of New Hampshire, on a general consideration of the exposed condition of the western frontier of the State

after the abandonment of Tieonderoga by the American army. But events speedily occurred which showed the wisdom of these measures of preparation. At the very period when they were completed, General Burgoyne, filled with an overweening confidence in his superior strength, and greatly deceived as to the extent of the royalist party in the Colonies, disregarding the advice of Baron Riedesel, the commander-inchief of the German troops, detached Colonel Baum, with a party of six hundred men on an expedition, the object of which was, in the first sentence of the instructions given by General Burgoyne to the commander, stated to be, "to try the affections of the country, to disconcert the councils of the enemy, to mount Riedesel's dragoons, to complete Peters's corps (of loyalists), and to obtain large supplies of cattle, horses, and carriages." \*

These instructions bear date the 9th of August, and the detachment of Baum was put in motion, about the time of Stark's arrival at Bennington. The Commander-in-chief of the American army, probably apprized of this movement of the enemy,

<sup>\*</sup>The original of these instructions came into the possession of General Lincoln, and was by him deposited in the archives of the Massachusetts Historical Society. A copy of the document is found in their Collections, First Series, Vol. II. p. 25.

perceived the wisdom of Stark's dispositions, and approved his plan of operations. On the 13th of August, information reached General Stark, that a party of Indians attached to Baum's force had been perceived at Cambridge, about twelve miles northwest from Bennington. He immediately detached Lieutenant-Colonel Gregg; with two hundred men, to stop their march. In the course of the night, he was advised by express, that a large body of the enemy, with a train of artillery, was in the rear of the Indians, in full march for Bennington. He immediately rallied his brigade, with all the militia which had collected at Bennington. Orders were at the same time despatched to the officer in command of Colonel Warner's regiment at Manchester, to march that body of men down to Bennington, and an animated call was made upon all the neighboring militia. These various dispositions were carried promptly into effect.

On the morning of the 14th, Stark moved forward to the support of Colonel Gregg, with the entire force under his command. At the distance of four or five miles, he met the Colonel in full retreat, and the enemy within a mile of him. Stark instantly halted, and drew up his men in order of battle. The enemy, perceiving that he had taken a stand, immediately came to a halt on very advantageous ground and there intrenched themselves. Unable to draw them from their po-

sition, he fell back for a mile, leaving only a small party to skirmish with the enemy. This was done with considerable effect. Thirty of their force, with two Indian chiefs, were killed or wounded, without any loss on the American side.

The following day, the 15th, was rainy, and nothing was attempted beyond skirmishing with the enemy. This was done with spirit, and the Indians began to desert the army of Colonel Baum, "because," as they said, "the woods were filled with Yankees." This respite enabled the enemy to complete their breast-works, to apprize General Burgoyne of their situation, and to ask for reinforcements. Colonel Breyman, with an additional body of German troops, was immediately detached to the assistance of Baum.

On the morning of the 16th, General Stark was joined by Colonel Symonds, with a body of Berkshire militia, and made preparations for an attack, according to a plan proposed by the General and agreed upon in a council of war.

The German troops with their battery were advantageously posted upon a rising ground at a bend in the Wollamsac (a tributary of the Hoosac) on its north bank. The ground fell off to the north and west, a circumstance of which Stark skilfully took advantage. Peters's corps of Tories were intrenched on the other side of the stream, in lower ground, and nearly in front of

the German battery. The little river, that meanders through the scene of the action, is fordable in all places. Stark was encamped upon the same side of it as the Germans, but, owing to its serpentine course, it crossed his line of march twice on his way to their position. Their post was carefully reconnoitred at a mile's distance, and the plan of attack was arranged in the following manner. Colonel Nichols, with two hundred men, was detached to attack the rear of the enemy's left, and Colonel Herrick, with three hundred men, to fall upon the rear of their right, with orders to form a junction before they made the assault. Colonels Hubbard and Stickney were also ordered to advance with two hundred men on their right and one hundred in front, to divert their attention from the real point of attack. The action commenced at three o'clock in the afternoon on the rear of the enemy's left, when Colonel Nichols, with great precision, carried into effect the dispositions of the commander. His example was followed by every other portion of the little army. General Stark himself moved forward slowly in front, till he heard the sound of the guns from Colonel Nichols's party, when he rushed upon the Tories, and in a few moments the action became general. "It lasted," says Stark, in his official report, "two hours, and was the hottest I ever saw. It was like one continued clap of thunder." The

Indians, alarmed at the prospect of being enclosed between the parties of Nichols and Herrick, fled at the commencement of the action, their main principle of battle array being to contrive or to escape an ambush or an attack in the rear. The Tories were soon driven over the river, and were thus thrown in confusion on the Germans, who were forced from their breast-work. Baum made a brave and resolute defence. The German dragoons, with the discipline of veterans, preserved their ranks unbroken, and, after their ammunition was expended, were led to the charge by their Colonel with the sword; but they were overpowered and obliged to give way, leaving their artillery and baggage on the field.

They were well enclosed in two breast-works, which, owing to the rain on the 15th, they had constructed at leisure. But notwithstanding this protection, with the advantage of two pieces of cannon, arms and ammunition in perfect order, and an auxiliary force of Indians, they were driven from their intrenchments by a band of militia just brought to the field, poorly armed, with few bayonets, without field-pieces, and with little discipline. The superiority of numbers, on the part of the Americans, will, when these things are considered, hardly be thought to abate any thing from the praise due to the conduct of the commander, or the spirit and courage of his men.

The enemy being driven from the field, the militia dispersed to collect the plunder. Scarcely had they done so, before intelligence was brought, that a large reinforcement from the British army was on the march, and within two miles' distance This was the corps of Colonel Breyman, already mentioned, which had been despatched by General Burgoyne on receiving from Baum intelligence of his position. The rain of the preceding day and the badness of the roads had delayed his arrival: a circumstance which exercised a very important influence on the fate of the battle. On the approach of Breyman's reinforcements, the flying party of Baum made a rally, and the fortune of the day was for a moment in suspense. Stark made an effort to rally the militia; but happily at this juncture Colonel Warner's regiment came up fresh and not yet engaged, and fell with vigor upon the enemy.

This regiment, since the battle fought at Hubbardston, had been stationed at Manchester. It had been reduced, by the loss sustained in that action, to less than two hundred men. Warner, their Colonel, as we have seen, was at Bennington and was with General Stark on the 14th. The regiment at Manchester was under the command of Major Samuel Safford. In consequence of the absence of a large number of the men on a scouting party, and other causes, it was not pos-

· Too much praise cannot be bestowed on the conduct of those, who gained the battle of Bennington, officers and men. It is perhaps the most conspicuous example of the performance by militia of all that is expected of regular, veteran troops. The fortitude and resolution, with which the lines at Bunker's Hill were maintained, by recent recruits, against the assault of a powerful army of experienced soldiers, have always been regarded with admiration. But at Bennington the hardy yeomen of New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts, many of them fresh from the plough and unused to the camp, "advanced," as General Stark expresses it in his official letter, "through fire and smoke, and mounted breast-works, that were well fortified and defended with cannon."

Fortunately for the success of the battle, Stark was most ably seconded by the officers under him; every previous disposition of his little force was most faithfully executed. He expresses his particular obligations to Colonels Warner, and Herrick, "whose superior skill was of great service to him." Indeed the battle was planned and fought with a degree of military talent and science, which would have done no discredit to any service in Europe. A higher degree of discipline might have enabled the General to check the eagerness of his men to possess themselves of the spoils of victory; but his ability, even

in that moment of dispersion and under the flush of success, to meet and conquer a hostile reinforcement, evinces a judgment and resource not often equalled in partisan warfare.

In fact it would be the height of injustice not to recognise, in this battle, the marks of the master mind of the leader, which makes good officers and good soldiers out of any materials, and infuses its own spirit into all that surround it. This brilliant exploit was the work of Stark, from its inception to its achievement. His popular name called the militia together. His resolute will obtained him a separate commission, -at the expense, it is true, of a wise political principle, but on the present occasion, with the happiest effect. His firmness prevented him from being overruled by the influence of General Lincoln, which would have led him, with his troops, across the Hudson. How few are the men, who in such a crisis would not merely not have sought, but ac tually have repudiated, a junction with the main army! How few, who would not only have desired, but actually insisted on taking the responsibility of separate action! Having chosen the burden of acting alone, he acquitted himself in the discharge of his duty, with the spirit and vigor of a man, conscious of ability proportioned to the crisis. He advanced against the enemy with promptitude; sent forward a small force to reconnoitre and measure his strength; chose his ground deliberately and with skill; planned and fought the battle with gallantry and success. Pointing out the enemy to his soldiers, he declared to them, that "he would gain the victory over them in the approaching battle, or Molly Stark should be a widow that night." And this victory was gained by the simple force of judicious dispositions of his men, bravely executed.

The consequences of this battle were of great importance. It animated the hearts of the people, more than fulfilling, in this respect, the happy prediction of Washington. But its immediate effects were of the first moment. It not only cost the army of Burgoyne more than one thousand of his best troops, but it wholly deranged the plan of his campaign, and materially contributed to the loss of his army. By advancing beyond Ticonderoga, his communication with the country in his rear was interrupted. He relied on these lateral ex cursions to keep the population in alarm and to prevent their flocking to Gates. He also depended on procuring his supplies by such inroads into the country. The catastrophe of Baum's expedition, by which he hoped to furnish himself with an ample store of provisions collected at Bennington. disappointed that expectation, and compelled him to halt, till he could procure them in detail from other quarters, and thus retarded his advance

toward Albany for a month, during all which time the militia poured to the standard of General Gates, and placed him in a condition, to compel the surrender of the British army. In the Memoir of Baron Riedesel's expedition, written by the Baroness, it is stated that this judicious officer strongly remonstrated against despatching Baum, and the event of the expedition is declared "to have paralyzed at once the operations of the British army."

General Stark, on the achievement of his victory, communicated the intelligence of it to General Gates, by a letter bearing date three days after the battle. He also transmitted official information of it to the State authorities of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Vermont, whose troops were engaged with him in the contest. To each of these three States he sent trophies of the battle, — brazen drums, muskets, and swords taken from the field.

The following is a copy of General Stark's letter, accompanying the trophies sent by him to the Assembly of Massachusetts, and copied from the original in the public archives at Boston.

"Bennington, September 15th, 1777.

"General Stark begs leave to present to the State of the Massachusetts Bay, and pray their acceptance of the same, one Hessian gun and bayonet, one broad sword, one brass-barrelled drum,

and one grenadier's cap, taken from the enemy, in the memorable battle, fought at Wallomsac, on the 16th of August last; and requests that the samemay be kept in commemoration of that glorious victory, obtained over the enemy that day, by the united troops of that State, those of New Hampshire, and Vermont, which victory ought to be kept in memory, and handed down to futurity, as a lasting and laudable example for the sons and daughters of the victors, in order never to suffer themselves to become the prey of those mercenary tyrants and British sycophants, who are daily endeavoring to ruin and destroy us."

The General Court of Massachusetts was not in session on the receipt of this letter, and did not meet till the next December. On the 12th of that month, the following letter was addressed to General Stark, in behalf of the Assembly.

"Boston, 12th of December, 1777.

"SIR,

"The General Assembly of this State take the earliest opportunity, to acknowledge the receipt of your acceptable present, - the tokens of victory at the memorable battle of Bennington.

"The events of that day strongly mark the bravery of the men, who, unskilled in war, forced from their intrenchments a chosen number of veteran troops, of boasted Britons; as well as the address and valor of the General, who directed their movements and led them on to conquest. This signal exploit opened the way to a rapid succession of advantages most important to America.

"These trophies shall be safely deposited in the archives of the State, and there remind posterity of the irresistible power of the God of armies, and the honors due to the memory of the brave.

"Still attended with like successes, may you long enjoy the just rewards of a grateful country."

Together with this letter the following resolution was adopted.

"Resolved unanimously, that the Board of War of this State be and they hereby are directed, in the name of this Court, to present to the honorable Brigadier-General Stark a complete suit of clothes becoming his rank, together with a piece of linen; as a testimony of the high sense this Court have of the great and important services rendered by that officer."

The interesting trophies of the battle sent to Massachusetts are still preserved on the walls of her Senate-chamber, opposite to the chair of the President of that body.\*

<sup>\*</sup> We beg leave respectfully to suggest, that the name of John Stark, with the date of the battle of Benning ton, be placed beneath them.

But perhaps the most characteristic incident in the whole transaction, was the neglect of Stark to inform Congress of his victory. Slighted as he thought himself by that body, by the promotion of officers younger than himself, he had quitted the Continental service in disgust. While yet smarting under the recent sense of injury, he had sought the noblest revenge, that of redoubled exertions in the cause of his country; and having fulfilled this purpose to the utmost of the demands, either of ambition or patriotism, he disdained to make his success the instrument of a triumphant accommodation. He gained his victory two days before Congress had passed their resolution, censuring his assumption of a separate command. As his letters on the subject of his rank had lain on the table of Congress unanswered, he forbore to write to them, even to communicate the tidings of his triumph. Congress, however, wisely chose to take themselves the first step toward a reconciliation, and, on the 4th of October, passed the following resolution; "That the thanks of Congress be presented to General Stark of the New Hampshire militia, and the officers and troops under his command, for their brave and successful attack upon and victory over the enemy in their lines at Bennington; and that Brigadier Stark be appointed a Brigadier-General in the armies of the United States." On the last clause of the

resolution the ayes and nays were called, and one vote was given in the negative.\*

Several anecdotes of this affair have been recorded, and the following deserves a repetition. Among the reinforcements from Berkshire County eanre a clergyman, with a portion of his flock, resolved to make bare the arm of flesh against the enemies of the country. Before daylight on the morning of the 16th, he addressed the commander as follows. "We the people of Berkshire have been frequently called upon to fight, but have never been led against the enemy. We have now resolved, if you will not let us fight, never to turn out again." General Stark asked him, "if he wished to march then, when it was dark and rainy." "No," was the answer. "Then," continued Stark, "if the Lord should once more give us sunshine, and I do not give you fighting enough, I will never ask you to come again." - The weather cleared up in the course of the day, and the men of Berkshire followed their spiritual guide into action.+

We ought not wholly to dismiss this account of the battle of Bennington, without observing, that General Stark, in persisting in his refusal to march his troops from Vermont to the army under Gen-

<sup>\*</sup> Judge Chase of Maryland.

<sup>†</sup> This is believed to have been the Rev. Mr. Allen of Pittsfield.

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eral Schuyler, agreeably to the orders sent to that effect by General Lincoln, was not actuated merely by personal feelings, or a selfish purpose to maintain his separate command. He disapproved, on the soundest military principles, of Schuyler's plan of the campaign, which was to concentrate all the troops, which he could collect in front, and leave Burgoyne's rear undisturbed. Stark, on the contrary, saw, that nothing would more effectually weaken him, than to hang on his rear, and compel him to make strong detachments for observation and security. General Washington concurred in this view of the subject. Stark, however, had, on the 13th of August, and before the resolution of Congress censuring his conduct had passed, communicated his willingness to General Schuyler to cooperate with him in the impending crisis, without any regard to his personal griefs, and in any way, in which the public welfare might require it.

This most important affair, however, was but an incidental circumstance in the campaign. A general call had gone out to New England, in consequence of the disastrous downfall of Ticonderoga. General Stark remained nearly a month at Bennington after the battle, and received a reinforcement of one thousand of the militia; but, as his former troops had enlisted for a short period, their term of service had nearly expired. General Stark finally proceeded to head-quarters, and en-

tered the army of General Gates, at Behmus's Heights. But on the 18th of September, the period for which most of his men were drafted had expired. Gates was desirous to retain them, as he was in daily expectation of a battle. They were drawn up and harangued by him and by their own general, Stark, but without effect. They had been raised en masse, and had lest their homes greatly to their own-inconvenience, and their time had expired. They had expressly stipulated that they should know no commander but Stark, as he had stipulated that he should not be placed under the Continental officers. He was now willing to waive this scruple, but they were not. Finally, General Gates was already so strong, that it was not easy to make out a case of very urgent necessity. With all these excuses, it is not very surprising, that the militia insisted upon being marched home, and that all efforts to detain them were unavailing.

Scarcely had they started, when the action of the 19th was commenced. At the sound of the artillery many turned, and would have gone back to the army. But as the firing ceased, they resumed their homeward march. General Stark, holding no commission in the Continental army, and left without soldiers, returned, to make report of his campaign to the Council of New Hampshire. Wherever he went, he received demonstrates

strations of the popular gratitude; and Congress soon honored him with their thanks, and the rank in the army, of which he had thought himself, in the spring, injuriously deprived.

He now addressed himself, with new zeal and efficiency, to the public service. His victory at Bennington had added great influence to his name, and breathed hope and courage into the people. The militia were now ready to rise in all quarters, and pour into General Gates's army, in the undoubting confidence of the speedy destruction of Burgovne. General Stark was soon enabled to take the field, with a more numerous force than he had commanded before. Acting upon his former policy, he placed his army in the rear of the enemy, and wholly cut off their communications with Lake George and Canada. No circumstance contributed more to accelerate the fall of Burgoyne, as it baffled him in his attempted retreat, after the battle of the 4th of October. In fact, it nearly completed the circle in which Burgoyne was enclosed; and General Stark was of opinion, that he might have been compelled to surrender at discretion. The state of his army, as disclosed after its capitulation, puts this beyond doubt; but as all the substantial objects of such a surrender were attained by the capitulation, without the hazard of driving the enemy to despair, it was adopted as the safer course.

The war in this quarter being brought to a triumphant close, and General Stark reinstated in the Continental service, he repaired to New Hampshire for recruits and supplies. In a short time, his services were required by Congress on a proposed expedition, of which the history is wrapped in some obscurity. Congress, without consulting General Washington, conceived the plan of another expedition to Canada, to be commenced, like the former, in mid winter. Without any previous information, that such an expedition was intended, General Washington received a letter from the President of the Board of War, of the 24th of January, 1778, enclosing one of the same date to General Lasayette, requiring the immediate attendance of the latter on Congress, to receive his instructions, as commander-in-chief of the expedition. Generals Conway and Stark were to have been the second and third in command. Lafayette, after receiving his instructions, repaired to Albany, and there General Stark was directed to meet him. On their arrival, it became manifest that no preparations had been made for pursuing the project, and it was accordingly abandoned.

The command in the Northern department was intrusted to General Stark in the spring of 1778. The number of troops at his disposal was small, and he was obliged to protect with them an extensive and important frontier. His station at Albany

imposed on him the unpleasant duty of watching the disaffected, the spies, and the adventurers of all descriptions, that were preying on the public, in this important district. He was glad to escape from the annoyances resulting from his position, and willingly received an order to join General Gates in Rhode Island. Here he was posted at East Greenwich, where the militia were chiefly stationed, a post for which he was eminently qualified, by his popularity with that branch of the army. At the close of the campaign, he returned through Boston to New Hampshire, to enforce, by his presence and urgency, the call for recruits and supplies.

In the spring of 1779, he returned to the army in Rhode Island, and by direction of General Gates instituted a reconnoissance of the coast, from Mount Hope on the east, to Point Judith on the west. The military force in this district was small, and more than ordinary vigilance was required to keep up a proper observation of the enemy. Indications of a movement being perceived in the autumn, he removed his head-quarters from Providence to Point Judith, but rarely slept more than a single night in a place.

Late in October, the enemy were in motion, and the men of General Stark's command were for some days on constant duty. On the 10th of November they decamped from Rhode Island,

and early the next morning General Stark took possession of Newport, to protect the inhabitants of that place from plunder, and the other consequences of a change in the military occupation of the town. Shortly afterwards Generals Gates and Stark, with all their troops, excepting a small garrison, were ordered to reinforce General Washington in New Jersey. In the month of December the main army was thrown into two divisions for the winter, the Northern and the Southern; — the former of which was placed under General Heath, whose head-quarters were at West Point, and the latter under General Washington himself, whose head-quarters were fixed at Morristown, in New Jersey.

General Stark was employed by the Commanderin-chief, while the troops remained in winterquarters, on his accustomed errand to New England for recruits and supplies. In May, 1780, he
rejoined the army at Morristown. He was present
at the battle of Springfield, in New Jersey, which
occurred shortly after his return. At this period
Count Rochambeau, with his fleet, appeared on
the coast. Stark was sent into New England to
collect, if possible, a body of militia and volunteers, to reinforce the army at West Point. This
object he effected with his usual energy, and
reached West Point, while General Washington
was absent at Hartford, whither he had repaired

to hold a conference with Count Rochambeau, as to the combined operations of their forces. This was shortly before the defection of Arnold. Having delivered up his reinforcements, General Stark rejoined his division in New Jersey; but, in the month of September, he was ordered with his brigade to relieve General Saint Clair, who had occupied West Point with the troops of the Penn sylvania line, after Arnold's flight.

While at West Point, it became his painful duty to act on the court-martial, by which Major André was condemned as a spy. He felt the hardship of the case, but joined his brother officers, in the unanimous opinion, that the life of this unfortunate officer was forfeited by the laws of war, and that the interests of the country required, that the forfeit should be paid.

About this time General Washington, having formed a project to surprise Staten-Island, with a view to masking his intentions, ordered General Stark, with a detachment of twenty-five hundred men and a heavy train of wagons, to advance as near as possible to York Island, bring off all the corn and forage that could be collected, and hover about the approaches to the city, till they should be ordered back. The British appear to have suspected some concealed design, for they suffered this detachment to range the country up to Morrisania and Kingsbridge, and then quietly to return

with their booty. Having received a despatch from General Washington, brought by Colonel Humphreys across the ferry at Paulus Hook a stormy night, informing them, that the expedition against Staten-Island was abandoned, General Stark drew off his forces and returned to head-quarters. Shortly after this period, the army went into winter-quarters at West Point, New Windsor, and Fishkill.

During the summer of 1780, General Stark joined his brother officers in one of those touching and powerful appeals to Congress, on the distressed state of the army, with which the annals of the Revolution abound. The arrival of the French auxiliary forces brought home to the minds of the American soldiery, officers and men, a painful contrast of condition. The French troops were liberally paid in specie, the American troops received a compensation, at best inadequate, in paper which was worthless. The officers were almost without exception of a class of men, dependent on their industry and exertions in their various callings and pursuits, for the support of themselves and their families. While they were withdrawn from home, their professions, their farms, and pecuniary affairs necessarily went to decay, and their families were straitened. Their appointment as officers frequently yielded them not even the decent comforts of life for themselves at the camp. Men, "whose

tables once abounded with plenty and variety," were, in consequence of devoting themselves to the service of the country, compelled "to subsist, month after month, upon barely one ration of dry bread and meat, and that frequently of the meanest quality, their families looking to them in vain for their usual support, and their children for that education, to which they once had a title."

These painful expostulations produced for the present no beneficial effect. The difficulty was perhaps less than is generally supposed in the real poverty of the country, though it would be paradoxical to deny, that the country was poor. But the soil was as fertile then as now. The number of persons withdrawn from the peaceful and productive pursuits of life, and engaged in the military service of the country, was not large enough, either by the loss of their labor or the burden of their support, to make three millions of people poor. The regular foreign trade of the country was destroyed; but it had never yet been the great interest which it has since become, and its place was partly supplied by privateering, which was probably carried on much to the advantage of the United States. The subsistence of the enemy's armies was eventually a great branch of business, profitable to the country, although the circulation of the capitals employed in it, was of course impeded by political causes. All these considera-

tions show sufficiently, that the extreme public poverty, which forms so prominent and painful a topic in the state-papers of the Revolution, was a poverty not of the people but of the government. The government had no power. The property belonged to the people, and the government could not act on the people. Its only action was on the States, and the States in a mere financial view were metaphysical existences. They had no money, and were subject to no process. The bitterness of the experience, which our fathers had of the evils of such a system, explains their readiness, hightoned as they were on the subject of taxation, to clothe the new government, formed by the federal constitution, with a direct control, under constitutional limits, over the property of the citizen.

Failing in their application to Congress, some of the general officers from New England addressed a memorial to their several States, at the close of the year 1780. It is a powerful and interesting document. The name of General Greene stands at the head of the signers, and that of General Stark is among the number. This able document, like that last mentioned, may be found in the Appendix to the interesting Memoir of General Stark, to which we have so often had occasion to refer.

The health of General Stark was seriously impaired at the close of this campaign. He was now beyond the meridian of a life, almost the whole of

which had been a scene of hardship. One of the pioneers of civilization on a savage frontier, a hunter, a clearer of the soil, a ranger through the Seven Years' War, and already for five years engaged in that of the Revolution, it is not to be wondered at, that he found his constitution, strong as it was, not insensible to the trials, to which he subjected it. He thought seriously, at the close of the campaign of 1780, of retiring from the service, and endeavoring to restore his health, in the cultivation of his farm. He communicated his feelings to General Sullivan, with his views of the provision which Congress was bound to make for officers who retired disabled from the service. On the advice of General Sullivan, he went no further, than to ask a furlough for the winter. This was readily accorded to him. Relaxation from the pressure of active duty accomplished the only object he had in view in retiring; and he was prepared, on the return of spring, to resume his post, with recruited health, and new ardor in the public service.

In the month of June, 1781, General Stark was designated by the Commander-in-chief to command the Northern department. His head-quarters were fixed at Saratoga. The force at his control for the protection of the frontier was but inconsiderable, consisting of small detachments from the militia of New York, New Hampshire, and Massachu-

setts. The post was by no means an enviable one. The country was, in this part of it, overrun by spies and traitors. Robberies were of frequent occurrence, and unarmed citizens were sometimes surprised in their houses, and carried prisoners into Canada. General Schuyler's house was robbed, and two of his servants were carried into Canada. The General saved himself by retreating to his chamber, barricading his door, and firing upon the marauders. The militia of Albany were roused by the noise, but the plunderers escaped.

Shortly after General Stark established his head-quarters at Saratoga, a party of these brigands was discovered within the lines, unarmed, and a British commission was found upon their commander, Thomas Lovelace, a refugee from the States. He was brought before a court-martial, was tried, and condemned as a spy; and the sentence was carried into effect the following day. This individual having family connexions in the neighborhood, a remonstrance was addressed by them to the Commander-in-chief, and threats were circulated of procuring retaliation to be made. General Washington directed a copy of the proceedings to be sent to him; but no further notice was taken of the affair.

Another of the party, on a promise of pardon, gave information that they belonged to a band of fifteen, who had come from Canada, as plunderers

and spies, and scattered themselves through the country, to ascertain the state of affairs, and collect intelligence for the British general commanding in Canada, who meditated an incursion into New York. He stated, that they had left their boats on the shores of Lake George. A lieutenant was despatched, with a sufficient force, and with the prisoner as a guide, and ordered to wait five days, and surprise the party on their return to their boats. This officer found the bcats, but, after having waited one day, the prisoner escaped. Fearful for his safety, the officer disobeyed the orders which he had received, to wait five days, and immediately returned. It was afterwards ascertained, that the party returned in two days, and might all have been surprised.

General Stark was at his post at Saratoga, when the army of Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown. Writing to General Schuyler, a few weeks before that event, he expresses a confident assurance, that it would take place, and his regret at not sharing in the glory of the triumph, which he foretold for his country's arms. After this memorable event, which brought the war to a virtual close, and removed all danger of an inroad upon the Canada frontier, General Stark dismissed the militia to their homes, with his thanks for their good conduct; and, having taken measures for the security of the public property, was directed himself to repair to New

England by the way of Albany, and to exert himself during the winter in raising men and supplies for the ensuing campaign. He did not, however, himself take the field in 1782. The season passed away without active military operations; negotiations for peace were known to be on foot. and were brought to a provisional close, in the autumn of that year. These considerations, with the state of his health, greatly impaired by attacks of rheumatism, prevented his joining the army till ordered to do so by General Washington, in April, 1783. He reported himself at head-quarters on the day appointed, and received the thanks of General Washington for his punctuality. He exerted his best influence, with that of his brother officers, to allay the discontent which existed in the minds of the army, and which was studiously fomented by the famous Newburg Letters. He had, at a former period, been, on his own account, dissatisfied with the policy pursued by Congress; and some of his letters manifest the persuasion, on his part, that the interests of the army were not cordially promoted by that body. But his distrust was overcome by the progress of events. Congress had exerted itself to the utmost, to meet the reasonable wishes of officers and men, and Stark was particularly solicitous, that the close of the glorious drama should be sullied by no discreditable or unpatriotic act on the part of his associates.

When the army was finally disbanded, he retired to private life, carrying with him an honored name. He devoted himself, for the residue of his days, to the care of his farm, and the various duties, which devolved upon him, as the head of a numerous family. Leading the life of a real Cincinnatus, he declined associating himself with the Society, formed by the officers of the newly disbanded army, under that name. He shared the apprehensions, which prevailed so widely, of the dangerous tendency of that institution; and he had something severe and primitive in his taste, which disinclined him from its organization.

From the close of the revolutionary war, no incident of public importance marks the life of General Stark. He gradually descended the vale of years, an object of respect due to age, patriotism, integrity, and public service of the most brilliant cast, in trying times. His life was prolonged, beyond any expectation which could reasonably be formed of one, whose early years were one unbroken series of hardship and exposure. He attained the unusual age of ninety-four. For many years before his death, he had become, in the best sense of the word, a privileged character. One of the few surviving officers of the Revolution, he was regarded as the personification of its spirit, in the neighborhood in which he lived. He was visited by strangers; and the most eminent men in the country took a pride in paying him the homage of their respects. The Memoir of his Life contains letters of Messrs. Jefferson and Madison, expressive of the interest taken by these distinguished statesmen in this venerable hero, and their willingness to encourage an attachment on his part towards themselves.

The war of 1812 came upon General Stark at a period of advanced age, when it was, of course, impossible for him to engage for a third time in the public service; but he watched its progress with interest. He was informed that the fieldpieces, which he had taken at Bennington, were surrendered to the enemy at Detroit, when the army of General Hull capitulated at that place. The history of these cannon is somewhat singular. They were of French fabric, and, being found at Quebec, were brought by General Burgoyne from Canada, and formed the field artillery of Colonel Baum. Having been taken by General Stark at Bennington, they were inscribed with the date of the battle, August 16th, 1777. On the capitulation of Hull, they fell into the hands of the British, by whom they were transported to Fort George, at the mouth of the Niagara. On the fall of that fortress, they passed again into the possession of the Americans, and were sent by Major-General Dearborn to Sackett's Harbor, where they were used in firing a salute, on occasion of General

Harrison's victory over General Proctor, in the battle of the Thames. They are now said to be at Washington. When Stark heard, that "his guns," as he called them, were taken at Detroit, he expressed great feeling, and regretted that his age and infirmities prevented his taking the field himself.

In the year 1809, an invitation was sent to General Stark, by the inhabitants of Bennington and its vicinity, to join them in the celebration of the anniversary of the battle. More than sixty of those, who had been engaged in the action, attended the meeting, at which the arrangements for the celebration were made. But he was then eightyone years of age, and the state of his health prevented his accepting the invitation. The committee, in requesting his attendance, expressed the wish, that "the young men of Bennington might have the pleasure of seeing the man, who so gallantly fought to defend their sacred rights, their fathers and mothers, and protected them while lisping in infancy." In reply to this portion of the letter of invitation, the aged hero observed, "You say you wish your young men to see me; but you, who have seen me, can tell them, that I was never worth much for a show; and certainly cannot be worth their seeing now."

At length, on the 8th of May, 1822, his long and eventful life was brought to a close, at the age

of ninety-four. With the exception of Sumpter, he was the last of the American generals of the Revolution. His funeral was attended with military honors, by a large concourse of people, at the place of his residence, in Manchester on the Mermac river. His remains were deposited in a tomb, which, within a few years, had been erected at his request, upon a rising ground on the second bank of the river, and visible at a distance of four or five miles, up and down the Merrimac. On the 4th of July, 1829, a monument was erected by his family upon this spot. It consists of a block of granite in the form of an obelisk, with the simple inscription, "Major-General Stark."

In person, General Stark was of about the medium size, and well proportioned. In his early years he was remarkable for his strength, activity, and ability to bear fatigue. He was seasoned in his youth to the hunter's and woodman's life. In the French war, a single bear-skin and a roll of snow were not uncommonly the ranger's bed. He was remarkable through life for his kindness and hospitality, particularly to his reduced companions in arms. It is justly mentioned as an extraordinary circumstance in his life, that frequently as he was engaged in battle in two long wars, he never received a wound.

The Memoir, to which we have been so largely indebted, closes with the following sentences;—

"His character in his private was as unexceptionable as in his public life. His manners were frank and open; though tinged with an eccentricity peculiar to himself and useful to society. He sustained through life the reputation of a man of honor and integrity, friendly to the industrious and enterprising, — severe to the idle and unworthy. Society may venerate the memory of an honest citizen, and the nation that of a hero, whose eulogy is in the remembrance of his countrymen."

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Chailes B. Brown.

LIFE

OF

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN;

BY

WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT.

## CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN.

THE class of professed men of letters, if we exclude from the account the conductors of periodical journals, is certainly not very large even at the present day in our country. But before the close of the last century, it was nearly impossible to meet with an individual who looked to author. ship as his only, or indeed his principal means of subsistence. This was somewhat the more remarkable, considering the extraordinary developement of intellectual power exhibited in every quarter of the country, and applied to every variety of moral and social culture; and formed a singular contrast with more than one nation in Europe, where literature still continued to be followed as a distinct profession, amidst all the difficulties resulting from an arbitrary government, and popular imbecility and ignorance.

Abundant reasons, indeed, are suggested for this, by the various occupations afforded to talent of alk kinds, not only in the exercise of political functions, but in the splendid career opened to enter-

prise of every description in our free and thriving community. We were in the morning of life, as it were, when every thing summoned us to action; when the spirit was quickened by hope and youthful confidence; and we felt that we had our race to run, unlike those nations, who, having reached the noontide of their glory, or sunk into their decline, were naturally led to dwell on the soothing recollections of the past, and to repose themselves, after a tumultuous existence, in the quiet pleasures of study and contemplation. "It was amidst the ruins of the Capitol," says Gibbon, "that I first conceived the idea of writing the history of the Roman Empire." The occupation suited well with the spirit of the place, but would scarcely have harmonized with the life of bustling energy, and the thousand novelties which were perpetually stimulating the appetite for adventure, in our new and unexplored hemisphere. In short, to express it in one word, the peculiarities of our situation as naturally disposed us to active life, as those of the old countries of Europe to contemplative.

'The subject of the present memoir affords an almost solitary example, at this period, of a scholar, in the enlarged application of the term, who cultivated letters as a distinct and exclusive profession, resting his means of support, as well as his fame, on his success; and who as a writer of fic-

tion is still further entitled to credit, for having quitted the beaten grounds of the old country, and sought his subjects in the untried wilderness of his own. The particulars of his unostentatious life have been collected with sufficient industry by his friend, Mr. William Dunlap, to whom our native literature is under such large obligations for the extent and fidelity of his researches. We will select a few of the most prominent incidents from the mass of miscellaneous fragments and literary lumber, with which his work is somewhat encumbered. It were to be wished, that, in the place of some of them, more copious extracts had been substituted from his journal and correspondence, which, doubtless, in this as in other cases, must afford the most interesting, as well as authentic materials for biography.

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN was born at Philadelphia, January 17, 1771. He was descended from a highly respectable family, whose ancestors were of that estimable sect, who came over with William Penn to seek an asylum, where they might worship their Creator unmolested in the meek and humble spirit of their own faith. From his earliest childhood Brown gave evidence of his studious propensities, being frequently noticed by his father on his return from school poring over some heavy tome, nothing daunted by the formidable words it contained, or mounted on a table and

busily engaged in exploring a map which hung on the parlor wall. This infantine predilection for geographical studies ripened into a passion in later years. Another anecdote recorded of him at the age of ten, sets in a still stronger light his appreciation of intellectual pursuits, far above his years. A visitor at his father's having rebuked him, as it would seem without cause, for some remark he had made, gave him the contemptuous epithet of "boy." "What does he mean," said the young philosopher, after the guest's departure, "by calling me boy? Does he not know that it is neither size nor age, but sense, that makes the man? I could ask him a hundred questions, none of which he could answer."

At eleven years of age, he was placed under the tuition of Mr. Robert Proud, well known as the author of the History of Pennsylvania. Under his direction, he went over a large course of English reading and acquired the elements of Greek and Latin, applying himself with great assiduity to his studies. His bodily health was naturally delicate, and indisposed him to engage in the robust, athletic exercises of boyhood. His sedentary habits, however, began so evidently to impair his health, that his master recommended him to withdraw from his books, and recruit his strength by excursions on foot into the country. These pedestrian rambles suited the taste of the pupil,

and the length of his absence often excited the apprehensions of his friends for his safety. He may be thought to have sat to himself for this portrait of one of his heroes. "I preferred to ramble in the forest and loiter on the hill; perpetually to change the scene; to scrutinize the endless variety of objects; to compare one leaf and pebble with another; to pursue those trains of thought which their resemblances and differences suggested; to inquire what it was that gave them this place, structure, and form, were more agreeable employments than ploughing and threshing." "My frame was delicate and feeble. Exposure to wet blasts and vertical suns was sure to make me sick." The fondness for these solitary rambles continued through life, and the familiarity which they opened to him with the grand and heautiful scenes of nature undoubtedly contributed to nourish the habit of reverie and abstraction, and to deepen the romantic sensibilities, from which flowed so much of his misery, - as well as happiness, in after life.

He quitted Mr. Proud's school before the age of sixteen. He had previously made some small poetical attempts, and soon after sketched the plans of three several epics, on the discovery of America, and the conquests of Peru and Mexico. For some time, they engaged his attention to the exclusion of every other object. No ves-

tige of them now remains, or at least has been given to the public, by which we can ascertain the progress made towards their completion. The publication of such immature juvenile productions may gratify curiosity by affording a point of comparison with later excellence. They are rarely, however, of value in themselves sufficient to authorize their exposure to the world, and notwith-standing the occasional exception of a Pope or a Paschal, may very safely put up with Uncle Toby's recommendation on a similar display of precocity "to hush it up, and say as little about it as possible."

Among the contributions, which at a later period of life he was in the habit of making to different journals, the fate of one was too singular to be passed over in silence. It was a poetical address to Franklin, prepared for the Edentown newspaper. "The blundering printer," says Brown in his journal, " from zeal or ignorance, or perhaps from both, substituted the name of Washington. Washington therefore stands arrayed in awkward colors; philosophy smiles to behold her darling son; she turns with horror and disgust from those who have won the laurel victory in the field of battle, to this her favorite candidate, who had never participated in such bloody glory, and whose fame was derived from the conquest of philosophy alone. The printer by his blundering

ingenuity made the subject ridiculous. Every word of this clumsy panegyric was a direct slander upon Washington, and so it was regarded at the time." There could not well be imagined a more expeditious or effectual recipe for converting eulogy into satire.

Our hero had now reached a period of life, when it became necessary to decide on a profession. After due deliberation, he determined on the law: a choice, which received the cordial approbation of his friends, who saw in his habitual diligence and the character of his mind, at once comprehensive and logical, the most essential requisites for success. He entered on the studies of his profession with his usual ardor; and the acuteness and copiousness of his arguments, on various topics proposed for discussion in a lawsociety, over which he presided, bear ample testimony to his ability and industry. But however suited to his talents the profession of the law might be, it was not at all to his taste. He became a member of a literary club, in which he made frequent essays in composition and eloquence. He kept a copious journal, and by familiar exercise endeavored to acquire a pleasing and graceful style of writing; and every hour that he could steal from professional schooling was devoted to the cultivation of more attractive literature. In one of his contributions to a journal, just before

this period, he speaks of "the rapture with which he held communion with his own thoughts, amidst the gloom of surrounding woods, where his fancy peopled every object with ideal beings, and the barrier between himself and the world of spirits seemed burst by the force of meditation. In this solitude, he felt himself surrounded by a delightful society; but when transported from thence, and compelled to listen to the frivolous chat of his fellow-beings, he suffered all the miseries of solitude." He declares that his intercourse and conversation with mankind had wrought a salutary change; that he can now mingle in the concerns of life, perform his appropriate duties, and reserve that higher species of discourse for the solitude and silence of his study. In this supposed control over his romantic fancies, he grossly deceived himself.

As the time approached for entering on the practice of his profession, he felt his repugnance to it increase more and more; and he sought to justify a retreat from it altogether, by such poor sophistry as his imagination could suggest. He objected to the profession as having something in it immoral. He could not reconcile it with his notions of duty to come forward as the champion indiscriminately of right and wrong; and he considered the stipendiary advocate of the guilty party as becoming, by that very act, participator in the

guilt. He did not allow himself to reflect, that no more equitable arrangement could be devised, none which would give the humblest individual so fair a chance for maintaining his rights, as the employment of competent and upright counsel, familiar with the forms of legal practice, necessarily so embarrassing to a stranger; that so far from being compelled to undertake a cause manifestly unjust, it is always in the power of an honest lawyer to decline it; but that such contingencies are of most rare occurrence, as few cases are litigated, where each party had not previously plausible grounds for believing himself in the right, a question only to be settled by fair discussion on both sides; that opportunities are not wanting, on the other hand, which invite the highest display of eloquence and professional science, in detecting and defeating villany, in vindicating slandered innocence, and in expounding the great principles of law, on which the foundations of personal security and property are established; and finally, that the most illustrious names in his own and every other civilized country have been drawn from the ranks of a profession, whose habitual discipline so well trains them for legislative action, and the exercise of the highest political functions.

Brown cannot be supposed to have been insensible to these obvious views, and indeed, from one of his letters in later life, he appears to have clearly

recognised the value of the profession he had deserted. But his object was, at this time, to justify himself in his fickleness of purpose, as he best might, in his own eyes and those of his friends. Brown was certainly not the first man of genius, who found himself incapable of resigning the romantic world of fiction, and the uncontrolled revels of the imagination for the dull and prosaic realities of the law. Few, indeed, like Mansfield, have been able so far to constrain their young and buoyant imaginations, as to merit the beautiful eulogium of the English poet; while many more comparatively, from the time of Juvenal downwards, fortunately for the world, have been willing to sacrifice the affections plighted to Themis on the altars of the Muse.

Brown's resolution at this crisis caused sincere regret to his friends, which they could not conceal, on seeing him thus suddenly turn from the path of honorable fame, at the very moment when he was prepared to enter on it. His prospects, but lately so brilliant, seemed now overcast with a deep gloom. The embarrassments of his situation had also a most unfavorable effect on his own mind. Instead of the careful discipline, to which it had been lately subjected, it was now left to rove at large wherever caprice should dictate, and waste itself on those romantic reveries and speculations, to which he was naturally too much addicted. This was the

period when the French Revolution was in its heat, and the awful convulsion experienced in one unhappy country seemed to be felt in every quarter of the globe; men grew familiar with the wildest paradoxes, and the spirit of innovation menaced the oldest and best established principles in morals and government. Brown's inquisitive and speculative mind partook of the prevailing skepticism. Some of his compositions, and especially one on the Rights of Women, published in 1797, show to what extravagance a benevolent mind may be led, by fastening too exclusively on the contemplation of the evils of existing institutions, and indulging in indefinite dreams of perfectibility.

There is no period of existence when the spirit of a man is more apt to be depressed, than when he is about to quit the safe and quiet harbor, in which he has rode in safety from childhood, and launch on the dark and unknown ocean, where so many a gallant bark has gone down before him. How much must this disquietude be increased, in the case of one, who, like Brown, has thrown away the very chart and compass, by which he was prepared to guide himself through the doubtful perils of the voyage. How heavily the gloom of despondency fell on his spirits at this time is attested by various extracts from his private correspondence. "As for me," he says, in one of his letters, "I long ago discovered that Nature had

not qualified me for an actor on this stage The nature of my education only added to these disqualifications, and I experienced all those deviations from the centre, which arise when all our lessons are taken from books, and the scholar makes his own character the comment. A happy destiny, indeed, brought me to the knowledge of two or three minds, which Nature had fashioned in the same mould with my own, but these are gone. And, O God! enable me to wait the moment, when it is thy will that I should follow them." In another epistle he remarks, "I have not been deficient in the pursuit of that necessary branch of knowledge, the study of myself. I will not explain the result, for have I not already sufficiently endeavored to make my friends unhappy by communications, which, though they might easily be injurious, could not be of any possible advantage? I really, dear W., regret that period, when your pity was first excited in my favor. I sincerely lament, that I ever gave you reason to imagine, that I was not so happy, as a gay indifference with regard to the present, stubborn forgetfulness with respect to the uneasy past, and excursions into lightsome futurity could make me; for what end, what useful purposes were promoted by the discovery? It could not take away from the number of the unhappy, but only add to it, by making those who loved me participate in

my uneasiness, which each participation, so far from tending to diminish, would, in reality, increase, by adding those regrets, of which I had been the author in them, to my own original stock." It is painful to witness the struggles of a generous spirit, endeavoring to suppress the anguish thus involuntarily escaping in the warmth of affectionate intercourse. This becomes still more striking, in the contrast exhibited between the assumed cheerfulness of much of his correspondence at this period, and the uniform melancholy tone of his private journal, the genuine record of his emotions.

Fortunately his taste, refined by intellectual culture, and the elevation and spotless purity of his moral principles, raised him above the tempta tions of sensual indulgence, in which minds of weaker mould might have sought a temporary relief. His soul was steeled against the grosser seductions of appetite. The only avenue, through which his principles could in any way be assailed, was the understanding; and it would appear, from some dark hints in his correspondence at this period, that the rash idea of relieving himself from the weight of earthly sorrows, by some voluntary deed of violence, had more than once flitted across his mind. It is pleasing to observe with what beautiful modesty and simplicity of character he refers his abstinence from coarser indulgences to

his constitutional infirmities, and consequent disinclination to them, which, in truth, could be only imputed to the excellence of his heart and his understanding. In one of his letters he remarks, "that the benevolence of nature rendered him, in a manner, an exile from many of the temptations that infest the minds of ardent youth. Whatever his wishes might have been, his benevolent destiny had prevented him from running into the frivolities of youth." He ascribes to this cause his love of letters, and his predominant anxiety to excel in whatever was a glorious subject of competi-"Had he been furnished with the nerves and muscles of his comrades, it was very far from impossible that he might have relinquished intellectual pleasures. Nature had benevolently rendered him incapable of encountering such severe trials."

Brown's principal resources for dissipating the melancholy, which hung over him, were his inextinguishable love of letters, and the society of a few friends, to whom congeniality of taste and temper had united him from early years. In addition to these resources, we may mention his fondness for pedestrian rambles, which sometimes were of several weeks' duration. In the course of these excursions, the circle of his acquaintance and friends was gradually enlarged. In the city of New York, in particular, he contracted an intimacy with several individuals of similar age and kindred

mould with himself. Among these, his earliest associate was Dr. E. H. Smith, a young gentleman of great promise in the medical profession. Brown had become known to him during the residence of the latter as a student in Philadelphia. By him our hero was introduced to Mr. Dunlap, who has survived to commemorate the virtues of his friend in a biography already noticed, and to Mr. Johnson, the accomplished author of the New York Law Reports. The society of these friends had sufficient attractions to induce him to repeat his visit to New York, until at length, in the beginning of 1798, he may be said to have established his permanent residence there, passing much of his time under the same roof with them. His amiable manners and accomplishments soon recommended him to the notice of other eminent individuals. He became a member of a literary society, called the Friendly Club, comprehending names which have since shed a distinguished lustre over the various walks of literature and science.

The spirits of Brown seemed to be exalted in this new atmosphere. His sensibilities found a grateful exercise in the sympathies of friendship, and the powers of his mind were called into action by collision with others of similar tone with his own. His memory was enriched with the stores of various reading, hitherto conducted at random, with no higher object than temporary amusement

or the gratification of an indefinite curiosity. He now concentrated his attention on some determinate object, and proposed to give full scope to his various talents and acquisitions in the career of an author, as yet so little travelled in our own country.

His first publication was that before noticed, entitled "Alcuin, a Dialogue on the Rights of Women." It exhibits the crude and fanciful speculations of a theorist, who, in his dreams of optimism, charges exclusively on human institutions the imperfections necessarily incident to human nature. The work, with all its ingenuity, made little impression on the public; it found few purchasers, and made, it may be presumed, still fewer converts.

He soon after began a romance, which he never completed, from which his biographer has given copious extracts. It is conducted in the epistolary form, and, although exhibiting little of his subsequent power and passion, is recommended by a graceful and easy manner of narration, more attractive than the more elaborate and artificial style of his later novels.

This abortive attempt was succeeded, in 1798, by the publication of *Wieland*, the first of that remarkable series of fictions, which flowed in such rapid succession from his pen, in this and the three following years. In this romance, the author

deviating from the usual track of domestic or historic incident, proposed to delineate the powerful workings of passion, displayed by a mind constitutionally excitable, under the control of some terrible and mysterious agency. The scene is laid in Pennsylvania. The action takes place in a family by the name of Wieland, the principal member of which had inherited a melancholy and somewhat superstitious constitution of mind, which his habitual reading and contemplation deepened into a calm but steady fanaticism. This temper is nourished still further by the occurrence of certain inexplicable circumstances of ominous import. Strange voices are heard by different members of the family, sometimes warning them of danger, sometimes announcing events seeming beyond the reach of human knowledge. The still and solemn hours of night are disturbed by these unearthly summons. The other actors of the drama are thrown into strange perplexity, and an underplot of events is curiously entangled by the occurrence of unaccountable sights as well as sounds. By the heated fancy of Wieland they are referred to supernatural agency. A fearful destiny seems to preside over the scene, and to carry the actors onward to some awful catastrophe. At length, the hour arrives. A solemn, mysterious voice announces to Wieland, that he is now called on to testify his submission to the Divine will, by the

sacrifice of his earthly affections, - to surrender up the affectionate partner of his bosom, on whom he had reposed all his hopes of happiness in this life. He obeys the mandate of Heaven. The stormy conflict of passion, into which his mind is thrown, as the fearful sacrifice he is about to make calls up all the tender remembrances of conjugal fidelity and love, is painted with frightful strength of coloring. Although it presents, on the whole, as pertinent an example as we could offer from any of Brown's writings, of the peculiar power and vividness of his conceptions, the whole scene is too long for insertion here. We will mutilate it, however, by a brief extract, as an illustration of our author's manner, more satisfactory than any criticism can be. Wieland, after receiving the fatal mandate, is represented in an apartment alone with his wife. His courage, or rather his desperation fails him, and he sends her, on some pretext, from the chamber. An interval, during which his insane passions have time to rally, ensues.

"She returned with a light; I led the way to the chamber; she looked round her; she lifted the curtain of the bed; she saw nothing. At length she fixed inquiring eyes upon me. The light now enabled her to discover in my visage what darkness had hitherto concealed. Her cares were now transferred from my sister to myself, and she said in a tremuluous voice, 'Wieland'

you are not well; what ails you? Can I do nothing for you? That accents and looks so winning should disarm me of my resolution, was to be expected. My thoughts were thrown anew into anarchy. I spread my hand before my eyes, that I might not see her, and answered only by groans. She took my other hand between hers, and, pressing it to her heart, spoke with that voice which had ever swayed my will and wafted away sorrow 'My friend! my soul's friend! tell me thy cause of grief. Do I not merit to partake with thee in thy cares? Am I not thy wife?'

"This was too much. I broke from her embrace, and retired to a corner of the room. In this pause, courage was once more infused into me. I resolved to execute my duty. She followed me, and renewed her passionate entreaties to know the

cause of my distress.

"I raised my head and regarded her with steadfast looks. I muttered something about death, and the injunctions of my duty. At these words she shrunk back, and looked at me with a new expression of anguish. After a pause, she clasped her hands, and exclaimed,—

"'O Wieland! Wieland! God grant that I am mistaken; but surely something is wrong. I see it; it is too plain; thou art undone, — lost to me and to thyself.' At the same time, she gazed on my features with intensest anxiety, in hope that

different symptoms would take place. I replied with vehemence, — 'Undone! No; my duty is known, and I thank my God that my cowardice is now vanquished, and I have power to fulfil it. Catharine! I pity the weakness of nature; I pity thee, but must not spare. Thy life is claimed from my hands, thou must die!'

"Fear was now added to her grief. 'What mean you? Why talk you of death? Bethink yourself, Wieland; bethink yourself, and this fit will pass. O why came I hither! Why did you

drag me hither?

mand. I am appointed thy destroyer, and destroy thee I must.' Saying this I seized her wrists. She shrieked aloud, and endeavored to free herself from my grasp; but her efforts were vain.

it. Am I not thy wife? and wouldst thou kill me? Thou wilt not; and yet—I see—thou art Wieland no longer: A fury resistless and horrible possesses thee—spare me—spare—help—help—?

"Till her breath was stopped she shrieked for help,—for mercy. When she could speak no longer, her gestures, her looks appealed to my compassion. My accursed hand was irresolute and tremulous. I meant thy death to be sudden, thy struggles to be brief. Alas! my heart was infirm; my resolves mutable. Thrice I slackened my grasp, and life kept its hold, though in the midst of pangs. Her eyeballs started from their sockets. Grimness and distortion took place of all that used to bewitch me into transport, and subdue me into reverence.

"I was commissioned to kill thee, but not to torment thee with the foresight of thy death; not to multiply thy fears, and prolong thy agonies. Haggard, and pale, and lifeless, at length thou ceasedst to contend with thy destiny.

"This was a moment of triumph. Thus had I successfully subdued the stubbornness of human passions; the victim which had been demanded was given; the deed was done past recall.

"I lifted the corpse in my arms and laid it on the bed. I gazed upon it with delight. Such was the elation of my thoughts, that I even broke into laughter. I clapped my hands and exclaimed, 'It is done! My sacred duty is fulfilled. To that I have sacrificed, O my God! thy last and best gift, my wife!'

"For a while I thus soared above frailty. I imagined I had set myself for ever beyond the reach of selfishness; but my imaginations were false. This rapture quickly subsided. I looked again at my wife. My joyous ebullitions vanished, and I asked myself who it was whom I saw. Methought it could not be Catharine. It could not

be the woman who had lodged for years in my heart; who had slept nightly in my bosom; who had borne in her womb, who had fostered at her breast, the beings who called me father; whom I had watched with delight, and cherished with a fondness ever new and perpetually growing; it could not be the same.

"Where was her bloom? These deadly and blood-suffused orbs but ill resemble the azure and ecstatic tenderness of her eyes. The lucid stream that meandered over that bosom, the glow of love that was wont to sit upon that cheek, are much unlike these livid stains and this hideous deformity. Alas! these were the traces of agony; the gripe of the assassin had been here!

"I will not dwell upon my lapse into desperate and outrageous sorrow. The breath of heaven that sustained me was withdrawn, and I sunk into mere man. I leaped from the floor; I dashed my head against the wall; I uttered screams of horror; I panted after torment and pain. Eternal fire, and the bickerings of hell, compared with what I felt, were music and a bed of roses.

"I thank my God that this degeneracy was transient, that he deigned once more to raise me aloft. I thought upon what I had done as a sacrifice to duty, and was calm. My wife was dead; but I reflected, that, though this source of human consolation was closed, yet others were still open.

If the transports of a husband were no more, the feelings of a father had still scope for exercise. When remembrance of their mother should excite too keen a pang, I would look upon them and be comforted.

"While I revolved these ideas, new warmth flowed in upon my heart. I was wrong. These feelings were the growth of selfishness. Of this I was not aware, and to dispel the mist that obscured my perceptions, a new effulgence and a new mandate were necessary.

"From these thoughts I was recalled by a ray that was shot into the room. A voice spake like that which I had before heard, - 'Thou hast done well; but all is not done, - the sacrifice is incomplete, - thy children must be offered. they must perish with their mother."

This too is accomplished by the same remorseless arm, although the author has judiciously refrained from attempting to prolong the note of feeling, struck with so powerful a hand, by the recital of the particulars. The wretched fanatic is brought to public trial for the murder, but is acquitted on the ground of insanity. The illusion which has bewildered him, at length breaks on his understanding in its whole truth. He cannot sustain the shock, and the tragic tale closes with the suicide of the victim of superstition and imposture. The key to the whole of this mysterious agency which controls the circumstances of the story is - ventriloquism! ventriloquism exerted for the very purpose by a human fiend, from no motives of revenge or hatred, but pure diabolical malice, or as he would make us believe, and the author seems willing to endorse this absurd version of it, as a mere practical joke! The reader, who has been gorged with this feast of horrors, is tempted to throw away the book in disgust, at finding himself the dupe of such paltry jugglery, which, whatever sense be given to the term ventriloquism, is altogether incompetent to the various phenomena of sight and sound with which the story is so plentifully seasoned. We can feel the force of Dryden's imprecation, when he cursed the inventors of those fifth acts, which are bound to unravel all the fine mesh of impossibilities, which the author's wits had been so busily entangling in the four preceding.

The explication of the mysteries of Wieland naturally suggests the question, how far an author is bound to explain the supernaturalities, if we may so call them, of his fictions; and whether it is not better on the whole, to trust to the willing superstition and credulity of the reader (of which there is perhaps store enough in almost every bosom, at the present enlightened day even, for poetical purposes), than to attempt a solution on purely natural or mechanical principles. It was

thought no harm for the ancients to bring the use of machinery into their epics, and a similar freedom was conceded to the old English dramatists, whose ghosts and witches were placed in the much more perilous predicament of being subjected to the scrutiny of the spectator, whose senses are not near so likely to be duped, as the sensitive and excited imagination of the reader in his solitary chamber. It must be admitted, however, that the public of those days, when the

"undoubting mind

"Believed the magic wonders that were sung," were admirably seasoned for the action of superstition in all forms, and furnished, therefore, a most enviable audience for the melo-dramatic artist, whether dramatist or romance-writer. But all this is changed. No witches ride the air now-adays, and fairies no longer "dance their rounds by the pale moonlight," as the worthy Bishop Corbet, indeed, lamented a century and a half ago.

But still it may be allowed, perhaps, if the scene is laid in some remote age or country, to borrow the ancient superstitions of the place, and incorporate them into, or at least color the story with them, without shocking the well-bred prejudices of the modern reader. Sir Walter Scott has done this with good effect in more than one of his romances, as every one will readily call to mind. A fine example occurs in the Boden Glass ap-

parition in Waverley, which the great novelist, far from attempting to explain on any philosophical principles, or even by an intimation of its being the mere creation of a feverish imagination, has left as he found it, trusting that the reader's poetic feeling will readily accommodate itself to the popular superstitions of the country he is depicting. This reserve on his part, indeed, arising from a truly poetic view of the subject, and an honest reliance on a similar spirit in his reader, has laid him open, with some matter-of-fact people, to the imputation of not being wholly untouched himself by the national superstitions. How much, nevertheless, would the whole scene have lost in its permanent effect, if the author had attempted an explanation of the apparition, on the ground of an optical illusion not infrequent among the mountainmists of the Highlands, or any other of the ingenious solutions so readily at the command of the thorough-bred story-teller.

It must be acknowledged, however, that this way of solving the riddles of romance would hardly be admissible in a story drawn from familiar scenes and situations in modern life, and especially in our own country. The lights of education are flung too bright and broad over the land, to allow any lurking-hole for the shadows of a twilight age. So much the worse for the poet and the novelist. Their province must now be confined

to poor human nature, without meddling with the "Gorgons and Chimeras dire," which floated through the bewildered brains of our forefathers, at least on the other side of the water. At any rate, if a writer, in this broad sunshine, ventures on any sort of diablerie, he is forced to explain it by all the thousand contrivances of trapdoors, secret passages, waxen images, and all the other makeshifts from the property-room of Mrs. Radeliffe and Company.

Brown, indeed, has resorted to a somewhat higher mode of elucidating his mysteries by a remarkable phenomenon of our nature. But the misfortune of all these attempts to account for the marvels of the story by natural or mechanical causes, is, that they are very seldom satisfactory, or competent to their object. This is eminently the case with the ventriloquism in Wieland. Even where they are competent, it may be doubted whether the reader, who has suffered his credulous fancy to be entranced by the spell of the magician, will be gratified to learn, at the end, by what cheap mechanical contrivance he has been duped. However this may be, it is certain that a very unfavorable effect, in another respect, is produced on his mind, after he is made acquainted with the nature of the secret spring by which the machinery is played, more especially when one leading circumstance, like ventriloquism in Wieland, is

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made the master-key, as it were, by which all the mysteries are to be unlocked and opened at once. With this explanation at hand, it is extremely difficult to rise to that sensation of mysterious awe and apprehension, on which so much of the sublimity and general effect of the narrative necessarily depends. Instead of such feelings, the only ones which can enable us to do full justice to the author's conceptions, we sometimes, on the contrary, may detect a smile Iurking in the corner of the mouth, as we peruse scenes of positive power, from the contrast obviously suggested of the impotence of the apparatus and the portentous character of the results. The critic, therefore, possessed of the real key to the mysteries of the story, if he would do justice to his author's merits, must divest himself, as it were, of his previous knowledge, by fastening his attention on the results, to the exclusion of the insignificant means by which they are achieved. He will not always find this an easy matter.

But to return from this rambling digression;—in the following year, 1799, Brown published his second novel, entitled Ormond. The story presents few of the deeply agitating scenes, and powerful bursts of passion, which distinguish the first. It is designed to exhibit a model of surpassing excellence, in a female rising superior to all the shocks of adversity, and the more perilous bland-

ishments of seduction, and who, as the scene grows darker and darker around her, seems to illumine the whole with the radiance of her celestial virtues. The reader is reminded of the "patient Griselda," so delicately portrayed by the pencils of Boccaccio and Chaucer. It must be admitted, however, that the contemplation of such a character in the abstract is more imposing, than the minute details by which we attain the knowledge of it; and although there is nothing, we are told, which the gods look down upon with more satisfaction, than a brave mind struggling with the storms of adversity, yet, when these come in the guise of poverty and all the train of teasing annoyances in domestic life, the tale, if long protracted, too often produces a sensation of weariness scarcely to be compensated by the moral grandeur of the spectacle.

The appearance of these two novels constitutes an epoch in the ornamental literature of America. They are the first decidedly successful attempts in the walk of romantic fiction. They are still further remarkable, as illustrating the character and state of society on this side of the Atlantic, instead of resorting to the exhausted springs of European invention. These circumstances, as well as the uncommon powers they displayed both of conception and execution, recommended them to the notice of the literary world, although their philosophical method of dissecting passion and analyzing

motives of action, placed them somewhat beyond the reach of vulgar popularity. Brown was sensible of the favorable impression which he had made, and mentions it in one of his epistles to his brother, with his usual unaffected modesty;—
"I add somewhat, though not so much as I might if I were so inclined, to the number of my friends. I find to be the writer of Wieland and Ormond is a greater recommendation than I ever imagined it would be."

In the course of the same year, the quiet tenor of his life was interrupted by the visitation of that fearful pestilence, the yellow fever, which had for several successive years made its appearance in the city of New York, but which, in 1798, fell upon it with a violence similar to that with which it had desolated Philadelphia in 1793. Brown had taken the precaution of withdrawing from the latter city, where he then resided, on its first appearance there. He prolonged his stay in New York, however, relying on the healthiness of the quarter of the town where he lived, and the habitual abstemiousness of his diet. His friend Smith was necessarily detained there by the duties of his profession, and Brown, in answer to the reiterated importunities of his absent relatives to withdraw from the infected city, refused to do so, on the ground that his personal services might be required by the friends who remained in it; a disinterestedness well meriting the strength of attachment which he excited in the bosom of his companions.

Unhappily, Brown was right in his prognostics, and his services were too soon required in behalf of his friend, Dr. Smith, who fell a victim to his own benevolence; having caught the fatal malady from an Italian gentleman, a stranger in the city, whom he received, when infected with the disease, into his house, relinquishing to him his own apartment. Brown had the melancholy satisfaction of performing the last sad offices of affection to his dying friend. He himself soon became affected with the same disorder; and it was not till after a severe illness that he so far recovered, as to be able to transfer his residence to Perth Amboy, the abode of Mr. Dunlap, where a pure and invigorating atmosphere, aided by the kind attentions of his host, gradually restored him to a sufficient degree of health and spirits for the prosecution of his literary labors.

The spectacle he had witnessed made too deep an impression on him to be readily effaced, and he resolved to transfer his own conceptions of it, while yet fresh, to the page of fiction, or as it might rather be called, of history, for the purpose, as he intimates in his preface, of imparting to others some of the fruits of the melancholy lesson he had himself experienced. Such was the origin of his next novel, Arthur Mervyn, or Memoirs of the Year 1793. This was the fatal year of the yellow fever in Philadelphia. The action of the story is chiefly confined to that city, but seems to be prepared with little contrivance, on no regular or systematic plan, consisting simply of a succession of incidents, having little cohesion except in reference to the hero, but affording situations of great interest, and frightful fidelity of coloring. The pestilence wasting a thriving and populous city has furnished a topic for more than one great master. It will be remembered, as the terror of every schoolboy, in the pages of Thucydides; it forms the gloomy portal to the light and airy fictions of Boccaccio; and it has furnished a subject for the graphic pencil of the English novelist, De Foe, the only one of the three, who never witnessed the horrors which he paints, but whose fictions wear an aspect of reality, which history can rarely reach.

Brown has succeeded in giving the same terrible distinctness to his impressions by means of individual portraiture. He has, however, not confined himself to this, but by a variety of touches lays open to our view the whole interior of the city of the plague. Instead of expatiating on the loathsome symptoms and physical ravages of the disease, he selects the most striking moral circumstances which attend it; he dwells on the withering sensation that falls so heavily on the heart, in the streets of the once busy and crowded city, now deserted and silent, save only where the wheels of the melancholy hearse are heard to rumble along the pavement. Our author not unfrequently succeeds in conveying more to the heart by the skilful selection of a single circumstance, than would have flowed from a multitude of petty details. It is the art of the great mas-

ters of poetry and painting.

The same year in which Brown produced the first part of "Arthur Mervyn," he entered on the publication of a periodical entitled The Monthly Magazine and American Review, a work, that, during its brief existence, which terminated in the following year, afforded abundant evidence of its editor's versatility of talent and the ample range of his literary acquisitions. Our hero was now fairly in the traces of authorship. He looked to it as his permanent vocation, and the indefatigable diligence with which he devoted himself to it may at least serve to show that he did not shrink from his professional engagements from any lack of industry or enterprise.

The publication of "Arthur Mervyn" was succeeded not long after by that of Edgar Huntly, or the Adventures of a Sleepwalker; a romance presenting a greater variety of wild and picturesque adventure, with more copious delineations of natural scenery, than is to be found in his other

fictions; circumstances no doubt possessing more attractions for the mass of readers than the peculiarities of his other novels. Indeed, the author has succeeded perfectly in constantly stimulating the curiosity by a succession of as original incidents, - perils and hair-breadth escapes, - as ever flitted across a poet's fancy. It is no small triumph of the art, to be able to maintain the curiosity of the reader unflagging through a succession of incidents, which, far from being sustained by one predominant passion, and forming parts of one whole, rely each for its interest on its own independent merits.

The story is laid in the western part of Pennsylvania, where the author has diversified his descriptions of a simple and almost primitive state of society with uncommonly animated sketches of rural scenery. It is worth observing, how the sombre complexion of Brown's imagination, which so deeply tinges his moral portraiture, sheds its gloom over his pictures of material nature; raising the landscape into all the severe and savage sublimity of a Salvator Rosa. The somnambulism of this novel, which, like the ventriloquism of "Wieland," is the moving principle of all the machinery, has this advantage over the latter, that it does not necessarily impair the effect, by perpetually suggesting a solution of mysteries, and thus dispelling the illusion, on whose existence the effect of the

whole story mainly depends. The adventures, indeed, built upon it are not the most probable in the world. But waving this, we shall be well rewarded for such concession,—there is no further difficulty.

The extract already cited by us from the first of our author's novels has furnished the reader with an illustration of his power in displaying the conflict of passion under high moral excitement. We will now venture another quotation from the work before us, in order to exhibit more fully his talent for the description of external objects.

Edgar Huntly, the hero of the story, is represented in one of the wild mountain fastnesses of Norwalk, a district in the western part of Pennsylvania. He is on the brink of a ravine, from which the only avenue lies over the body of a tree thrown across the chasm, through whose dark depths below a rushing torrent is heard to pour its waters.

"While occupied with these reflections, my eyes were fixed upon the opposite steeps. The tops of the trees, waving to and fro, in the wildest commotion, and their trunks, occasionally bending to the blast, which in these lofty regions blew with a violence unknown in the tracts below, exhibited an awful spectacle. At length my attention was attracted by the trunk which lay across the gulf, and which I had converted into a bridge. I perceived that it had already swerved somewhat from

its original position, that every blast broke or loosened some of the fibres by which its roots were connected with the opposite bank, and that, if the storm did not speedily abate, there was imminent danger of its being torn from the rock and precipitated into the chasm. Thus my retreat would be cut off, and the evils, from which I was endeavoring to rescue another, would be experienced by myself.

"I believed my destiny to hang upon the expedition with which I should recross this gulf. The moments that were spent in these deliberations were critical, and I shuddered to observe that the trunk was held in its place by one or two fibres which were already stretched almost to breaking.

"To pass along the trunk, rendered slippery by the wet, and unsteadfast by the wind, was eminently dangerous. To maintain my hold in passing, in defiance of the whirlwind, required the most vigorous exertions. For this end it was necessary to discommode myself of my cloak, and of the volume which I carried in the pocket of my cloak

"Just as I had disposed of these encumbrances, and had arisen from my seat, my attention was again called to the opposite steep, by the most unwelcome object that at this time could possibly occur. Something was perceived moving among the bushes and rocks, which for a time I hoped was no more than a racoon or opossum; but which

presently appeared to be a panther. His gray coat, extended claws, fiery eyes, and a cry which he at that moment uttered, and which, by its resemblance to the human voice is peculiarly terriffic, denoted him to be the most ferocious and untamable of that detested race. The industry of our hunters has nearly banished animals of prey from these precincts. The fastnesses of Norwalk, however, could not but afford refuge to some of them. Of late I had met them so rarely that my fears were seldom alive, and I trod without caution the ruggedest and most solitary haunts. Still, however, I had seldom been unfurnished in my rambles with the means of defence.

"The unfrequency with which I had lately encountered this foe, and the encumbrance of provision, made me neglect on this occasion to bring with me my usual arms. The beast that was now before me, when stimulated by hunger, was accustomed to assail whatever could provide him with a banquet of blood. He would set upon the man and the deer with equal and irresistible ferocity. His sagacity was equal to his strength, and he seemed able to discover when his antagonist was armed and prepared for defence.

"My past experience enabled me to estimate the full extent of my danger. He sat on the brow of the steep, eyeing the bridge, and apparently deliberating whether he should cross it. It was probable that he had scented my footsteps thus far, and, should he pass over, his vigilance could scarcely fail of detecting my asylum.

"Should he retain his present station, my danger was scarcely lessened. To pass over in the face of a famished tiger was only to rush upon my fate. The falling of the trunk, which had lately been so anxiously deprecated, was now with no less solicitude desired. Every new gust, I hoped, would tear asunder its remaining bands, and by cutting off all communication between the opposite steeps place me in security. My hopes, however, were destined to be frustrated. The fibres of the prostrate tree were obstinately tenacious of their hold, and presently the animal scrambled down the rock and proceeded to cross it.

"Of all kinds of death that which now menaced me was the most abhorred. To die by disease, or by the hand of a fellow creature, was propitious and lenient in comparison with being rent to pieces by the fangs of this savage. To perish in this obscure retreat, by means so impervious to the anxious curiosity of my friends, to loose my portion of existence by so untoward and ignoble a destiny, was insupportable. I bitterly deplored my rashness in coming hither unprovided for an encounter like this.

"The evil of my present circumstances consisted chiefly in suspense. My death was unavoidable, but my imagination had leisure to torment itself by anticipations. One foot of the savage was slowly and cautiously moved after the other. He struck his claws so deeply into the bark that they were with difficulty withdrawn. At length he leaped upon the ground. We were now separated by an interval of scarcely eight feet. To leave the spot where I crouched was impossible. Be hind and beside me, the cliff rose perpendicularly, and before me was this grim and terrible visage. I shrunk still closer to the ground and closed my eyes.

"From this pause of horror I was aroused by the noise occasioned by a second spring of the animal. He leaped into the pit, in which I had so deeply regretted that I had not taken refuge, and disappeared. My rescue was so sudden, and so much beyond my belief or my hope, that I doubted for a moment whether my senses did not deceive me. This opportunity of escape was not to be neglected I left my place, and scrambled over the trunk with a precipitation which had like to have proved fatal. The tree groaned and shook under me, the wind blew with unexampled violence, and I had scarcely reached the opposite steep when the roots were severed from the rock, and the whole fell thundering to the bottom of the chasm.

"My trepidations were not speedily quieted. I looked back with wonder on my hair-breadth escape, and on that singular concurrence of events, which had placed me in so short a period in absolute security. Had the trunk fallen a moment earlier, I should have been imprisoned on the hill or thrown headlong. Had its fall been delayed another moment I should have been pursued; for the beast now issued from his den, and testified his surprise and disappointment by tokens, the sight of which made my blood run cold.

"He saw me and hastened to the verge of the chasm. He squatted on his hind legs and assumed the attitude of one preparing to leap. My consternation was excited afresh by these appearances. It seemed at first as if the rift was too wide for any power of muscles to carry him in safety over; but I knew the unparalleled agility of this animal, and that his experience had made him a better judge of the practicability of this exploit than I was.

"Still there was hope that he would relinquish this design as desperate. This hope was quickly at an end. He sprung, and his fore legs touched the verge of the rock on which I stood. In spite of vehement exertions, however, the surface was too smooth and too hard to allow him to make good his hold. He fell, and a piercing cry uttered below showed that nothing had obstructed his descent to the bottom."

The subsequent narrative leads the hero through a variety of romantic adventures, especially with the savages, with whom he has several desperate rencontres and critical escapes. The track of adventure indeed strikes into the same wild solitudes of the forest, that have since been so frequently travelled over by our ingenious countryman Cooper. The light in which the character of the North American Indian has been exhibited by the two writers, has little resemblance. Brown's sketches, it is true, are few and faint. As far as they go, however, they are confined to such views as are most conformable to the popular conceptions; bringing into full relief the rude and uncouth lineaments of the Indian character, its cunning, cruelty, and unmitigated ferocity, with no intimations of a more generous nature. Cooper, on the other hand, discards all the coarser elements of savage life, reserving those only of a picturesque and romantic cast, and elevating the souls of his warriors by such sentiments of courtesy, hightoned gallantry, and passionate tenderness, as belong to the riper period of civilization. Thus idealized, the portrait, if not strictly that of the fierce and untamed son of the forest, is at least sufficiently true for poetical purposes. Cooper is indeed a poet. His descriptions of inanimate nature, no less than of savage man, are instinct with the breath of poetry. Witness his infinitely various pictures of the ocean; or still more, of the beautiful spirit that rides upon its bosom, the gallant ship, which under his touches becomes an animated thing, inspired by a living soul; reminding us of the beautiful superstition of the simplehearted natives who fancied the bark of Columbus some celestial visitant, descending on his broad

pinions from the skies.

Brown is far less of a colorist. He deals less in external nature, but searches the depths of the soul. He may be rather called a philosophical than a poetical writer; for, though he has that intensity of feeling which constitutes one of the distinguishing attributes of the latter, yet in his most tumultuous bursts of passion, we frequently find him pausing to analyze and coolly speculate on the elements which have raised it. This intrusion, indeed, of reason, la raison froide, into scenes of the greatest interest and emotion, has sometimes the unhappy effect of chilling them altogether.

In 1800, Brown published the second part of his Arthur Mervyn, whose occasional displays of energy and pathos by no means compensate the violent dislocations and general improbabilities of the narrative. Our author was led into these defects by the unpardonable precipitancy of his composition. Three of his romances were thrown off in the course of one year. These were written with the printer's devil literally at his elbow; one being begun before another was completed, and all of them before a regular, well digested plan was devised for their execution.

The consequences of this curious style of doing business are such as might have been predicted. The incidents are strung together with about as little connexion as the rhymes in "The house that Jack built"; and the whole reminds us of some bizarre, antiquated edifice, exhibiting a dozen styles of architecture according to the caprice or convenience of its successive owners.

The reader is ever at a loss for a clew to guide him through the labyrinth of strange, incongruous incident. It would seem as if the great object of the author was to keep alive the state of suspense, on the player's principle, in the "Rehearsal," that "on the stage, it is best to keep the audience in suspense, for to guess presently at the plot, or the sense, tires them at the end of the first act. Now here, every line surprises you, and brings in new matter!" Perhaps, however, all this proceeds less from calculation, than from the embarrassment which the novelist feels in attempting a solution of his own riddles, and which leads him to put off the reader, by multiplying incident after incident, until at length, entangled in the complicated snarl of his own intrigue, he is finally obliged, when the fatal hour arrives, to cut the knot which he cannot unravel. There is no other way by which we can

account for the forced and violent denouemens which bring up so many of Brown's fictions. Voltaire has remarked somewhere in his Commentaries on Corneille, that " an author may write with the rapidity of genius, but should correct with scrupulous deliberation." Our author seems to have thought it sufficient to comply with the first half of the maxim.

In 1801, Brown published his novel of Clara Howard, and, in 1804, closed the series with Jane Talbot, first printed in England. They are composed in a more subdued tone, discarding those startling preternatural incidents, of which he had made such free use in his former fictions. In the preface to his first romance, "Wieland," he remarks, in allusion to the mystery, on which the story is made to depend, that "it is a sufficient vindication of the writer, if history furnishes one parallel fact." But the French critic, who tells us le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable, has, with more judgment, condemned this vicious recurrence to extravagant and improbable incident. Truth cannot always be pleaded in vindication of the author of a fiction, any more than of a libel. Brown seems to have subsequently come into the same opinion; for in a letter addressed to his brother James, after the publication of "Edgar Huntly," he observes; "Your remarks upon the gloominess and out-of-nature incidents of 'Huntly,' if they be not just in their full extent, are doubtless such as most readers will make, which alone is a sufficient reason for dropping the doleful tone and assuming a cheerful one, or at least substituting moral causes and daily incidents in place of the prodigious or the singular. I shall not fall hereafter into that strain." The two last novels of our author, however, although purified from the more glaring defects of the preceding, were so inferior in their general power and originality of conception, that they never rose to the same level in public favor.

In the year 1801, Brown returned to his native city, Philadelphia, where he established his residence in the family of his brother. Here he continued, steadily pursuing his literary avocations, and in 1803, undertook the conduct of a periodical, entitled The Literary Magazine and American Register. A great change had taken place in his opinions on more than one important topic connected with human life and happiness, and, indeed, in his general tone of thinking, since abandoning his professional career. Brighter prospects no doubt suggested to him more cheerful considerations. Instead of a mere dreamer in the world of fancy, he had now become a practical man; larger experience and deeper meditation had shown him the emptiness of his Utopian theories; and though his sensibilities were as ardent, and as easily enlisted as ever in the cause of humanity, his schemes of amelioration were built upon, not against the existing institutions of society. The enunciation of the principles, on which the periodical above alluded to was to be conducted, is so honorable every way to his heart and his under standing, that we cannot refrain from making a brief extract from it.

"In an age like this, when the foundations of religion and morality have been so boldly attacked, it seems necessary, in announcing a work of this nature, to be particularly explicit as to the path which the editor means to pursue. He, therefore, avows himself to be, without equivocation or reserve, the ardent friend and the willing champion of the Christian religion. Christian piety he reveres as the highest excellence of human beings; and the amplest reward he can seek for his labor is the consciousness of having, in some degree, however inconsiderable, contributed to recommend the practice of religious duties. As in the conduct of this work a supreme regard will be paid to the interests of religion and morality, he will scrupulously guard against all that dishonors and impairs that principle. Every thing that savors of indelicacy or licentiousness will be rigorously proscribed. His poetical pieces may be dull, but they shall at least be free from voluptuousness or sensuality; and his prose, whether seconded or not by genius and knowledge, shall scrupulously aim at the promotion of public and private virtue."

During his abode in New York, our author had formed an attachment to an amiable and accomplished young lady, Miss Elizabeth Linn, daughter of the excellent and highly gifted Presbyterian divine, Dr. William Linn, of that city. Their mutual attachment, in which the impulses of the heart were sanctioned by the understanding, was followed by their marriage in November, 1804, after which he never again removed his residence from Philadelphia.

With the additional responsibilities of his new station, he pursued his literary labors with increased diligence. He projected the plan of an Annual Register, the first work of the kind in the country, and in 1806 edited the first volume of the publication, which was undertaken at the risk of an eminent bookseller of Philadelphia, Mr. Conrad, who had engaged his editorial labors in the conduct of the former Magazine, begun in 1803. When it is considered, that both these periodicals were placed under the superintendence of one individual, and that he bestowed such indefatigable attention on them, that they were not only prepared, but a large portion actually executed by his own hands, we shall form no mean opinion of the extent and variety of his stores of information, and his facility in applying them. Both works are replete with evidences of the taste and erudition of their editor, embracing a wide range of miscellaneous articles, essays, literary criticism, and scientific researches. The historical portion of "The Register," in particular, comprehending, in addition to the political annals of the principal states of Europe and of our own country, an elaborate inquiry into the origin and organization of our domestic institutions, displays a discrimination in the selection of incidents, and a good faith and candor in the mode of discussing them, that entitle it to great authority as a record of contemporary transactions. Eight volumes were published of the first mentioned periodical, and the latter was continued under his direction till the end of the fifth volume, 1809.

In addition to these regular, and, as they may be called, professional labors, he indulged his prolific pen in various speculations, both of a literary and political character, many of which appeared in the pages of the "Port Folio." Among other occasional productions we may notice a beautiful biographical sketch of his wife's brother, Dr. J. B. Linn, pastor of the Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, whose lamented death occurred in the year succeeding Brown's marriage. We must not leave out of the account three elaborate and extended pamphlets, published between 1803 and

1809, on political topics of deep interest to the community at that time. The first of these, on the cession of Louisiana to the French, soon went into a second edition. They all excited general attention, at the time of their appearance, by the novelty of their arguments, the variety and copiousness of their information, the liberality of their views, the independence, so rare at that day, of foreign prejudices, the exemption, still rarer, from the bitterness of party spirit; and, lastly, the tone of loyal and heartfelt patriotism,—a patriotism without cant,—with which the author dwells on the expanding glory and prosperity of his country, in a strain of prophecy, that it is our boast has now become history.

Thus occupied, Brown's situation seemed now to afford him all the means for happiness attainable in this life. His own labors secured to him an honorable independence, and a high reputation, which, to a mind devoted to professional or other intellectual pursuits, is usually of far higher estimation than gain. Round his own fireside, he found ample scope for the exercise of his affectionate sensibilities; while the tranquil pleasures of domestic life proved the best possible relaxation for a mind wearied by severe intellectual effort. His grateful heart was deeply sensible to the extent of his blessings, and in more than one letter he indulges in a vein of reflection, which

shows, that his only solicitude was from the fear of their instability. His own health furnished too well-grounded cause for such apprehensions.

We have already noticed, that he set out in life with a feeble constitution. His sedentary habits and intense application had not, as it may well be believed, contributed to repair the defects of nature. He had for some time shown a disposition to pulmonary complaints, and had raised blood more than once, which he in vain endeavored to persuade himself did not proceed from the lungs. As the real character of the disease disclosed itself in a manner not to be mistaken, his anxious friends would have persuaded him to cross the water in the hope of reestablishing his health by a seasonable change of climate: But Brown could not endure the thoughts of so long a separation from his beloved family, and he trusted to the effect of a temporary abstinence from business, and of one of those excursions into the country, by which he had so often recruited his health and spirits.

In the summer of 1809 he made a tour into New Jersey and New York. A letter addressed to one of his family from the banks of the Hudson, during this journey, exhibits in melancholy colors how large a portion of his life had been clouded by disease, which now, indeed, was too oppressive to admit of any other alleviation than

what he could find in the bosom of his own family.

"My dearest Mary,—Instead of wandering about, and viewing more nearly a place that affords very pleasing landscapes, here am I, hovering over the images of wife, children, and sisters. I want to write to you and home, and though unable to procure paper enough to form a letter, I cannot help saying something, even on this scrap.

I am mortified to think how incurious and inactive a mind has fallen to my lot. I left home with reluctance. If I had not brought a beloved part of my home along with me, I should probably have not left it at all. At a distance from home, my enjoyments, my affections are beside you. If swayed by mere inclination, I should not be out of your company a quarter of an hour, between my parting and returning hour; but I have some mercy on you and Susan, and a due conviction of my want of power to beguile your vacant hour with amusement, or improve it by instruction. Even if I were ever so well, and if my spirits did not continually hover on the brink of dejection, my talk could only make you yawn; as things are, my company can only tend to create a gap, indeed.

"When have I known that lightness and vivacity of mind which the divine flow of health,

even in calamity, produces in some men, and would produce in me, no doubt; at least, when not soured by misfortune? Never; scarcely ever; not longer than an half-hour at a time, since I have called myself man, and not a moment since I left

you."

Finding these brief excursions productive of no salutary change in his health, he at length complied with the entreaties of his friends, and determined to try the effect of a voyage to Europe in the following spring. That spring he was doomed never to behold. About the middle of November, he was taken with a violent pain in his left side, for which he was bled. From that time forwards he was confined to his chamber. His malady was not attended with the exemption from actual pain, with which nature seems sometimes willing to compensate the sufferer for the length of its duration. His sufferings were incessant and acute; and they were supported, not only without a murmur, but with an appearance of cheerfulness, to which the hearts of his friends could but ill respond. He met the approach of death in the true spirit of Christian philosophy. No other dread, but that of separation from those dear to him on earth, had power to disturb his tranquillity for a moment. But the temper of his mind in his last hours is best disclosed in a communication from that faithful partner, who contributed, more than any other, to support him through them. "He always felt for others more than for himself; and the evidences of sorrow in those around him, which could not at all times be suppressed; appeared to affect him more than his own sufferings. Whenever he spoke of the probability of a fatal termination to his disease, it was in an indirect and covered manner, as 'you must do so and so when I am absent,' or 'when I am asleep.' He surrendered not up one faculty of his soul but with his last breath. He saw death in every step of his approach, and viewed him as a messenger that brought with him no terrors. He frequently expressed his resignation; but his resignation was not produced by apathy or pain; for while he bowed with submission to the Divine will, he felt with the keenest sensibility his separation from those who made this world but too dear to him. Towards the last he spoke of death without disguise, and appeared to wish to prepare his friends for the event, which he felt to be approaching. A few days previous to his change, as sitting up in the bed, he fixed his eyes on the sky, and desired not to be spoken to until he first spoke. In this position, and with a serene countenance, he continued for some minutes, and then said to his wife, 'When I desired you not to speak to me, I had the most transporting and sublime feelings I have ever experienced; I wanted to enjoy them and know how long they would last; ' concluding with requesting her to remember the circumstance."

A visible change took place in him on the morning of the 19th of February, 1810; and he caused his family to be assembled around his bed, when he took leave of each one of them in the most tender and impressive manner. He lingered however a few days longer, remaining in the full possession of his faculties, to the 22nd of the month, when he expired without a struggle. He had reached the thirty-ninth year of his age the month preceding his death. The family, which he left, consisted of a widow and four children.

There was nothing striking in Brown's personal appearance. His manners, however, were distinguished by a gentleness and unaffected simplicity, which rendered them extremely agreeable. He possessed colloquial powers, which do not always fall to the lot of the practised and ready writer. His rich and various acquisitions supplied an unfailing fund for the edification of his hearers. They did not lead him, however, to affect an air of superiority, or to assume too prominent a part in the dialogue, especially in large or mixed company, where he was rather disposed to be silent, reserving the display of his powers for the unrestrained intercourse of friendship. He was a

stranger, not only to base and malignant passions, but to the paltry jealousies which sometimes sour the intercourse of men of letters. On the contrary, he was ever prompt to do ample justice to the merits of others. His heart was warm with the feeling of universal benevolence. Too sanguine and romantic views had exposed him to some miscalculations and consequent disappointments in youth; from which, however, he was subsequently retrieved by the strength of his understanding, which, combining with what may be called his natural elevation of soul, enabled him to settle the soundest principles for the regulation of his opinions and conduct in after-life. His reading was careless and desultory, but his appetite was voracious; and the great amount of miscellaneous information, which he thus amassed, was all demanded to supply the outpourings of his mind in a thousand channels of entertainment and instruction. His unwearied application is attested by the large amount of his works, large even for the present day, when mind seems to have caught the accelerated movement, so generally given to the operations of machinery. The whole number of Brown's printed works, comprehending his editorial as well as original productions, to the former of which his own pen contributed a very disproportionate share, is not less than four-and-twenty printed volumes, not to mention various pamphlets, anonymous contributions to divers periodicals, as well as more than one compilation of laborious research, which he left unfinished at his death.

Of this vast amount of matter produced within the brief compass of little more than ten years, that portion, on which his fame as an author must permanently rest, is his novels. We have already entered too minutely into the merits of these productions, to require any thing further than a few general observations. They may probably claim to be regarded as having first opened the way to the successful cultivation of romantic fiction in this country. Great doubts were long entertained of our capabilities for immediate success in this department. We had none of the buoyant, stirring associations of a romantic age, none of the chivalrous pageantry, the feudal and border story, or Robin-Hood adventure, none of the dim, shadowy superstitions and the traditional legends, which had gathered, like moss, round every stone, hill, and valley of the olden countries. Every thing here wore a spick-and-span new aspect, and lay in the broad, garish sunshine of every-day life. We had none of the picturesque varieties of situation or costume; every thing lay on the same dull, prosaic level; in short, we had none of the most obvious elements of poetry, at least so it appeared to the vulgar eye. It required the eye

of genius to detect the rich stores of romantic and poetic interest, that lay beneath the crust of societv. Brown was aware of the capabilities of our country; and the poverty of the results he was less inclined to impute to the soil, than to the cultivation of it. At least this would appear from some remarks dropped in his correspondence in 1794, several years before he broke ground in this field himself. "It used to be a favorite maxim with me, that the genius of a poet should be sacred to the glory of his country. How far this rule can be reduced to practice by an American bard, how far he can prudently observe it, and what success has crowned the efforts of those, who in their compositions have shown that they have not been unmindful of it, is perhaps not worth the inquiry.

"Does it not appear to you, that, to give poetry a popular currency and universal reputation, a particular cast of manners and state of civilization is necessary? I have sometimes thought so, but perhaps it is an error, and the want of popular poems argues only the demerit of those who have already written, or some defect in their works, which unfits them for every taste or understanding."

The success of our author's experiment, which was entirely devoted to American subjects, fully established the soundness of his opinions, which

have been abundantly confirmed by the prolific pens of Irving, Cooper, Sedgwick, and other accomplished writers, who in their diversified sketches of national character and scenery, have shown the full capacity of our country for all the purposes of fiction. Brown does not direct himself, like them, to the illustration of social life and character. He is little occupied with the exterior forms of society. He works in the depths of the heart, dwelling less on human action than the sources of it. He has been said to have formed himself on Godwin. Indeed, he openly avowed his admiration of that eminent writer, and has certainly in some respects adopted his mode of operation; studying character with a philosophic rather than a poetic eye. But there is no servile imitation in all this. He has borrowed the same torch, indeed, to read the page of human nature, but the lesson he derives from it is totally different. His great object seems to be to exhibit the soul in scenes of extraordinary interest. For this purpose striking and perilous situations are devised, or circumstances of strong moral excitement, a troubled conscience, partial gleams of insanity, or bodings of imaginary evil which haunt the soul, and force it into all the agonies of terror. In the midst of the fearful strife. we are coolly invited to investigate its causes and all the various phenomena which attend it; every

contingency, probability, nay possibility, however remote, is discussed and nicely balanced. The heat of the reader is seen to evaporate in this cold-blooded dissection, in which our author seems to rival Butler's hero, who,

> "Profoundly skilled in analytic, Could distinguish and divide A hair 'twixt south and southwest side."

We are constantly struck with the strange contrast of over-passion and over-reasoning. But perhaps, after all, these defects could not be pruned away from Brown's composition without detriment to his peculiar excellences. Si non errasset, fecerat ille minus. If so, we may willingly pardon the one for the sake of the other.

We cannot close without adverting to our author's style. He bestowed great pains on the formation of it, but in our opinion without great success, at least in his novels. It has an elaborate, factitious air, contrasting singularly with the general simplicity of his taste, and the careless rapidity of his composition. We are aware, indeed, that works of imagination may bear a higher flush of color, a poetical varnish, in short, that must be refused to graver and more studied narrative. No writer has been so felicitous in reaching the exact point of good taste in this particular as Scott, who, on a ground-work of prose, may be said to have enabled his readers to breathe an atmosphere of poetry. More than one author, on the other hand, as Florian in French, for example, and Lady Morgan in English, in their attempts to reach this middle region, are eternally fluttering on the wing of sentiment, equally removed from good prose and

good poetry.

Brown, perhaps, willing to avoid this extreme, has fallen into the opposite one, forcing his style into unnatural vigor and condensation. Unusual and pedantic epithets, and elliptical forms of expression in perpetual violation of idiom, are resorted to, at the expense of simplicity and nature. He seems averse to telling simple things in a simple way. Thus, for example, we have such expressions as these, "I was fraught with the persuasion that my life was endangered." "The outer door was ajar. I shut it with trembling eagerness, and drew every bolt that appended to it." "His brain seemed to swell beyond its continent." "I waited till their slow and hoarser inspirations showed them to be both asleep. Just then, on changing my position, my head struck against some things which depended from the ceiling of the closet." "It was still dark. but my sleep was at an end, and by a common apparatus [tinderbox?] that lay beside my bed, I could instantly produce a light." "On recovering from deliquium, you found it where it had

been dropped." It is unnecessary to multiply examples, which we should not have adverted to at all, had not our opinions in this matter been at variance with those of more than one respectable critic. This sort of language is no doubt in very bad taste. It cannot be denied, however, that, although these defects are sufficiently general to give a coloring to the whole of his composition, yet his works afford many passages of undeniable eloquence and rhetorical beauty. It must be remembered, too, that his novels were his first productions, thrown off with careless profusion, and exhibiting many of the defects of an immature mind, which longer experience and practice might have corrected. Indeed his later writings are recommended by a more correct and natural phraseology, although it must be allowed that the graver topics to which they are devoted, if they did not authorize, would at least render less conspicuous any studied formality and artifice of expression.

These verbal blemishes, combined with defects already alluded to in the development of his plots, but which all relate to the form rather than the *fond* of his subject, have made our author less extensively popular than his extraordinary powers would otherwise have entitled him to be. His peculiar merits, indeed, appeal to a higher order of criticism than is to be found in

ordinary and superficial readers. Like the productions of Coleridge, or Wordsworth, they seem to rely on deeper sensibilities than most men possess, and tax the reasoning powers more severely than is agreeable to readers who resort to works of fiction only as an epicurean indulgence. The number of their admirers is, therefore, necessarily more limited than that of writers of less talent, who have shown more tact in accommodating themselves to the tone of popular feeling — or prejudice.

But we are unwilling to part, with any thing like a tone of disparagement lingering on our lips, with the amiable author, to whom our rising literature is under such large and various obligations; who first opened a view into the boundless fields of fiction, which subsequent adventurers have successfully explored; who has furnished so much for our instruction in the several departments of history and criticism; and has rendered still more effectual service by kindling in the bosom of the youthful scholar the same generous love of letters which glowed in his own; whose writings, in fine, have uniformly inculcated the pure and elevated morality exemplified in his life. The only thing we can regret is, that a life so useful should have been so short; if, indeed. that can be considered short, which has done so much towards attaining life's great end.