BOOK II.

NORTHERN DIVISION OF THE HISTORY, 1788–1810.

CHAPTER I.

METHODISM IN THE NORTHERN DISTRICT, 1788–1800.

We have seen that the first recognition of Wyoming circuit on the Minutes was in 1791. This same year is distinguished by the evidence of progress on the west of the Hudson in a higher latitude. Two new circuits appear on the Minutes this year in this direction, namely, Saratoga and Otsego, the former containing one hundred members and the latter eighty. Methodism had already found its way into the new settlements up the valley of the Mohawk, and along the line between Albany and Cooperstown, and perhaps still further west.

In 1788 the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson was appointed to the charge of a district embracing an extensive territory in the valley of the Hudson and on the shores of Lake Champlain. Several zealous young men were put under his charge, and he was directed by Bishop Asbury "to do the best he could." In his Journal he says: "I was very uneasy in my mind, being unacquainted with the country, an entire stranger to its inhabitants, there being no Methodists further north than Westchester; but I gave myself to earnest prayer for direction. I knew that the Lord was with me. In the night season, in a dream, it seemed as if the whole country up the North River, as far as Lake Champlain, east and west, was open to my view.

"After the conference adjourned I requested the young men to meet me. Light seemed so to reflect on my path that I gave them directions where to begin, and which way to form their circuits. I also appointed the time of each quarterly meeting, requested them to take up a collection in every place where they preached, and told them that I should go up the North River to the extreme parts of the work, visiting the towns and cities on the way, and in my return I should visit them all and hold their quarterly meetings. I had no doubt but the Lord would do wonders, for the young men were pious, zealous, and laborious."*

The method pursued by these "young men" was to travel through the portion of the country which they proposed to embrace in their circuit, and inquire who would open their doors for their reception, and for the accommodation of such of their neighbors as might wish to listen to the preaching of the Gospel. They found open doors and willing hearts everywhere, notwithstanding the strong prejudices which generally prevailed against the new sect. Samuel Wigton and Lemuel Smith were sent to the extreme north, one to Cambridge circuit, and the other to Champlain, or rather they proceeded to form circuits which were to be called by those names. They labored, however, together.

Smith and Wigton came together to Hampton, Washington county, New York, and called at the house of Mr. Samuel Bibbins, and opened to him their mission. They were made welcome to the hospitalities of his house and permitted to preach there. Samuel Bibbins, jr., declared that he had seen these two men in a dream, and knew them as soon as he laid his eyes upon them. At the first meeting the husband, wife, and son Samuel, with many others, were awakened. A class was immediately formed, and thenceforward Mr. Bibbins's house was the home of the Methodist preachers, and, as often as was required, the place of preaching.

* Life of Garrettson.

Samuel Bibbins, jr., was unusually gifted in prayer and exhortation, and soon became a local preacher. The work of revival followed him, and hundreds were converted through his instrumentality.* In after years he was admitted into the Genesee Conference, and was a successful laborer to the close of his life, which took place in 1856.

The work spread rapidly in all directions. It was in vain that the people were warned to avoid the "ignorant Methodists," who were "the false prophets who should come in the last days, and if it were possible deceive the very elect." The people would go to hear them, and hearing them, they became convicted of sin, and that ended the argument of their pastors. The work spread into Vermont and at the west into the new settlements.

After Mr. Garrettson had passed over his district he reports that "many houses, and hands, and hearts were opened; and," he says, "before the commencement of the winter we had several large circuits formed, and the most of the preachers were comfortably situated; sinners in a variety of places began to inquire what they must do to be saved."

In 1791 Philip Wager and Jonathan Newman were sent into the Otsego country to form a circuit, and they reported eighty members. This year Otsego county was formed, being taken from Montgomery. It was a wild country, the settlements few and far between; there were scarcely any roads, and the people were poor, wicked, and reckless. The country was settled, so far as it was settled at all, mostly by New England people. They had been educated in the Calvinistic creed, and forced to attend church on the

*A strange providence is connected with the record of these facts. On the fifth of July, 1859, Rev. Elisha Bibbins, the youngest son of Samuel Bibbins, sen., made us a visit, and communicated the particulars related in the text. We told him they were very timely, as we had just reached the period to which they refer, and needed the information just then as a link in the chain of events. He conversed upon the events of those times, as he had received them from his father and brothers, with great interest and animation. The next morning he died in our private room, where he had been brought, in a severe paroxysm, at about four o'clock.

Sabbath; but when once separated from their early associations, and freed from the restrictions of the Puritanic code, they, as a general thing, broke loose from all moral restraints, and were a Sabbath-breaking, irreligious race, some of them almost as wild and savage as the wolves and bears which often invaded their inclosures.

To such a population the Gospel, as preached by the old Methodist preachers, was admirably adapted. The preachers were plain, common-sense, brave men. They were taken from among the masses, accustomed to privations, used to danger, trained to hard work; their sympathies were with the people, and they took hold of their hearts.

Many of the old preachers had served in the army in the Revolutionary struggle, and some of them had been giants in wickedness. Such men were not likely to prove cowards in the great moral struggle in which they were engaged. They had fought for liberty under their country's banner, and had faced death in almost every form; and how were they likely to face the enemies of God and truth, and fight under the banner of Christ for the liberation of the slaves of sin and Satan? Ah! they were as brave soldiers of the cross as they had been soldiers for civil liberty and American independence. Jonathan Newman was just the man for the work assigned him. He became identified with Otsego circuit, and his dust sleeps under its green turf. He was a mighty preacher, and was usually in the advance line of attack. He was the first Methodist preacher who visited many interesting points where Methodism now holds, and has long held an enviable position.

In 1792 two new circuits are formed, still further at the north, on the St. Lawrence, called Cataraque and Oswegatchie. This year Jonathan Newman and James Covel are upon Otsego circuit, and they extended their labors up the Mohawk Valley, and over the wild ridges and vales where originate the tributaries of the Susquehanna.

The *elders* in this early period acted more as missionaries than in later times. They not only followed their preach-

ers in their pioneer work, and attended the quarterly meetings, but they often made excursions into unexplored territory, and planted the standard of the cross quite in advance of the circuit lines. This year Mr. Garrettson made a journey to the west as far as Whitestown, and prepared the way for the establishment of regular appointments, and for embracing that region within the bounds of a circuit on the Mohawk River.

Mr. Garrettson visited Utica in 1824 with his family, and it was our impression that he then gave us an account of that visit; but to be certain of the fact we addressed a line to Miss Mary R. Garrettson upon the subject, and received from her the following in reply:

"RHINEBECK, *Dec.* 23, 1859.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I have been examining my father's papers, as well as the weak state of my eyes would allow. I think there are no journals for either of the years you mention, except a very short one for '91, in which the western part of this state is not mentioned. However, I know that my father's first district in this state led him as far west as Whitestown, near Utica, for I heard him speak of it, not only when we were in Utica in 1824, but before and after. I think he was the first presiding elder that region ever saw."

In an article headed "Saquoit Station," in the Christian Advocate and Journal for April 10, 1840, by Rev. Z. Paddock, we have confirmatory evidence of the fact which we have taken much pains to establish. Dr. Paddock says: "Forty years ago the approaching season the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, of precious memory, preached the first Methodist sermon that was probably ever heard in this neighborhood. The services were performed in a private dwelling, which then stood about two miles from this place, on the direct road to Utica, but which has long since gone to decay. There are a few, and only a few, now living who heard the sermon in question; but their memory of it and of its distinguished author is distinct, vivid, and affecting."

This year terminated Mr. Garrettson's labors as presiding elder in the western settlements, and we are not able to find any trace of a regular quarterly meeting so far west as Whitestown until the following year.

In 1793 Thomas Ware succeeds Freeborn Garrettson in charge of the district including the part of the state of New York west of the Hudson. This year Herkimer circuit appears on the Minutes, with Jonathan Newman and David Bartine as the preachers.

There is still preserved a stewards' book, which was kept by the late Elijah Davis, of Saquoit, who was probably the first circuit steward in Paris, in which the following is the first record of the collections and disbursements of a quarter: "At a quarterly meeting held in Paris, Dec. 28, 1793," "Brother Newman" is paid "£3. 18*s*. 2*d*." It is probable that "the elder" was not present at this quarterly meeting. This year Mr. Newman preached in Paris, and made it a regular appointment in Herkimer circuit. The old people say he was the first Methodist preacher who preached in Saquoit.

The next record is as follows: "At a quarterly meeting held at Fort Plain, November 29, 1794, paid Thomas Ware, elder, 8*s*. 0*d*.; Smith Weeks, £4 2*s*. 1½*d*.; William Vredenburg, £1 4*s*. 0*d*.; John Daniels, 6*s*. 6*d*. Total, £6 0*s*. 7½*d*."

This old book gives abundant evidence of the long rides, numerous appointments, and small pay of the old preachers.*

1794. Delaware circuit appears upon the Minutes, with a membership of two hundred and ninety. This circuit lay on the head waters of the Delaware, embracing the country west of the Catskill Mountains and east of the Susquehanna valley. The hardy itinerants found their way among the

* This book we often saw and examined when we lived in the house of our venerable friend Davis, in 1821, and are now happy to acknowledge our obligations to the Rev. G. C. Elliott, of the Oneida Conference, for a copy of a considerable portion of its curious details.

towering peaks of the Catskills and the deep valleys of the Delaware River, and Schoharie and Cherry Valley Creeks, (as rough and romantic a region as civilization ever penetrated,) and there won multitudes to Christ.

In 1795 we mark the progress of the work at the north in the addition of Bay of Quinte and Niagara to the list of circuits. The flame had now extended along the shore of Lake Ontario, and begins to shine across the Canada line. There are two hundred and sixty-five members on Bay of Quinte and sixty-four on Niagara. The work now moves on northward and westward with encouraging rapidity.

We find no new circuit recognized in our territory for the next three years. In 1798 Chenango appears, and here is Jonathan Newman again, in charge of a new circuit. This circuit took in the extremes of Otsego, Herkimer, and Tioga, embracing the Chenango and Unadilla valleys, and many small and remote settlements among the hills. Freeborn Garrettson, presiding elder.

In 1799 we find in the Minutes Mohawk, and Cayuga and Oneida added to the list of circuits. Mohawk is taken from Herkimer and has one hundred and eighteen members. Oneida has only twenty-eight. William M'Lenahan, presiding elder.

The year 1800 was signalized by many gracious revivals of religion, and a great enlargement of the work. Within the portion of the state of New York west of Albany and Saratoga circuits, we now find fifteen hundred and seventy-three members.

This year Barzillai Willy and William Vredenburg are upon Chenango circuit. The latter we recollect to have heard in old Middlefield, our native place, when we were a boy. He was what was called a Low Dutchman—a man six feet high and well proportioned, with a pleasant face and a stentorian voice. There was no religious excitement in the place at the time, but he poured out such a tide of earnest appeals and exhortations that a young lady broke down and wept. She subsequently experienced religion.

His whole frame seemed to be agitated, and waving and clapping his great hands he roared out, "I am after souls, and souls I must have," and he was not disappointed.

Mrs. Hubbard, a sister of the late Rev. Samuel Morrison, related to us the following anecdote of Vredenburg: The late Brother Smith Arnold, previous to his becoming a preacher, living somewhere near the Hudson, opened his doors for preaching. One of the preachers came and greatly interested the people. Arnold was a young Methodist, and had high hopes that his neighbors would continue to be gratified with the meetings. Two weeks after the first appointment a large awkward man rode up to his door and inquired, "Does Smit Airnold live here?" Upon being answered in the affirmative, the stranger dismounted, took his saddle-bags upon his arm and walked in. Very much to Mr. Arnold's consternation, he found that the Low Dutchman was the preacher. In the evening the people collected, and the stranger read a hymn in broken English, and proceeded to address the throne of grace. To Mr. Arnold there seemed to be little in the prayer but earnestness; it would all be well enough in a circle of Methodists, but he was sure that his neighbors would be so disgusted as to leave the house before he commenced preaching. But, much to his astonishment, they all took their seats and seemed ready to listen with becoming gravity. He proceeded with his sermon, or rather his exhortation, in a most vehement strain. He lifted his tremendous voice to its highest strains, and vociferated the terrors of the law and the invitations of the Gospel, ejecting a shower of saliva from his mouth. Mr. Arnold was overwhelmed with confusion. His imagination was so wrought up that he thought he saw the curled lip and the wagging head every where through the congregation when he dared to open his eyes.

The meeting was closed, and the people retired in silence, as he supposed, out of respect to him. The preacher was off early the next morning, but had no sooner gone than one

of Mr. Arnold's neighbors—one of many for whom he had been hearing—came in with a sad countenance. As soon as he saw him he tried to prepare his mind for a sound abusing. But what was his astonishment when the man, in broken accents, interrupted with sobs, began to talk about his sins and his exposure to ruin. In the course of the day he found that the arrows of the Almighty, awkwardly but unerringly hurled by the Dutchman, had done extensive execution, and were rankling in many hearts. This singular beginning resulted in a powerful revival and the salvation of many souls.

We will now return to Chenango circuit, where, in the year 1800, William Vredenburg was one of the preachers. A great revival took place this year in Brookfield, and the Giles family were converted and brought over to Methodism. The following somewhat particular account of this event is from the pen of Rev. Charles Giles, one of the subjects of the work:

"The year 1800 opened in our history, and brought a glorious reformation with it. My sister Anna, who was older than myself, was among the first-fruits of that spiritual harvest. She possessed a great share of vivacity, and was excessively fond of gayety and amusements. Her readiness in conversation, frank and easy manners, won her many friends, and gave her a high rank among her associates. Hence a strange pulse of feeling was excited among the youth of the town, when it was known that she was under religious impressions. But while they were so concerned on account of her seriousness, she was praying to God for mercy and salvation. Shortly after her prayers were answered, and her anxious soul was released from the power of sin and unbelief. Joy and peace gained entire control over her consecrated spirit.

"But before she had received the evidence of her justification, the apparent opposition to her religious course manifested by her father, in his doubting looks and expressions respecting a change of heart, and Jesus Christ for-

giving sins, occasioned a great conflict in her mind. One night, with deep anxiety of soul, she prayed before retiring to rest, that something comforting might be revealed to her in the visions of the night. While there wrapped in soft repose—according to her own version—'I seemed to be transported into an open space; there, on my left hand, a glorious being appeared with a smile on his countenance; and it was impressed on my understanding that the being whom I beheld was the Saviour. On my right hand stood my father. I was very anxious to go to Jesus Christ the Saviour; though I stood musing in profound silence, it seemed that my father knew the secret desires of my heart, and felt a strong opposition to my ardent inclination. Hence he stretched out his hand toward me filled with bright dollars, and said, "Here, child, don't go to heaven through Christ." I turned and looked on my left hand, then gazed on the money; then turned back again and looked on the Saviour, who at length spoke and said to me, "I am the way." When I awoke in the morning I found it was a dream.

"'It was, however, impressed on my mind that I must communicate this singular dream to my father; which undertaking seemed difficult for me to perform, in the position I then occupied. Knowing my father's prejudices, I was fearful that he would not receive it kindly if I should relate the vision to him. I was resolved, however, to do what appeared to be my duty, leaving the consequences in the hand of Providence. Accordingly, as soon as a convenient opportunity afforded in the morning, I communicated the dream to my father, who heard me attentively, and for some reason appeared much affected. But I did not then inform him who the man was that offered me the money, nor did he question me on the subject at that time. After relating my dream, I immediately retired into my room, and knelt down before the Lord to pray: I was there, in silent devotion, when my father opened the door and came in. Signs of mental distress were evidently depicted on his coun-

tenance as he walked slowly along and sat down. Though my feelings before were intense, stronger emotions were excited in my trembling heart when my father said to me, with a solemn, anxious look, "Do you know the person who presented the money to you, in your dream?" "Yes, father, I do," was my reply; "the person was yourself." Immediately he fell into extreme agony of mind, and without control he wept aloud. The sound of his lamentations brought my mother into the room, where I tried to pray for them, and mingled my flowing tears with theirs at the altar of devotion.'

"Truly my father, by the incident of my sister's dream, was deeply affected at the time; it being so remarkably personal, he could not resist its influence; still, it did not appear that he felt much mental anguish on account of his own sinfulness. The wonderful effects produced by the reformation there had evidently disturbed his mind, and led him to examine his system of faith critically, which was assailed at that time by a new kind of arguments, and stood trembling on its false and rotten foundation. Weighing these conflicting subjects kept his mind continually vacillating; at one time opposing, at another yielding, according to the changeful tide of his feelings. In this perplexed state of mind my father appeared at the time my sister stated her dream to him.

"So time rolled onward, and week succeeded week, laden with the effects of good and evil, till the following eventful hour came. My sister Anna, whose dream I have related, had been growing stronger in faith and confidence as she pursued her pious course. On a memorable morning she came from her room under the influence of divine love, threw her arms around her mother's neck, and, with tears and melting tones of affection, exhorted her to pray, and to give her soul into the compassionate arms of Christ. Then, urged by the same holy impulse, she flew to her father, sprinkling the floor with tears as she went, and fell on his neck, exhorting him to seek salvation—to fly to Jesus Christ

for mercy, who was willing to forgive his sins, and restore him to divine favor. The rest of us were silent, sad spectators of the moving scene.

"Although my father had been, in years elapsed, a strong advocate for Universalism, in this awful moment his delusive theory fled instantly away, like chaff before the wind. His soul was moved with horror. He melted like wax amid a flame. While tears flowed down his face, in extreme agitation of mind and with a faltering, tremulous voice, he cried aloud: 'O! I fear that there is no mercy for me! I have rebelled against God so long that I am now left hopeless under his frown. But, children,' continued he, 'there is mercy for you; you have not sinned as long as I have, or grieved the Spirit of God by opposing the truth, and defending errors as I have done. You all can obtain forgiveness and be happy forever.'

"As my father ceased speaking, while his sorrows were audible, my sister knelt before the throne of mercy and prayed that the God of salvation would have compassion on us all, who were at the time melted into tenderness around her. Solemn and deep impressions were made by the Spirit of God on each trembling breast, which created an ardent desire in our hearts to be saved from sin; a sense of which was then pressing heavily upon our troubled spirits.

"Imboldened by the grace of God which abounded in her heart, this converted sister improved every opportunity to communicate to her youthful associates the wonderful things she had experienced, and exhorted them to repent, and pray, and seek salvation. Such affectionate admonitions coming often suddenly upon them, when they were unprepared for resistance, and coming from one also whom they highly esteemed, produced amazing effects. A deep seriousness was becoming apparent among them, and, indeed, the same happy influence was spreading through all classes of community."

"On a memorable night I obtained the evidence, the witness

of the Spirit sealed upon my heart. That evening a meeting was appointed for prayer, about one quarter of a mile from my father's residence; it so happened that my parents were not at the meeting. Many gathered to the appointed place, some of whom were rejoicing in the liberty of salvation, while others were sorrowing in deep distress of mind. After singing a suitable hymn, we all knelt before the throne of grace to pray, and to give ourselves to God in a sacred covenant. As the devotional exercise progressed, sighs and awful wailings were heard rising from every part of the congregation. The lady of the house, together with others, who were in extreme agony of soul, cried aloud for mercy; no one rebuked them for crying. It was an awful, overwhelming season. The sound broke the repose and stillness of the night, and was borne along the valley, and fell impressively on the sleepless organs of my dear parents at home.

"While these exercises were going on around me I was knelt before a bench, in deep thoughtfulness, wrapped almost in speechless awe. My mind, at the time, was so abstracted from the things of earth, and absorbed in carefulness about my own soul, that time moved onward unnoticed, and the cries and distress of others passed over me like sounds in a dream. Our minister and our pious friends, like guardian angels, remained with us, praying with ceaseless solicitude for our salvation, and speaking to us often to keep the promises of God before our mental vision.

"The distress of my mind at that time, however, did not proceed from a burden of guilt and condemnation as before. But my labor was an intense desire to be a Christian; I wanted a knowledge and witness of the fact imprinted on my heart. While I was there knelt before the Lord, with the eye of my mind directed heavenward, a strait gate appeared to my view, which it seemed I had entered; and directly before me a beautiful narrow way opened, ascending to the throne of God. And on each side of this celestial

highway I descried a dreary desert, where I saw many of my wretched fellow-beings wandering in darkness, entangled with spells and snares, groping their way amid the dismal chaos. While gazing with wonder on the scene around me, I thought that I saw the glorious angel of the covenant descending on this heavenly road, and, as he came near, part of his crimson mantle seemed to wave over me, impressing my mind, at the same time, with this solemn charge: '*Doubt no more!*'

"All this I believed was only a wakeful, ideal vision, which passed before the eye of my mind at the time. Still it might have been the effect of some supernatural agency. These views, however, did not constitute any part of the foundation of my Christian hope. Benevolent feelings, love to God and his cause, a concern for the souls of my fellow-mortals, together with the peace, assurance, and faith which I felt at the time, formed the basis of my hope. These evidences, to my conscious mind, possessed the power and attributes of a reality. These heaven-born feelings and blessings, which I had felt before and then enjoyed, established the fact that I had before received the remission of my sins; that when the burden of condemnation rolled off, and left my mind in a tranquil, happy state, then I was renewed in spirit, and passed from death to life. So the events of that night confirmed me in the belief that I was in the kingdom of grace. My enraptured spirit was borne on the wings of faith and love, while my mortal frame was bent before the throne of grace. The night, I found, had passed away like a dream. The harbinger of day was entering the windows as the meeting came to a close.

"My sister Betsey, who was younger than myself, was one among the number who that night obtained a happy deliverance from sin. It was a joyful morning to us and to many. Everything in nature appeared to wear a new aspect. Heaven and earth seemed to rejoice together, while our youthful hearts exulted with rapture unknown before. The minister requested us before we left the place to de-

clare to our friends what great things the Lord had wrought for us, which obvious duty we performed with pleasure.

"As the influence of the mighty reformation spread, my oldest brother, Nicholas, came into the kingdom of grace, after enduring many conflicts with the common enemy, who followed him with sore temptations. At length the angels in heaven, and all of us, rejoiced over my dear parents, who also were consoled with redeeming grace. Finally, the whole family, and almost the entire neighborhood, together with many in the adjoining settlements, became subjects of the blessed work. The wilderness and solitary places were glad. The trees clapped their hands, while the valleys echoed the sound of the triumphal songs of free grace and free salvation."

This is a fair specimen of what occurred in many places during this interesting period. The Spirit was poured out from on high upon multitudes, and men and women, old and young, dreamed dreams, saw visions, and were filled with the spirit of prophecy.

This year the first Methodist meeting-house within the bounds of the old Genesee Conference was undertaken in the settlement on the Sauquoit, called "the Paris meeting-house." Our excellent friend, the Rev. Dr. Paddock, in an article on the "Sauquoit station," published in the Christian Advocate and Journal, 1840, gives the following interesting account of the erection of this church:

"In the year 1800 the circuit began to talk of building a place of worship, and in the succeeding year, having obtained a subscription of $800, payable chiefly in labor, resolved on commencing the work. The house now occupied by the Sauquoit society is the fruit of that effort.* At the laying of the foundation stone the late Kirkland Griffin, Esq., then a member of this society, but now a saint in heaven, knelt and offered up prayer to God. The work progressed, and when the house was ready to be raised, brethren and *sisters*

* Since this was written, we learn the old house has given place to a permanent brick structure.—G. P.

in large numbers, considering the sparseness of the population, came together; the latter furnishing in true temperance style, cake and cheese as the most appropriate refreshment. Before the raising was commenced, the Rev. Lemuel Smith, a local preacher, gave out the hymn beginning

> 'What now is my object and aim,
> What now is my hope and desire,'

which all present cordially united in singing, when with great ardor and appropriateness he addressed the throne of grace. After the building was up, and before the persons present separated, there were again singing and prayer directed by the same individual. The house thus erected has probably been the spiritual birthplace of more than a thousand souls; and how many have been blessed, and comforted, and sanctified within its sacred walls eternity alone can determine. With the exception of perhaps one log chapel, it was the first Methodist meeting-house erected in the state of New York west of Albany. The first sermon preached in it was delivered by the late Rev. Bishop Whatcoat, the house being then in an unfinished state."

A new district is formed this year, partly in the United States and partly in Canada.

CHAPTER II.

METHODISM IN THE NORTHERN DISTRICT, 1801–1810.

1801. The report of the members shows a large increase this year.

1802. The Rev. William Colbert is appointed presiding elder on Albany district at the conference in May. His diary furnishes much information with regard to the outlines of the circuits and the progress of the work. Albany district is in the Philadelphia Conference, and embraces the territory from the Hudson west as far as the settlements had proceeded within the state of New York.

The first entry which we find is Wednesday, July 7, at Seely's,* in Westmoreland. He "preached in Seely's barn," but seems not to have been in a very happy mood. From this point he proceeded to Augusta, and thence to Sherburn, dining at "friend Graham's" on his way. John Graham lived in Hamilton, on the northern extremity of Colchester settlement, and was one of the first Methodists in that region. He still had his residence there in 1814, but about this time removed west.

The quarterly meeting at Sherburn was at what was called "The old Four Corners," west of Sherburn village some four miles. This was an early center of Methodist influence. In those early times quarterly meetings were great occasions. The presiding elder was ordinarily sustained by half a dozen preachers, one or more following him from one quarterly meeting to another. The Low Dutchman, Hoyer, seems at this time to have been quite a constant companion of Mr. Colbert, and to have preached at least once at each quarterly meeting, either on Saturday or Sabbath. He was a bachelor, very eccentric, but sincere and earnest. He was admitted on trial in 1803, traveled for several years and then located. He was a hypochondriac, and sometimes gave his traveling companions great annoyance. An old Methodist once related to us an amusing instance of his nervousness. He was as usual one of the presiding elder's train, and the company came to a considerable stream, the Unadilla, which they had to cross. A freshet had taken away the bridge, and the stream must be forded below. Hoyer dare not 'ride the river.' The commencement to rebuild the bridge had been made, and progressed so far as that the sleepers were laid. Hoyer concluded to make the experiment of walking on one of the sleepers and let one of the company lead his horse across at the ford. The company passed over, but what was their

* William Seely was a plain, earnest, old style local preacher, who in his day, did good service to the Church, contributing his strength, influence, and money to the cause of Methodism. He died as he lived, a good man.

consternation when they saw poor Hoyer lose his self-command, lie down on his stomach on the log and throw his arms and legs around it, roaring for help with all his might. Two men walked the log and tried hard to persuade him to make some effort to rise and walk on, but the thing he alleged impossible; he would certainly fall into the river and be drowned. Finding all reasoning in this direction useless, they tried another method: "Well," said one, "we cannot stay here; we must go on and leave him to his fate. Farewell, Brother Hoyer." "O! O! O! don't leave me here!" Hoyer exclaimed convulsively. "Well, then get up and look right up to heaven and pray, and by God's help we will save you. Brother Hoyer, have you no faith at all? If so, you are in a poor state to die here." The terrified traveler rallied and looked up, and was soon safe.

In our boyish days we used to hear much of "Brother Hoyer," and often heard the sisters making themselves merry over his queer antics. In 1821 we saw him for the first and only time, and heard him speak in a love-feast in Sauquoit. Everybody believed him a good man, and sometimes he preached with great power.

In relation to the Sherburn quarterly meeting, Mr. Colbert makes the following entry in his diary:

"*Saturday*, 10. With Brothers Covel, Sweet, and Woodward at Sherburn. Our Brother Hoyer preached us a very plain, honest sermon from John iii, 16. Brother Sweet gave an exhortation; after him Brother Covel spoke with power. I spoke after him and concluded the meeting. Our business in conference was carried on with much moderation, and finished with peace and unanimity.

"*Sunday*, 11. This morning, at the opening of the love-feast, I felt as if shadows, clouds, and darkness rested upon me, but, glory to God! the Lord displayed his power, members spoke feelingly, and at the close of the meeting the mourners were invited to come forward and join us in prayer for deliverance. They came up, surrounded the table, the Lord poured out his Spirit, and in answer to prayer several were brought

to rejoice in the God of their salvation. So great was the stir that the doors were not opened until near twelve o'clock, and then with difficulty we got the people out of the barn into the woods. The scene under the tall beech and maple trees was truly delightful. Brother Dewey preached for us a most excellent sermon from John iv, 35, 36. Brother Sweet prayed, and Brother Woodward gave an exhortation. I spoke and Brother Covel closed the meeting. We then administered the Lord's Supper under the trees, and a blessed solemn time we had. Glory to God! We lodged at William Stover's."

Mr. Colbert thence proceeded through Onondaga Hollow to Marcellus, where he lodged at Alexander Adams's, "preached at a school-house," and here "Brother Hoyer gave an exhortation and dealt out the truth in such plainness" that he was afraid "some of them were not well pleased." He went on from Adams's to Thompson's, where he halted a day or two and read Mr. Taggart's book against Methodism. Methodism was no longer a thing that its enemies might frown down. It had assumed an importance which made it a mark for heavy ordnance, hence Taggart's attack upon it. It was answered in New England, and never was felt there as a real obstacle in the way of the progress of Methodism. Shadrach Bostwick contemplated an answer to this famous book, but William Thacher did the work.* We once saw a copy of Thacher's pamphlet, but have no distinct impression of its merits.

Mr. Colbert next moves on to Cayuga circuit. His quarterly meeting was at "friend Edie's." His entry in his diary for Sunday morning is curious; he says: "I thank God that I am brought to see the light of another morning. Here I conceive it might not be improper to insert an affair of last night. In one room six of us lodged in three beds; two of the beds were on bedsteads and one on the floor. About midnight I was awakened by a horrid yell, which

*Bostwick had nearly finished his book when the MS. was destroyed by fire. He did not resume the work.

appeared to be between the head of the bed in which Brothers Willis and Vandusen lay and the foot of that in which lay Brother Hoyer and myself. When I arose to see what was the matter Brother Hoyer was sitting up, and about to seize fast hold of me. I supposed him to be in a fit, and in an instant sprang from the bed taking the sheet with me. I flew to the door, when Brother Vandusen sprang from the foot of his bed, and in his flight had his shirt sleeve torn by Brother Willis, who laid hold of him as he sprang up. Brother Daniel White, who laid on the floor with another young man, rose up and found the young man clinging around him. Brother Alward White and his wife lay in another room trembling and sweating. Friend Edie, his wife and children, were awakened up-stairs, and his daughter found herself not far from the top of the ladder.

"Never did I see so many people so panic struck. They declared that such hideous yells they never heard before. For my part I do not recollect hearing but one, but I must confess that I never was so frightened in all my life. Brother Willis, an excellent man, had nerve enough to sustain the shock. Brother Hoyer at first laughed at us, but finding all about him so shocked, began to feel fear very sensibly. Brother Alward White thinks that it was an infernal spirit; and perhaps nothing else could have made such a noise and excited such fears. For my part, I conceive that we cannot find out what it was, and that it will be most prudent to be reserved in our conjectures."

This was a singular incident, but we see not why it might not be accounted for without presuming upon the agency of an evil spirit. Is it not probable that the nervous Dutchman, Brother Hoyer, had an alarming dream, which brought from him an unearthly yell or two? Perhaps he thought himself plunging from the log into the river, or in some other imminent peril, and uttered a convulsive scream. The fright produced no very serious consequences, whatever was its real origin.

Hoyer, who had traveled with Mr. Colbert for "five

weeks," is now left on Cayuga circuit, to supply the place of Brother Willis, who goes to Oneida.

Monday, 9, Mr. Colbert passed through "Scipio, a handsome country, crossed the Cayuga bridge, a mile more or less, on through a fine settlement called Phelps," to his "old friend Pierce Granger's, where" he "found Brother Weeks, who informed him that" his "old friend Captain Dorsey wished to see" him. The next record is all natural:

"*Tuesday*, 20. Rode to Daniel Dorsey's, where I found myself at home, and felt something like being in Maryland. I should be glad to spend a good deal of my time in this place. Captain Dorsey has a handsome farm in Lyons; and here, to my joy, I found a number of Marylanders."

On Wednesday Mr. Colbert preached "to a very serious and attentive little congregation at friend Dorsey's with satisfaction," and says: "If my feelings do not deceive me, there will be good done in this place. Several appeared to be much affected."

"*Thursday*, 22. Spent at my friend Dorsey's. This is a very agreeable family, and a place of rest for the poor wandering preachers."

None know better how to appreciate such "a place of rest" than an itinerant preacher.

His quarterly meeting for Seneca circuit was "at Zebulon Norton's, in Charlestown." Nothing of special interest seems to have transpired at that meeting. Mr. Colbert proceeds to Tioga, and puts up with his old friend Elisha Cole. He remarks that he does not see any improvement in the country since he first visited it "in '92, except in the roads." The quarterly meeting was at "Friend Tabor's, in Towanda. A blessing came on Sabbath morning." He says:

"*Sunday*, *August* 1. This morning the Lord favored us with a shower both of rain and of his Spirit. Several were brought on their knees, and cried for mercy, in the love-feast. I thought it a pity we could not continue praying

with them, on account of the preaching at eleven o'clock. However, so concerned were they that they retired to the woods, and spent some time on their knees on the damp ground in prayer to God."

He goes on his way, but new trials await him.

"*Friday*, 6. This morning I have done what I do not remember to have done since I have been in the Methodist Church—I forgot to call the family to prayer, and never thought of it until I had gone several miles on the road. I felt very much distressed and cast down at the thought of it. I have suffered much this day riding through the rain, in company with Stephen Colgrove, between forty and fifty miles. In the night we got lost in the woods on the side of a mountain, among the hemlocks, old trees, roots, and holes. It was truly distressing. Brother Colgrove called several times, and was finally answered. The hearing of a human voice was very pleasant; but how to extricate ourselves from the brush and roots we knew not. We called for a light, but none came. Fortunately we found our way into a good road, which led us to a settlement at ten o'clock, and came to the brother-in-law's of Brother Colgrove, by the name of Pepper. He lived in a small house with another family; the whole number of both families made up fourteen. They used us as well as they could, and we felt thankful to God and to them.

"*Saturday*, 7. We got breakfast with our kind friends this morning, *but not before we called the family together for prayers.*" The quarterly meeting for Delaware circuit was at Elijah Calkins's. "O how we are pestered for want of room at our quarterly meetings in this county!" adds he, in bitterness of spirit. "Brother Newman" here met him, and preached on Sunday; and during the administration of the sacrament the cloud of mercy broke, and Mr. Colbert shouts: "Glory to God! he displayed his power, and it is said that two persons found the Lord, and numbers were brought to cry to God for a clean heart. A great solemnity rested on the countenances of the people, and I trust that

the fruits of the meeting will be seen in the world of glory."

Mr. Colbert thence proceeded in his regular route to Albany and Saratoga, and around to Otsego. He passed up the Mohawk country, preaching and baptizing, to Pickard's, in Springfield, where he held his quarterly meeting for Otsego circuit.

By some unaccountable mishap Otsego circuit disappears from the Minutes in 1796, and is not restored until 1803. It is evident that this old circuit, the next in age to Albany, and as old as Saratoga, had not been merged in some other circuit; for when Mr. Colbert takes charge of Albany district, in 1802, he recognizes Otsego circuit, and gives it four regular quarterly meetings. Jonathan Newman is present at the quarterly meeting at Pickard's, and his name disappears from the Minutes this year. It is probable that he had charge of the circuit, and that both the preachers and circuit were omitted by mistake. There are many similar mistakes in the old Minutes.

Mr. Colbert proceeds on his regular tour to Herkimer circuit, and thence to Western. This is a new circuit, taken from Mohawk, Oneida, and Chenango.

September 15, Mr. Colbert comes to Squire Pray's and finds a union meeting in progress. Lorenzo Dow was preaching in the grove. He says: "Lorenzo is tall, of a very slender form; his countenance is serene, solemn, but not dejected, and his words, or rather God's words delivered by him, cut like a sword. Brother Catlin,* one of our local preachers, spoke after him, and while he was speaking Brother Newman came forward, and, hearing him touch on principles, told him not to mind principles but to preach experience. He continued for a little while and then concluded. The ministers of the different denominations were called upon by Brother Newman to repair to a council chamber at Squire Pray's, where too much was said by some on union, union! Not that I, by any means, wanted to hear

* When a boy we often heard him.

controversy at such a meeting as this. It was agreed that Mr. Vining, a Baptist elder, and Brother Covel, should preach. Mr. Vining preached from John xvii, 21: 'That they all may be one,' etc.; and Brother Covel preached from Phil. i, 10: 'That ye may approve things that are excellent.' But the people became so noisy that he did not finish his discourse.

At night Lorenzo Dow preached a powerful sermon under the trees, by candle-light, from Acts xvii, 6: "These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also." He gave the preachers, as well as others, a solemn warning; but it was in an excellent spirit. Brother —— exhorted after him, and many were brought to cry for mercy. I gave out preaching the next night, and lodged at Squire Pray's, a very disagreeable place for me on account of the great number of people, although the Squire is a very kind man.

"*Thursday*, 16. Brother Ebenezer White preached at six o'clock, from Sol. Song, first seven verses of the fourth chapter. At ten o'clock Elder Straight, an open communion Baptist, gave us a sermon from Isa. xxxii, 2. Brother Swaim exhorted after him, and I preached after Brother Swaim's exhortation. When I concluded Brother Newman preached from 2 Cor. xiii, 11: 'Be of one mind.' In my judgment the people were kept too long in a sitting posture, although they paid great attention. We had an intermission, after which the Methodists and the open communion Baptists united in the sacramental service, and it was a blessed season. Indians and Africans came forward. It was romantic enough to see the people climbing the trees over the heads of many hundreds.

"At night Lorenzo Dow delivered one of the greatest discourses I ever heard against atheism, deism, and Calvinism. He took his text in about the middle of his sermon. Brother Covel arose after him and said that a young man desired the prayers of the preachers. Several others desired to be prayed for, and at length there was a wonderful display of

divine power in the large congregation, beneath the boughs of the trees and the starry heavens.

"*Friday*, 17. This morning Brother Swaim preached an excellent sermon from 1 Tim. i, 5: 'Now the end of the commandment is charity,' etc. Brother Newman appointed a meeting for the preachers in the council chamber; they had met there twice before. After this a young Presbyterian minister gave us an excellent sermon from Isa. i, 18. Brother Newman then gave liberty to the people to tell their experiences. I arose and spoke of the blessed effects of hearing Christian experience. I then took my leave and rode to Mr. Stanton's, at Paris. They are Baptists, but very kind, and I believe they enjoy religion."

The Methodist traveling preachers present at this union meeting, Mr. Colbert tells us, were "Benjamin Bidlack, Zenas Covel, Frederic Woodward, Matthias Swaim, Asa Cummings, William Hill, Ebenezer White, Jonathan Newman, Smith Arnold, Lorenzo Dow, with a great number of local preachers." There were present "nine Baptist and two Presbyterian preachers." He says: "Some things were delivered on the stage and in the council not agreeable to my mind; but I thank God I felt well, and, I believe, great good was done."

Several things in this record are worthy of note. At that period it was strange that a union meeting should be held. The other denominations were then straining every nerve to keep the Methodists down. They were considered as intruders, and were often treated as such by ministers of those denominations who, as they claimed, had possession of the ground; albeit the Methodist preachers everywhere acted as pioneers, "going out into the highways and hedges," and carrying the tidings of salvation to those who were destitute of the Gospel, and utterly without pastoral supervision. This was the general fact; but by this time the old, earnest pioneer preachers had made so strong an impression upon the public mind as to command no little respect, and a new line of policy was commenced, one which has since been

pursued upon a large scale. Bigoted sectarians, finding that the new sect had taken deep hold of the public mind, and that they could not be crushed by opposition, put themselves into a sort of fraternal relation with them, and then they cried "Union, union!" The motive was often but poorly disguised; it was to avail themselves of the results of Methodist revivals. Still the work of God went on, and union meetings, even when there could be no *communion*, were the means of good.

We have here the names of several prominent actors in the great Methodist movement in the interior of New York. Some of them we have previously noticed, and others we shall meet with frequently hereafter.

LORENZO DOW.

The eccentric Lorenzo Dow had got well under way as a marvel of a preacher. He commenced traveling and preaching in 1798, being then but eighteen years of age. He was appointed to Cambridge circuit with Timothy Dewey. In 1799 he was appointed to Essex, but soon left his circuit under a strong impression that he had a special mission to Ireland. Away he went across the ocean, and for some time attracted considerable attention in Ireland and England. He was dropped by the conference, and never again connected himself with the itinerancy in the regular way, but traveled and preached independently, being responsible to no ecclesiastical body. Still Dow was a Methodist in doctrine and in feeling, and often rendered valuable service to the Methodist Episcopal Church in various ways.

When Mr. Colbert heard him at the union meeting it had not been long since his return from Europe, and he was now rambling up and down the country and attracting vast crowds of earnest and astonished listeners. He often preached with great power, and was the means of many awakenings and conversions. He was zealous, shrewd, often witty, evangelical, bold, and eccentric. He was an original. There was never but one Lorenzo Dow. He found

a congenial spirit in "Peggy," whom he married, and who traveled with him over the continent, sharing, as far as possible, in his labors and privations. He spent years in the south among the planters and the slaves, but rested at no point for any considerable time. He often traveled through our territory, preaching as he went to vast multitudes. We heard him for the first time in Cazenovia, in 1816. He stood in the piazza of the old Madison County House, on the second story, and addressed thousands who stood on the green. He drove his own carriage, rode sometimes at the rate of forty or fifty miles a day, and preached four or five times. He passed on west about four weeks previously, and addressed all who could be hurried together without previous notice, and left an appointment for a particular day and hour on his return, which he promptly met, and then disappeared. Of course horse-flesh suffered sadly under Dow's hands. On being once rebuked by a friend for a want of mercy to his beast, he replied: "Souls are worth more than old horses."

He was stoop-shouldered, a confirmed asthmatic, breathing and speaking apparently with great difficulty. His voice was harsh, being worn threadbare by constant use; his shoulders moving convulsively up and down, as he worked his vocal organs as laboriously as a man would work at a dry pump, although with a little more success. He never shaved; his hair hung negligently down his back and over his shoulders in long, undressed twists. He seemed to have as little to do with soap and water as with a razor. All this helped to make up a character such as no one had ever seen before.

Lorenzo was a brave polemic. He assailed the isms with unmerciful severity. In many of his sermons he undertook a complete refutation of Atheism, Deism, Universalism, and Calvinism. He figured considerably as a writer. We have before us a copy of his "Polemical works: New York, printed and sold by J. C. Totten, 9 Bowery, 1814;" a 12mo. of 300 pages. His Journals, and those of his wife "Peggy," are

quite voluminous. His writings have passed through various editions, and have been extensively circulated and read. Most of them are quite readable; some of them instructive. His mode of reasoning may be seen in his "Chain of five Links, two Hooks, and a Swivel." He often reasons consecutively and logically, and not unfrequently deals in aphorisms and sarcasms, which are more telling upon common minds than the severest logic. "A double L does not spell a part;" and, "You can and you can't, you shall and you shan't; you'll be damned if you do, and you'll be damned if you don't," announced and reiterated in the hearing of thousands, were often more terrible blows inflicted upon the Calvinistic doctrines of limited atonement and the decree of reprobation than the most learned and ingenious reasoning.

Dow held himself bound by no conventional laws of society. He feared nobody, and cared for nothing beyond the simple claims of conscience. He was just as likely to open his batteries against Calvinism in a Presbyterian church as anywhere else. The fear of man was not a snare to this singular character; nor was he very much restrained by the common laws of courtesy. He seemed to take it for granted, that when he was invited to a pulpit he entered it, by common consent, eccentricities and all.

He was deeply interested in New England politics at the time the question of Church and State was agitated, and contributed his full share in the reduction of "the standing order" to a level with other denominations. He often rallied vast assemblies, and held them for three, and even four hours together, upon the impolicy and the vices of religious establishments, or the support of a particular denomination by law, and the support of the ministry by taxation. In those discourses the most terrible facts came out without the least mitigation—such as selling a poor man's cow at public auction to pay the minister. And there was no use in the murmurs of dissatisfaction. The more "the galled jade winced" the heavier the burden was heaped upon

his back. It was Lorenzo Dow, and there was no use in saying a word. Every effort in the way of trying to sustain the old order of things really, as he used to say, only made a bad matter worse.

Dow performed many curious antics, which were published in the papers and rehearsed everywhere until they became familiar as household words. As a specimen, the story of his raising the devil may suffice. Dow put up at a tavern in the South, and soon discovered that the landlord was absent from home, and that there was an unusual intimacy between the landlady and a gentleman visitor. The landlord returned in the evening, as it would seem, unexpectedly, and put his good lady and her friend into a panic. Under the directions of the lady the terrified visitor jumped into an empty hogshead and the lady covered him with cotton. The landlord came in half drunk, but was most *affectionately* received by his good wife. Upon finding Dow in his house he very unceremoniously demanded that he should raise the devil for him, alleging that he had often heard that he could do it. Dow declined, but the landlord insisted. "You will be frightened when you see him," said Dow. "No I shan't," added the brave man. "Well," said Dow, "if I must raise the devil I must;" and taking the candle in his hand, he said, "Follow me." Passing into the back room, and coming up to the hogshead, he adroitly lighted the cotton with the candle, and, sure enough, up came the devil enveloped in a blaze! Not a word did his satanic majesty say, but instantly disappeared. The fellow was completely deceived, and the next day went before a magistrate and made oath that Dow really raised the devil in his house, and he saw him. The matter being likely to call for a repetition of the miracle, and it not being probable that he would meet with the concurrence of the same favorable circumstances, Dow was obliged to make a public explanation.

Dow's last special mission was to expose the Jesuits. He lectured long and loud upon the wiles of the disciples

of Loyola; showed up their eternal intermeddling with politics, and their designs upon the free institutions of this country. He expounded the prophecies, quoted history, poured out a flood of invective, and warned the nation most solemnly of the perils which were impending. On his way to Washington, for the purpose of enlightening and awakening the government upon the subject, he passed through Wyoming. He delivered several powerful discourses in the old church in Kingston, and passed on south. In one of his discourses he said the Jesuits were watching him, and would kill him if they dare, but knowing that if he should be missing they would be suspected, they dare not molest him. He went on to Washington, and there died suddenly a few weeks after this. Some surmised that he was poisoned by the Jesuits; whether this was so, or whether he died of an organic affection of the heart, or from some other cause, we know not.

Lorenzo Dow was a strange specimen of humanity. He was called, and often called himself, "crazy Dow." He was not a lunatic, nor was he a monomaniac; for if he was insane on one point he was equally so on many. He was so eccentric as to border on insanity in everything. His conduct could not with justice be judged of by the ordinary laws of social or conventional propriety. Upon the whole, we always had a very high opinion of his piety and his integrity. He was a strange, good man—a man of rare natural endowments, but with an intellect of so peculiar a cast as to constitute him a great oddity, and in some respects an enigma. In his day he did much good and some harm. His influence upon the mind of the public fairly entitles him to a place in the history of the Church and of the times in which he lived.

Mr. Colbert makes another entry in his diary in relation to Dow. From Squire Pray's he went to Paris Hill, where he held a quarterly meeting, at Barak Cooley's. On Sunday he says: "For public preaching we repaired to the woods, where Lorenzo Dow delivered a discourse, with-

out taking a text, of three hours and twenty minutes in length, in which he said much against Calvinism, and what was much to the purpose. Many of the Calvinists complain, but they cannot confute his arguments. When he had done I administered the Lord's Supper, I suppose, to more than a hundred. At night held a meeting at Barak Cooley's and administered the Lord's Supper to Cooley's mother, an aged woman. It was a good time. Brother Kernaghan professed to have his soul sanctified, and Ruth Ridgemount, a young woman, was converted. In the love-feast to-day some gave us their names as subjects of prayer. We lodged at Brother Tibble's, where we had an excellent time in family prayer."

After preaching several times in different neighborhoods in Paris, Mr. Colbert proceeded to Daniel Seeley's, in Westmoreland, the place of his next quarterly meeting. Paris is in Chenango circuit, and Seeley's in Oneida. The two stand united in the Minutes, but they seem to have had separate quarterly meetings. Paris and Westmoreland were taken from Whitestown in 1792; it had become quite populous, and Methodism was working its way through all the settlements. Cooley's and Seeley's were headquarters for the Methodist preachers for many years, and Seeley's barn was the scene of many quarterly meetings which were talked of for a long time. What sort of a preaching place it was in Colbert's time, and how he enjoyed it, we may learn from his diary. He says:

"After the love-feast I preached from Heb. ii, 3. A barn filled with hay, straw, and people is a very disagreeable place to me. I would rather preach three sermons out of doors than one in such a place. The people felt themselves so disagreeably situated that they could not stay. The congregation was very restless. It is strange that so many preachers are so opposed to preaching out of doors when they see such inconveniences attending preaching to large congregations." We are not ignorant of the difficulty of preaching under such circumstances. There is no rebound-

ing of the voice, but it seems to be absorbed and wholly to vanish the moment it leaves the mouth of the speaker. We used under such circumstances, to suffer the most intense agony, and afterward to have the most mortifying sense of failure; but there was often no help for it. We had to preach to the people in barns or nowhere. Still these old barns were often gracious places.

"We lodged," says Mr. Colbert, "at Friend Tompkins's." Here he remarks that he was treated "with politeness." Of this we have no doubt, for we were treated in the same way at "Friend Tompkins's" many years after that. Here our itinerant takes occasion to remark that "among the Americans, in these northern parts, we have to wait on ourselves, which takes us in the course of the year many days from useful studies." Friend Tompkins and his wife were from the Green Isle, and would not allow "the preacher" to take care of his own horse. This made Mr. Colbert think of Maryland, where "servants" were plenty, and a traveler had nothing to do but to "walk in and be seated," and hear the order: "Boy, take that horse to the stable and feed him," and thenceforward felt himself relieved from all care with regard to his beast. "In these northern parts" things are marvelously different, excepting at such places as "Friend Tompkins's" or "Daniel Dorsey's."

On his way west Mr. Colbert passed "through a settlement of the Oneida Indians, with which" he "was much delighted," and does not fail to contrast them with some whites he had often observed, as to the appearance of their dwellings and the cleanliness of their persons.

He next visits Cayuga circuit, putting up with his friend "Judge Sherwood, of Scipio." He says:

"*Friday*, *October* 1. I rode in company with Brothers Vandusen and Kernaghan from Judge Sherwood's to Abel White's, in Milton, where they have built them a handsome meeting-house, standing on an eminence of gradual ascent, thirty feet by thirty-five. It affords me pleasure to see in

this wilderness I passed through nine years ago so many civilized people, and what is still better, so many Christianized and hearty in the cause of Methodism, which of all forms of Christianity I believe the best in the world."

He seems to have been somewhat disturbed in his feelings by a "want of order and subordination in the love-feast." They, notwithstanding, "had a very good time." He says: "I preached afterward; the congregation was so restless, and so many squalling children in the house, that I had but little satisfaction in speaking. I administered the Lord's Supper, after which Brother Vandusen preached a short sermon and Brother Hoyer gave an exhortation. I baptized a great number of adults and children to-day." This was an old-fashioned quarterly meeting: two sermons, two exhortations, baptisms, sacrament, and doubtless much besides.

Mr. Colbert was now upon his old ground. He was the apostle of Methodism in this country. He had visited "the lakes" in 1793, when the country was just being opened, and a few settlements were scattered among the forests. He is now astonished to see the progress of *civilization*. Methodism was rapidly advancing, and had already achieved many triumphs. It was a potent element in the formation of society and the foundation of the local institutions of this new and fertile portion of the Empire State. Nine years previously Mr. Colbert suffered hunger, neglect, and untold perils here; complained of the filth and almost savage wildness of the people, and the utter destitution of nearly all the comforts of civilization in and around their dwellings, and sighed for the comfortable homes of old Maryland; but now he finds himself in the midst of a flourishing community, and everywhere greeted by hosts of intelligent Methodists, and large congregations of attentive hearers. He first came into "the lake country" from Wyoming, following the line of progress from the south; now he comes from the Hudson, following the movement from the East, and here he is at the point where two lines of missionary

aggression came together, and uniting their forces, had set the country in a blaze.

From Milton Mr. Colbert moves rapidly on to Lyons, where he finds himself at his good old Maryland home, Daniel Dorsey's. Here he attends his quarterly meeting for Seneca circuit. He says: "In our quarterly conference we appointed Brother D. Dorsey steward. At night we had a good prayer-meeting.

"*Sunday, October* 10. In the morning, glory to God! we had a refreshing in the love-feast, after which I preached with freedom to a very attentive congregation. Brothers Hoyer and Kernaghan exhorted, after which we administered the Lord's Supper. The Lord was with us of a truth. One found peace, and several were rejoicing with shouts of triumph. In the evening we had a prayer-meeting, intermixed with exhortations, at Daniel Dorsey's.

"*March* 11. Spent at Friend Dorsey's and Cole's very agreeably.

"*Tuesday*, 12. We arose this morning with the expectation of starting for Scipio, but so it was, we did not get from our friend Dorsey's. At night a few of the neighbors met for prayer-meeting at Brother Dorsey's. This morning a black woman was brought to cry out while Brother Kernaghan was at prayer. To-night she fell while Brother Hoyer was up and about to speak, but was prevented by her cries. We prayed and I gave an exhortation. She lay on the floor until near bedtime, when she went out professing to be happy.

"*Wednesday*, 13. The weather was warm and pleasant. With Brothers Hoyer and Kernaghan I started from Brother Daniel Dorsey's for Tioga circuit. We fed at Geneva and came on to Cayuga bridge, where we were overtaken with a shower of rain and wind. At sunset drank coffee at Cubert's tavern, east end of the bridge, and rode on through the rain to John Thompson's, in Marcellus, which kept us out till ten o'clock. Could we have had agreeable entertainment at a tavern we should not have stayed out so long. We have

paid in part for our long and very agreeable stay at our friend Dorsey's. But if I can reach my quarterly meeting, as I trust I shall, I do not lament staying among my friends and old acquaintances from Maryland."

Mr. Colbert had hurried on to Dorsey's as early as possible, and had lingered as long there as any degree of prudence would allow; for a whole week he had enjoyed the hospitalities of his "old acquaintances from Maryland," and who could blame him? Such hospitality and such fare were rare in "this northern region," even after all the progress which had been made in the condition of society. Our itinerant pursues his journey. We will give his simple but heart-sickening narrative on to his next quarterly meeting:

"*Thursday*, 14. The weather unpleasant. We rode from Thompson's to Onondaga Hollow, where we dined, and rode on through Pompey Hollow to Merrick's tavern, where we lodged, and a disagreeable ride we had. It was well Brother Hoyer parted with us this forenoon, as we had to ride till nine o'clock at night through the woods in a gloomy path down the mountain." Well indeed, for "Brother Hoyer" was a notorious coward, and might have been half-frightened out of his wits. Next we have an instructive reflection. Our traveler says:

"I think I may venture to say that licenses are granted to persons under circumstances which may be considered an imposition on travelers. They have no stable for a horse, and nothing better than a filthy hog-trough, and a dung-hill at their door, to feed him in." Alas for the traveler who was obliged to go through Pompey Hollow and stay at Merrick's in those days!

"*Friday*, 15. Arose early this morning and rode from Merrick's tavern to William Stover's, in Sherburn, where, in the evening, we had a thunder-storm. To-day we suffered for our breakfast, as the taverns we passed appeared to be such filthy places. However, we stopped at one where we saw the possibility of getting into the house by wading

through the dung at the door." After such trials William Stover's hospitable residence must have been a comfortable place of rest for the night. Methodist preachers for many years after this found comforts and welcome here. Our traveler proceeds:

"*Saturday*, 16. This morning we arose before day, got our breakfast by daylight, and started for the Tioga and Unadilla quarterly meeting with Brother Kernaghan and Sister West, from Sherburn, and a disagreeable ride we had through the rain over hills and mountains, crossing the Chenango and Unadilla to Benjamin Claus's at the Butternuts. We were wet and weary enough by the time we got there. The little house was filled; Brother Osborne had preached, and Brother Booth had given an exhortation."

The meeting probably commenced at eleven o'clock in the morning, and Mr. Colbert and his company, and a lady with them, on horseback, had rode not less than thirty miles "through the rain and over hills and mountains," and arrived before the meeting had closed. This was the price paid for the blessings of a quarterly meeting in olden time. Women in those days often rode on horseback thirty, forty, and even fifty miles to a quarterly meeting, received a powerful blessing, and returned rejoicing.

They had a meeting in the evening. Some one preached, and Mr. Colbert "spoke a few words and dismissed the meeting." He remarks: "I feel very stupid after so long a ride over very unpleasant roads to places where I suffer for retirement. What little time I have for reading and private devotion!" How natural this. He proceeds:

"*Sunday*, 17. This morning we had a very happy time in love-feast. The friends were short and lively in their speeches. After love-feast, for want of room, we took the congregation into a meadow, where, under two sycamore trees, I preached with a degree of satisfaction. Brother White spoke after me. Brothers Kernaghan and Osborne exhorted after him. I baptized an aged woman and three others by sprinkling, administered the Lord's Supper, and

then baptized Wyatt Chamberlayne, by immersion, in the Butternut Creek. I trust this day's labor has not been in vain in the Lord. I have cause to be thankful for the degree of peace and satisfaction I feel in my mind, and for a hope that good has been done. O may I ever feel a heart to give glory to God for the good I see done on the earth!"

Mr. Colbert proceeded eastwardly, preached on Tuesday at a school-house in Pittsfield, and in the evening had a meeting "at Friend Abby's." On Wednesday they took breakfast "between daylight and sunrise, and rode on to Brother Newman's; stayed there an hour or two, prayed with the family, and rode on to Cooperstown, handsomely situated on the south end of Lake Otsego, Susquehanna's utmost spring. Stopped there a while and rode on to Daniel M'Allum's, where a few people were waiting. I preached to them with satisfaction from Amos v, 6. My life is a life of toil; I scarcely have time to read a chapter in the Bible some days." Such was the life of an itinerant preacher in the days of Mr. Colbert.

He is now in old Middlefield, near the place of our birth, and in the very house in which we first made a public profession of religion. Daniel M'Allum's house was the regular preaching place, and the place of the public prayer-meetings on Sundays when there was no preaching. Thither we went from Sabbath to Sabbath from the time of our being able to walk a mile to attend religious worship, which ordinarily consisted in a sermon from a local preacher, an exhortation from an exhorter, a sermon read by our beloved father, or a prayer-meeting. The Middlefield society was a strong society in those days, but still only at intervals enjoyed the labors of the traveling preachers on the Sabbath.

Mr. Colbert proceeded on through Cherry Valley "to Garret Vanvooris's, in Chattelet bush," the place of his quarterly meeting for Delaware circuit. On Sunday "the spacious barn floor was covered with a large congregation, very attentive indeed to the word."

"*Monday*, 25," he says, "we rode from Vanvooris's to

Schenectady. I preached at night in the academy with a degree of freedom, I suppose, to fifty or sixty people, who were very attentive, and lodged at Friend Joice's. This is a very kind family; the old gentleman is a very sensible man, and has been a preacher, but I fear is now very low in religion. He discovers great backwardness to a society being raised, though there are members enough in town to form into a class.

"*Tuesday*, 26. Rode to William Vredenburgh's and preached to a few women and four or five men, but not with much freedom among a number of bawling children."

"*Wednesday*, 27. I preached in Albany at night, but not with much life; after which I married the Rev. Cyrus Stebbins to Sally Mark.

"*Thursday*, 28. Spent in Albany, and at night preached on the hill at a Sister Davis's with a degree of life. Here there appear to be some under awakenings.

"*Saturday*, 30. Began our quarterly meeting at Coneskuena. We were favored with a great number of preachers. Cyrus Stebbins gave us a sermon on a very important subject, from 'Who is sufficient for these things?' M. Swaim and myself exhorted after him. We have cause to be thankful for a good beginning. In the love-feast we had a refreshing season. It is said six or seven were converted in the love-feast, and several sanctified. Three professed to be sanctified last night at the watchnight, which I thought it best for me not to attend, as I had been unwell in Albany."

The love-feast was more than usually "public" because of rain, which prevented people from remaining out-doors. "And," he says, "I believe it was best, for we were favored with a wonderful display of the power of God. One man, as soon as the Lord converted his soul, ran out in the rain and went home, saying he must go home and tell his wife what the Lord had done for his soul."

Mr. Colbert next proceeded to his quarterly meeting for Saratoga circuit, at Stillwater. On Sabbath he preached "to

about a thousand" people "in Friend Myers's yard." On Friday he "had a long and tiresome ride from Friend Brewster's, in Johnstown, to Daniel M'Allum's, in Middlefield, through a very handsome and well improved country on the south side of the Mohawk river." He says: "I praise the Lord that I have this day enjoyed a degree of serenity of mind." The diary proceeds:

"*Saturday*, 13. Though I did not go to bed until about eleven o'clock, I arose this morning between three and four and rode from Middlefield to Edson's, in Milford, where we held our second quarterly meeting for Otsego circuit. We rode about six miles before sunrise. The morning, though cold, was very pleasant. As Cooperstown came in view, the rising sun had clothed the surrounding mountains with his golden light. The landscape was truly delightful to the eye of the traveler." We do not wonder that even a weary itinerant should be charmed with the beauty of sunrise as he gains the summit of "Cooperstown Hill." Our boyish days were familiar with that scene.

1803, January 1, finds Mr. Colbert at Sugar Creek, at Stephen Ballard's, the place of the Tioga quarterly meeting. He says: "This Sugar Creek is a gloomy looking place." No doubt it was so at that period, as were many places which long since were highly improved, and now smile in beauty and loveliness. He begins the year with pious reflections and resolutions, and has a very good quarterly meeting at this "gloomy looking place."

On leaving Sugar Creek Mr. Colbert is soon called to contend with a class of trials with which the old itinerants were quite familiar—those which a sensitive mind feels from observing a badly regulated household. Our traveler enjoys the hospitality of a family who "are kind almost to an extreme," but the parents seemed not to be well agreed in the management of their children. The husband undertakes to correct a small child, and the "foolish mother" manifests her dissent by "flying to him and snatching the rod from him and throwing it into the fire, crying and say-

ing that the child knows not what it was corrected for." Mr. C. adds, "I very freely gave her my opinion."

He passes on to another place, and there finds occasion for the following reflection: "This has been a day of trial to me. Rustic parents and untutored children! Such a house is more disagreeable to me than a wilderness at midnight, swarming with screeching owls and howling wolves. Was it not for the love I have for souls I should prefer the life of a hermit to the many disagreeable things I meet with at other people's houses." After this record, so expressive of Mr. Colbert's fine feelings and bachelor sensitiveness, we do not wonder at the next minute of the diary.

"*Wednesday*, 5. With pleasure I arose this morning about four o'clock, and with still greater pleasure mounted my horse, between daylight and sunrise, and rode about forty miles to Higley's tavern, in Randolph." Higley afterward became a Methodist, and Randolph a strong point for Methodism, as we shall see.

Mr. Colbert attends his quarterly meeting for Albany circuit on Wednesday, 12th. He says: "Here three were recommended to conference: John Blades, a good preacher and an aged man, sixty-three; Thomas Ireland, a young man about twenty-four; and Gideon Draper, about twenty-two. Our quarterly conference held until dark, after which I had to sit up until between one and two o'clock settling with the preachers.*

"*Thursday*, 13. We had a glorious display of divine power this morning in the love-feast, and a powerful time in public preaching. Brothers Draper, Ireland, Dillon, Vredenburg, Blades, Morton, and Stead, exhorted. The attention of the people was remarkable. Several were

* The preachers were charged with the books on their circuits; the presiding elders were charged with all the books on their districts by the book agents; and the presiding elders settled with the preachers at the last quarterly meeting, and the agents with the presiding elders at the conference.

powerfully awakened, two professed to be set at liberty, one previously very much hardened. The daughter of William Brown, one of our local preachers, was powerfully convicted, and we left her on her knees crying for mercy, declaring that she would never rise until God had blessed her."*

This was a grand old-fashioned quarterly meeting, and here it was that Gideon Draper commenced his public ministrations. He was, as we have seen, and shall see more hereafter, a prominent actor in our field.

Mr. Colbert preached in the city of Albany on Friday evening. "Here," he says, "when Brother Vredenburg got some engaged, as is common for our friend and brother, Brother Stebbins told him and some others to hold their peace. This hurt Brother Vredenburg." From this it would seem that even in the good old times there was some little diversity of taste among the Methodists on the subject of shouting.

"*Saturday*, 22. Mr. Colbert came to Elijah Davis's, in Saquoit, Herkimer circuit, where he and his traveling companions were so chilled with the cold that they sent forward "Brother Covel," whom they found there, to begin the meeting.

We next find Mr. Colbert beating off to the north and holding a quarterly meeting, for Western circuit, in the

* Mr. Brown was one of General Van Rensselaer's tenants, and received notice to make payment. He collected a load of wheat and went with it to Albany, and calling on the general told him that was all he could raise. "What do you do?" asked the general. "Work at tailoring, and let out my land," answered Brown. "Don't you preach sometimes?" asked the general. "Yes," was the answer. "Will you preach at my house to-night?" "Yes." The general called in his friends to hear the poor mechanic. He was a small man, and unpromising in appearance, and the landlord undoubtedly thought to have a little fun with him. Brown was shrewd and fearless. He took for his text, "They that will be rich," etc. The next day the general gave him a free lease of his farm during his life and that of his wife, receipted the back rents, and had his wheat ground and sent back to him. So his manly courage and Christian fidelity received a present reward? —*Rev. Gideon Draper.*

Black River country. He comes first to "Turin, and from thence to Purser's," where "he preached at night." "Here," he remarks, "the people as well as the place wear a wild aspect." This was the first quarterly meeting ever "held in this part of the country," and was held "at one Rogers's, where were poor preparations made for the accommodation of the people." Very likely, and yet probably as good as circumstances would allow.

"*Sunday*, 30. A very heavy snow-storm. But, thank God! we had as good a time as could be expected in the love-feast; after which I preached, and Brothers Lyon and Willy exhorted. "Thus ended our quarterly meeting at Black River. We lodged again at Friend Coffin's."

"*Monday*, 31. Rode from Watertown to Stephen Hart's, in Turin, which I find an agreeable place. The man is generous, the woman is clean and clever; a clean woman in some places is a rarity." This was the northern frontier, within the state of New York. A few Methodists were scattered through the wilds; and now that the presiding elder had visited the country, and attended a quarterly meeting, Methodism was fairly inaugurated amid the frost and the snow-banks.

Saturday, *February* 19. Mr. Colbert enters in his diary the following: "We lodged at Alward White's. Here I received, by Brother Benton, an animating letter from Timothy Dewey, which with pleasure I shall here insert." The letter is mutilated, and several lines of the introductory part are so broken up that it is impossible to recover the sense. The date is left perfect, and is February 16th, 1803. We shall copy all that is left of this letter, not only as an illustration of the spirit of the author, but as a commentary upon the times. The first word in the first perfect page is "wolves;" after this the writer proceeds:

"I fear they will devour the sheep unless they are hunted every day; they stand gaping on every side.

"My soul is with you if my body is not. O let your prayers to God ascend for me, that the Lord may prosper

my way, and strengthen me in body and soul for the work! I know not but I shall be dead before you get to conference; however, let what will come, I hope to keep on, for God is with me. O for a gust of divine power! Pray God that great Pompey may be wholly converted to the Christian faith. Surely the times of refreshing have come from the presence of the Lord. There is rising of *one hundred* members on Pompey circuit now, and if I am not mistaken there will be *two hundred* in a short time. Glory to our conquering Saviour! You need not think strange if you hear of my death, for I am mortal; but I hope to slay more at my death than all I ever did in my life before. I begin to get the victory over myself; I can begin and end a sermon in one hour. I think this will continue my health, or at least not waste all my strength at once. I want to do all the good I can; but I see in order to do this I must be good; this is what the people look for in ministers, and this they must have, or they will not profit; for what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord. God grant me faith working by love. I feel my soul fired, and though my strength fails my courage holds out.

"I wish you to write to me and give me a short account, if no more, of your success since you parted from me. I expect to write to conference by the mail, as several things stand in the way of my going, namely, my family, my health, and my circuit. The Lord knows I long to be with you, but I submit to providence, expecting you will remember me when you get there, whether I am dead or alive."

Here the letter ends abruptly, as there is a hiatus in the diary. This letter represents Timothy Dewey as he was during the palmy days of his itinerancy, a holy, earnest, powerful preacher, spending his strength for the glory of God and the good of souls. We shall hereafter see more of this great and good man.

The Philadelphia Conference held its session this year at Duck Creek, state of Delaware, May 1. At that conference the Genesee district was taken from the old Albany

district, and William Colbert was appointed to its charge. The charges in the new district are Otsego, Herkimer, Black River, Western, Chenango, Westmoreland, Pompey, Cayuga, Ontario, Seneca, Tioga. Three of these, namely, Black River, Pompey, and Ontario, are new circuits. Pompey had been formed during the preceding conference year, as is evident from Mr. Dewey's letter; and Black River was composed of new and mostly unexplored territory.

After conference, in June, we find Mr. Colbert at Milford, on the western bank of the Delaware, exclaiming, "O how unlike Milford in the Delaware state!" Doubtless the two places were very dissimilar, and who could appreciate the difference better than Mr. Colbert? From this point he comes to "Lumberland." He preached on his way and lodged in a deserted house "between two mountains," turning his horse out to graze. He had some reasonable apprehensions for his safety here, but committed himself to the care of Providence, and lying down with his head upon his saddle-bags fell asleep.

"*Friday*, 24." Says he: "I was up and off before sunrise, and felt thankful that I got to Squire Catlin's at night."

"*Saturday*, 25. I rested at Squire Catlin's, and I felt much need of it." He preached twice on the Sabbath in a school-house. He remarks: "I have had an agreeable time at my friend Catlin's." Squire Catlin then resided on his place at the Great Bend, and his wife being a member of our Church, and he exceedingly courteous to the preachers, he was often called upon by them, and gave them the hospitalities of his comfortable home.

Mr. Colbert proceeded north, called at John Eastwood's and at Captain Calkins's, on the Unadilla, on the way to his quarterly meeting, at "Friend Potter's," for Herkimer circuit. Nothing particularly interesting is noted.

"*Tuesday*, 12," he says, "I rode to Utica, a small village on the south side of the Mohawk; dined at Robert Stewart's." He attends his next quarterly meeting at Westmoreland.

"*Monday, August* 1," he says, "spent with Timothy Dewey, at James Tomkins's."

"*Tuesday*, 2. In the afternoon rode to Kirkland Griffin's, in Paris.

"*Wednesday*, 3. Spent at Spencer Briggs's, reading Abbe Maury on Eloquence."

This place is what is now called Saquoit, from the name of the creek which passes through it. The station was one of the earliest in the old Genesee Conference, and on the Minutes went by the name of the township, Paris, for many years. The persons mentioned above were famous in Methodism.

September 21. Mr. Colbert "rode to Joseph Blair's, in Middlefield. Mrs. Blair was a second wife, and was the Anna Giles, of Brookfield, about whom Rev. Charles Giles gives us the interesting account which we have copied in another place.

"*Thursday*, 22," says he "we spent at Middlefield, and at night Samuel Budd preached and I spoke after him. In this place there appears to be a very happy society."

November, 12. Quarterly meeting for Otsego circuit was held in Middlefield, and on this day Mr. Colbert records his arrival "at Joseph Blair's, cold and weary, about two o'clock, and found that the quarterly meeting, for convenience' sake, was held at our friend Green's in the neighborhood; but as we supposed the meeting would be ended before we could get there we kept the house. At night we had a tedious conference. May the Lord restore peace to the societies!

"How unfit for business after riding a hundred miles through storms of snow since the day before yesterday morning, with a fellow-traveler fearful of being thrown from his horse, or his horse falling down with him." Poor Hoyer! here he is again, traveling with the presiding elder through the storm, over bad roads, at, as he conceives, the imminent hazard of his life every moment. And the poor presiding elder endures all the vexations arising from the

alarms and groans of the good, but notional and cowardly brother, for the sake of his help at the quarterly meetings. He groans at night after a tedious and vexatious day's ride with such a "fellow-traveler," but one rousing sermon from the dear old Dutchman makes ample amends for all the inconveniences of the journey.

"*Sunday*, 13," says Mr. Colbert, "we had a blessed love-feast and sacrament this morning; after which I preached from Matthew xviii, 3, and the Lord attended his word with power. Brothers Billings, Sweet, and Hill exhorted, and we left four or five crying for mercy when we returned to Joseph Blair's.

"*Monday*, 14. Spent at Joseph Blair's, and in the evening a few assembled to hold a prayer-meeting. Several of our sisters were carried away with ecstacies of joy. I cannot but make mention of the sorrows of Sister Green on account of her hardened daughter, Sally. Never did I see a mother in such agony for the salvation of a daughter. She prayed for her until she fell four or five times; and all this, with all the awful warnings and loving intreaties of others, brought not this stubborn mortal on her knees. There is a peculiar stiffness in the people of this northern clime, which often brings me to wish myself from among them; but they must be preached to.

"I believe, from what I have been told, that good has been done at our quarterly meeting. I have been informed that four were converted last night who were under conviction yesterday."

We understand all this perfectly, for we well remember nearly all the parties mentioned. "Aunt Green," as we used to call her, was a woman of great zeal and of unrivaled tenacity of purpose. "Her hardened daughter, Sally," was like her mother in unyielding firmness, or what might, without much injustice, be called obstinacy. She would never get upon her knees to accommodate anybody, until she felt constrained by the awakening Spirit of God. She was an independent thinker, and acted upon her own responsi-

bility. Her will was stronger than her sympathy, and we can see how she stood all the assaults in the form of threatenings and entreaties of the occasion described by Mr. C., without flinching in the least.

But Sally Green had another side to her character. She was generous and frank. The sensitiveness of her nature was deep and unobserved; her moral convictions concealed behind a rough exterior. A blunt refusal to make a religious effort with her simply meant, "Let me alone until I get ready, then I will start in my own way;" and so she did. Sally Green embraced religion at the same time we did, was baptized and united with the Church on the same day, and the last we knew of her she was still a worthy member of the Church. She was subsequently married to Mr. David Lent, of Mendon.

Mr. Colbert's severe judgment pronounced upon "the people of this northern clime," was the result of not fully understanding the Yankee character. The people of New England were trained to stand up in prayer. Kneeling was in their view an indication, if not a profession of *Methodism*, and they must be thoroughly broken down before they would come to their knees. When the southern people knelt, they often meant nothing more than an act of decent respect for religion; but the northern people came not down upon their knees until their hearts were melted into contrition, and they were willing to have it understood that they were ready to become fools for Christ's sake.

We next have a record in the diary which is of a piece with one which we have passed, but will now go back and gather up that the two may be seen together. They are small matters, but go to illustrate the condition of society, and the character of our old itinerant preachers.

"*Friday, October* 27. Spent at my friend Daniel Dorsey's mending my old boots. Brother Smith Weeks employed a part of the day in mending Brother Hoyer's boots. We are obliged to be frugal in this country.

"*Saturday*, 28. Spent at Daniel Dorsey's, the fore part

of the day in mending my shoes, and the latter part in reading the news, my Bible, and Fletcher and Benson against Priestley."

The other record is of the same class: "*November* 15 I spent at Joseph Blair's, and began to provide for my feet by making me a pair of socks. *Wednesday*, 16. Busy making my socks. *Thursday*, 17. Spent at my good friend Blair's."

A short time previously he had mended up his boots; but the weather was waxing cold, and he needed something more than bare boots to keep his feet from freezing. He now spends three days at his good friend Blair's, during which time he makes for himself a pair of "socks," or something which answered the purpose of what we call overshoes. We should like to see just such "a pair of socks," and hand them to one of our modern young preachers, and say: "Here, my good brother, draw these over your boots, mount your horse and ride from Joseph Blair's to Canajoharie, through a November snow-storm, and attend a quarterly meeting among the Dutch." It would be a wonder if he would consent to the proposition. It is likely enough that he would not like the looks of the "socks," and would express his fear that he "might take cold."

But think of a company of Methodist preachers turning cobblers at *Judge Dorsey's*. Possibly there was no such functionary as a cobbler in Lyons at that time, yet there might have been, but the difficulty was to get the few pennies to settle the bill. The latter seems likely enough to have been the trouble, for Mr. Colbert put the proceeding upon the basis of economy. "We are obliged," says he, "to be frugal in this country." Noble men, those! One, and a presiding elder too, mending his own boots and shoes; and another doing the same thing for a poor brother who had not the skill to do it himself. Such men deserve to have their names immortalized in history.

Mr. Colbert proceeded on his regular track from Middlefield down the Mohawk River, thence to Utica, and thence to

the Black River, back to Pompey and Western, and thence takes his course of appointments through the lake country.

Monday, December 26, he tells us he spent with Smith Weeks at Jonah Tooker's.

"*Tuesday*, 27. I rode from Squire Tooker's to Jonah Green's, in Owego Woods, where I preached to a small congregation."

On Wednesday he rode to Owego village.

"*Thursday*, 29. James Herron and Samuel Budd fell in with me at Jonathan Gaskill's. I preached; the people were attentive. In the evening I rode to James Ross's and preached to a large congregation in the school-house at Nanticoke. James Herron preached after me, and Samuel Budd gave an exhortation."

"*Friday*, 30. On my journey to-day I stopped at Chenango Point to feed my horse, where I fell in with a company of the sons of Belial, who were drinking and swearing. I could not but reprove them, for which I had to bear the insolent language of one who was called Lawyer Derry. Any man of common sense, to hear how much he talked like a fool, we might suppose, would not think he had sense enough for a lawyer."

"Chenango Point," now our great and beautiful Binghamton, with its two Methodist churches and its elegant seminary, was in a sad moral condition in the days of Colbert, and for years subsequent to those days.

Saturday, 31, Mr. Colbert notes: "Our quarterly meeting commenced to-day at Noah Hoadley's, in Randolph; a number of decent young friends attended. I preached to them from 'Wilt thou be made whole?' Abram Miner and James Herron spoke after me, and Samuel Budd concluded with prayer. At night David Wilcox preached and Brother Budd and myself exhorted, and a lively time we had.

"*Sunday, January* 1, 1804. Glory to God! this year has begun well with me. We had a blessed love-feast this morning; many lately brought into the fold of the Redeemer

spoke delightfully. We administered the sacrament, after which I preached from Luke xiii, 6–9. Weaver, Budd, and Herron exhorted powerfully after me. Glory to God! this has been a happy day.

"*Monday*, 2. I rode from Noah Hoadley's to Roswell Higley's, where I dined and prayed, and set off for Lawyer Catlin's.

"*Tuesday*, 3. Rode from Lawyer Catlin's to Squire Lyons's.

"*Wednesday*, 4. Rode from Lyons's to John Eastwood's. This afternoon has been extremely cold.

"*Thursday*, 5. I have had a cold ride from John Eastwood's to Thomas Giles's. I found it farther than I expected, though I have not suffered as much with the cold as I did yesterday. I was out until in the night.

"*Friday*, 6, I spent at Thomas Giles's, in Brookfield, reading my Bible, and sixty pages of Dr. Huntington's abominable work, Calvinism Improved, in which he makes out the state of sinners as safe as the saints, and that the sufferings of both end with this life.*

"*Saturday*, 7. Began our quarterly meeting at Brookfield. Benjamin Bidlack preached for us. John B. Hudson and John Dickins exhorted after him, and I concluded the meeting. We repaired to Thomas Giles's to hold our quarterly conference, where John Dickins was recommended as a suitable person to be employed as a traveling preacher. At night Brother Dickins preached at Samuel Hill's. I was well satisfied with his discourse. I gave an exhortation after him, and John Graham spoke after me. It was a lively time. We left them shouting and rejoicing, and returned to Thomas Giles's.

"*Sunday*, 8. Cold as was the weather, and uncomfortable as was the barn, we had a time of refreshing this morning in the love-feast and at the sacrament; after which I preached. Benjamin Bidlack preached after me. Ebenezer White gave

* Thomas Giles before his conversion was a Universalist, and a friend of Hosea Ballou; it is likely the copy of Huntington which Mr. Colbert read was a volume of his old library.

an exhortation. We concluded the meeting and repaired to Bliss Webb's. Here Brother Bidlack preached a lengthy, good sermon, and I gave a short exhortation after him."

Mr. Colbert next proceeds to his Otsego quarterly meeting at Elwood's, in Stewart's Patent, on Wednesday. Next he proceeded to Henry Hathaway's, in Norway, to his Herkimer quarterly meeting on Saturday and Sabbath. Monday, 16, he rode from Shadrach Vincent's to David Spencer's, in Boons's Settlement. Tuesday, 17, he rode from David Spencer's to Solomon Molton's. Thursday, 19, he says: "I have suffered much in riding from my good friend Molton's, in Floyd, to Squire Wager's, in Western, from the extreme cold." Friday, 20, he spent at Squire Wager's, and finished Dr. Huntington's book, "a book," he says very truly, "much calculated to lead souls to destruction."* The last quarterly meeting for the year for Western circuit was held at Western, Saturday and Sabbath, 21st and 22d, at the close of which, cold as it was, Mr. Colbert "baptized a woman by immersion in the Mohawk River, and in the evening rode to Andrew Clark's." He heard Eber Cowles preach in the evening, and "he married a young man by the name of John Goodenough to Andrew Clark's daughter Rebecca." Monday, 23, he preached at Andrew Clark's.

"*Saturday*, 28. Quarterly meeting at Saquoit. Benjamin Bidlack preached. Charles Giles and myself exhorted after him." Sunday they had a good time in love-feast and sacrament. In the evening "had a cold ride to Barak Cooley's."

Monday, 30. He remarks: "I have suffered much to-day riding from Cooley's to Abner Camp's, in Cazenovia, in company with Brother Vandusen." Here Mr. C. had a quarterly meeting for Pompey circuit on Tuesday. He hurries on in accomplishing his fourth round.

Saturday, February 4, he speaks of "a long, cold ride from John Thompson's to Alward White's in Marcellus." "Had a good love-feast" on Sabbath morning; after which

*But advocating a theory that no modern Universalist holds.

he preached. He next proceeds to Cayuga, Ontario, and Seneca circuits, with no marked success. He makes his last visit to his old Maryland friends in Lyons, and works his way around to old Tioga, where he made his first missionary demonstrations in 1792.

Thursday, 23, he says: "Extreme cold. I suffered much in riding from Catharinetown to Newtown Point, where I dined, after which I rode to Jacob Kress's."

Friday, 24. This day he rode to Tioga Point with great apprehensions that he should there receive a letter informing him of the death of his father, but to his "great satisfaction," found one informing him of "his recovery."

Saturday, 25. His last quarterly meeting on the district was at Sugar Creek. Elisha Cole preached, and John B. Hudson exhorted. "I," says Mr. Colbert, "exhorted after him, and Brother Herron concluded the meeting."

Here Mr. C. makes a long lamentation over Samuel Budd, who had, as he considered the matter, very hastily married and gone off on a visit with his wife. He looks upon such men with suspicion. "The curse of God," he thinks, will be very likely "to follow" the men who "leave the work of God for the sake of a woman." At this distance of time it is difficult to form a correct opinion of the transaction of which Mr. Colbert complains, but sure it is that although Budd had success at first as a preacher he stumbled afterward. Whether the predicted *curse* fell upon him we dare not say; but it is certain that he became embarrassed in his Church relations, and finally connected himself with the Methodist Protestants.

The quarterly meeting at Ballard's concluded, Mr. Colbert parted with the preachers, and each one went his own way. He says: "I have now parted with all my brethren in the district, and am on my way to Baltimore, in Maryland." He moved on southward, preaching as often as he could find hearers.

Thursday, March 1, he says: "I took leave of my friends Elisha Cole and David Downing, and their families, and a

disagreeable ride I have had through the snow to John Hollenbeck's, where I was well entertained, and treated with more politeness than at any tavern between the Mohawk and Genesee rivers." He next stops at Mason Alden's, at Meshopen, where, he says, "I am kindly received by my old acquaintance." On Saturday he came to James Sutton's, and on Sunday rode on to Gilbert Carpenter's; "got there in the time of their class-meeting, and preached at night at Squire Benjamin Carpenter's." On Monday he "rode to Colonel Dennison's, and preached at night in the school-house." On Tuesday "rode to Darius Williams's, and preached at night. On Wednesday he dined at Squire Pierce's, then went "to William Grange's, in Wilkesbarre, and preached at night to a pretty little well-behaved congregation." Thursday, 8. "Preached at night at Shawney, at their school-house, and lodged at Mr. Hodge's. Sister Hodge is a very active, sensible, and pious woman."

Thence Mr. Colbert proceeds down the river to Andrew Blanchard's, Amos Park's, and Christian Bowman's. At the last-named place we take leave of him on the 15th March, 1804. He attended conference, and was appointed to Chesapeake district and never returned to this northern country.*

1804. This year our field is divided between three annual conferences. Black River, Western, and Herkimer are in the Albany district, New York Conference; Elijah Woolsey, presiding elder. Wyoming is in the Susquehanna district, Baltimore Conference; James Smith, presiding elder. The eight remaining circuits, namely, Chenango, Westmoreland, Otsego, Pompey, Cayuga, Ontario, Seneca, and Tioga constitute Genesee district, in the Philadelphia Conference. Joseph Jewell presiding elder.

The circuits are manned by the old tried warriors as-

*We have seen a letter from Mr. Colbert to Judge Dorsey, in which it is stated that Bishop Asbury wished him to return to Genesee district; but the health of his father was such that he considered it his duty to ask for an appointment at the South.

sisted by several new recruits. Among the former class are John Husselkus, Eber Cowles, Benjamin Bidlack, Ebenezer White, William Hill, Frederic Woodward, William Hoyer, Roger Benton, John Billings. Among the latter are Benoni Harris, Nathan Smith, John Dickins, Sylvester Hill, Parley Parker, Thomas Dunn. Several of these men had been raised up in the country where they commenced their labors, and were the fruit of the revivals of the last few years. They had been trained to hard work and hard fare, and were full of zeal for the cause of God and the conversion of sinners. Two of the bravest and most successful of the old pioneers, Jonathan Newman and Timothy Dewey, this year are found in the list of such as "are under a location through weakness of body or family concerns."

This year the preachers on Cayuga circuit commenced preaching in what is now the county seat of Cortland county, and is called Cortlandville. The following account of the introduction of Methodism into this interesting place, before it could be called a village, is taken from "The History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Cortland, by Rev. L. D. Davis," of the Oneida Conference:

"In 1804 Rev. William Hill, the preacher in charge of Cayuga circuit, visited this place, and established an appointment. He had formerly been a Baptist clergyman, but was now a member of the Philadelphia Conference, which extended north to the Canada line. On his arrival he called on Mr. Jonathan Hubbard, to whom he made known his business as an ambassador for Christ, and his wish to preach the Gospel to this people. Arrangements were accordingly made, and notice sent to the different families residing in the neighborhood, who assembled at the appointed time and listened to the word of life. So far as can now be ascertained this was the first sermon ever preached within the bounds of Cortland village. The congregation assembled at Mr. Hubbard's house, and consisted of about twenty persons, embracing most of those residing in this part of the town.

"There were, at the time of Mr. Hill's visit, but three houses within the limits of the present corporation. Mr. Crittendon had disposed of his house and land to Mr. Hubbard, who resided at what is now the corner of Main and Center streets, where this meeting was held. He had recently moved in with his family and adopted this as his future home. Though a member of the Presbyterian Church, he had, while residing in Massachusetts, frequently listened to the preaching of such men as Jesse Lee, George Pickering, Silas Stebbins, Timothy Dewey, and their coworkers in the vineyard of the Lord. Through the instrumentality of their labors Mrs. H. and two or three of their children had already become members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. They were, therefore, prepared to extend a cordial welcome to a herald of the cross thus visiting them in the wilderness. At their request Mr. Hill left another appointment, and from that early date to the present regular Methodist preaching has been maintained in this place. Thomas Dunn was the junior preacher, and alternated with Mr. Hill in his rounds on the circuit.

"As the traveling preachers continued to visit Cortland,* it was soon deemed expedient to organize a society. Accordingly, in the winter of the same year, Mr. Hill received the following persons into the Church and formed them into a class, namely: Jonathan Hubbard, Mary Hubbard, James Hubbard, Abigail Hubbard, Elijah Batchelor, Martha Batchelor, Isaac Bassett, Polly Bassett, William Bassett, and Catherine Sherwood. Elijah Batchelor was appointed class-leader. He had been a member of the New York Conference, where he traveled for some years as an itinerant minister, and had now located and removed to this western country. It was through his influence that the circuit preachers were induced to labor here, and, as he often preached in their absence, he was greatly instrumental in building up and strengthening

*Though Cortlandville was then included in the town of Homer, it is here and elsewhere spoken of in these pages, for the purpose of avoiding confusion, by the name which it now bears.

the little society. He was, soon after, called upon to resume the active duties of the ministry, and, like a true disciple of Christ, left all and went forth to proclaim the glad tidings of peace to a lost and ruined world. The circuit embracing Cortland became several times his field of labor, so that his connection with the class here was not entirely broken off. Methodism, in her early struggles, was greatly indebted to his counsels and prayers for the degree of prosperity which she enjoyed. James Hubbard and Abigail, his sister, now Mrs. Bassett, are still with us as members of the Church to which they were then attached. During half a century they have identified their interests with this branch of Zion, and are yet permitted to rejoice in the prosperity that has attended the people of their choice. The others have, ere this, departed, as we humbly trust, to join the Church triumphant in the city of God above. They lived, however, to witness many trophies of redeeming grace, as sinners were brought into the kingdom of Christ through the instrumentality of this people.

"The society of ten members thus constituted was attached to Cayuga circuit, which was then embraced in Genesee district of the Philadelphia Conference. The district contained eight charges, which covered in their extent most of the territory now embraced in the five conferences lying wholly or in part in Western New York. Cayuga circuit, which had been taken from Seneca in 1799, extended from Lake Ontario on the north to a line near the old turnpike running east from Ithaca on the south, and from Cayuga Lake on the west to the Cincinnatus valley on the east. It was nearly as large as some modern conferences, and yet the unconquerable energy of two itinerant ministers enabled them to make regular visits to all its parts, and preach the Gospel to as many of its inhabitants as were willing to hear. To accomplish this extensive forests had to be threaded, without the least semblance of roads, and often with no other directions for their journey than the marks on the trees. Rivers had to be crossed without the help

of bridges, mountains ascended and descended with neither companion nor guide, and suffering and peril in a thousand forms endured without human alleviation or support. Added to all this, those itinerants were often reduced to extreme want, from the poverty of their brethren and the limited compensation which they received for their labors. Indeed, the subject of pay did not seem to be taken into the account. They lived with the settlers on the scantiest fare, and suffered with them, for the sole purpose of winning them to Christ. The record of such examples as they have left us is seldom to be found on the page of uninspired history.

"Rev. Joseph Jewell filled the office of presiding elder until the year 1808, when the district was transferred to New York Conference, and Rev. Peter Vannest appointed his successor. Neither of these men held quarterly meetings in Cortland. The circuit was large, and contained many societies more prominent than this, and better able to sustain the interest of these meetings."

CHAPTER III.

METHODISM IN CANADA.

The late venerable Peter Vannest, while enjoying the retirement suitable to his age and infirmities, sketched many of his recollections of pioneer service for the information of the public. Several rare contributions from him are to be found in the files of the Christian Advocate and Journal. We shall make some extracts from one of these communications, which may be found in the number for September 8, 1847.

In 1802 Joseph Jewell, presiding elder, from Upper Canada, came to the Philadelphia and New York Conferences

upon a recruiting expedition, as at that time no one was sent across the line without his consent. Mr. Vannest says: "I volunteered, and was sent to Oswegatchie. From a place called Bastard to the River Beddo was fourteen miles the way the road went; but to cross a point of woods it was but seven. I got a man to pilot me; he was soon bewildered, and said that we were lost, and despaired of ever finding the way out. We tried to track our way back, but it was impossible, the leaves were so thick; so I undertook to pilot myself, and soon found the road. We got safe to the appointment. At that place I found an Indian family encamped on the shore of the river. The man asked me for some tobacco, and I gave him some. The next morning I went to see him, and he offered me a fine leg of venison. I told him I did not want it. He said: 'You take 'em, you eat 'em, you welcome—'bacco.' I asked him how far their castle was. He held up his hands, and said so many hundred miles. I asked him to show me how he went. He took a stick and made a map on the sand, so complete as to show the lakes and rivers, and carrying places for their canoes through the woods. I asked him the distance from such to such a place. He began with his fingers thus: One finger for a hundred miles, a crooked finger for fifty, and a finger across the crooked one for twenty-five miles. I marked down as he went from place to place, and found that it was one thousand miles to an appointment. We had to go twenty miles without seeing a house, and were guided by marked trees, there being no roads. At one time my colleague was late in getting through the woods, when the wolves began to howl around him, and the poor man felt much alarmed; but he got through unhurt, for which he felt thankful to the Lord.

"I think in August I went to Bay of Quinte circuit, which was very large. In summer we crossed ferries, and in winter rode much on the ice. One appointment was thirty-four miles distant, without any stopping place. Most of the way was through the Indians' land. In summer

used to stop about half way, in the woods, and turn my horse out where the Indians had had their fires. In winter I would take some oats in my saddle-bags, and make a place in the snow to feed my horse. In many places there were trees fallen across the path, which made it difficult getting around in deep snow. I asked the Indians why they did not cut out the trees. One said: "Indian like deer; where he cannot creep under he jump over.' There was seldom any traveling that way, which made it bad, in deep snows, to break the road. At one time when the snow was deep, I went on the ice until I could see clear water, so I thought it time to go ashore. I got off my horse and led him, and the ice cracked at every step. If it had broken there would have been nothing but death for us both, but the good Lord preserved man and beast. I got to the woods in deep snow, and traveled up the shore till I found a small house, where I found out the course to my path through the woods. Keeping a good look-out for the marked trees, I at last found my appointment, about seven o'clock. If I had missed my path I do not know what would have become of me. At my stopping-place the family had no bread, nor meal to make any of till they borrowed some of a neighbor; so I got my dinner and supper about eleven o'clock on Saturday night. On Sabbath I preached. On Monday rode about five miles, crossed the bay, and then rode seventeen miles through the woods without seeing a house, preached, and met class for a day's work.

"In the spring of 1803 I led my horse about three miles on the ice on the Bay of Quinte, in the forenoon. That night the ice all sank to the bottom, so that the next morning there was none to be seen! So the good Lord has saved me from many dangers, both seen and unseen. Glory be to his holy name forever! Amen.

"In 1803 I went to Niagara circuit with a young man by the name of Samuel How. We had no presiding elder that year, so I had to attend quarterly meetings on that and on Long Point circuits.

"At a newly-settled place on the circuit I appointed a love-feast and sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It was a new thing in that place, and many attended. There was a small class there. I told the leader to admit all members and serious persons; so he let them in, until the house was filled to overflowing, but I did the best I could with the multitudes. I inquired why he let so many in. He said they all looked serious, and he did not know them.

"After meeting a genteel looking man came to me and requested me to preach in his house. I said I did not think I could, as I had so many appointments; but I inquired where he lived, and what sort of a house he had. He said he had a large house; he kept tavern, and had a large ball-room, that would hold many. 'Sir,' said I, 'you do not want meeting in your house; there was no room for the Lord in the inn; but I thank you for your compliment. You know you do not want it, and the Lord knows you do not want it.' So the man went away, and before he got half way home he felt convicted, and said to himself: 'I did not want meeting; how did the man read my heart?' When he got home he made up his mind to sell his distillery, and make and sell no more whisky. So he gave his ball-room to the Lord for a place of worship until the society could get a better place. There were seven brothers of them, who, with their wives, all got religion, and a good work began in that place. So the Lord works in his own way. Glory be to his holy name!"

Through the labors of missionaries, some of whom remained but a short time, while others finally adopted the country, and remained there permanently, the work of God continued to advance in Canada. Young men were raised up from among the people of the provinces who did good service, and were especially adapted to the state of society, and were British subjects, and consequently not looked upon with an eye of jealousy, but had unrestricted access to all classes. By these means Methodism became firmly established in the Canadian provinces, and acquired a vast influ-

ence over the masses. The brave old pioneers, like Vannest, were the first to visit the poor, hardy, and hard-working people at their cabins, and tell them of the Saviour's love, and it was not easy to turn them away from the teachings and pastoral oversight of those who, under God, had been the means of their conversion.

CHAPTER IV.

METHODISM WEST OF THE GENESEE RIVER.

The work of God kept pace with the advance of civilization westward. As the enterprising and hardy pioneers set themselves down in the wilderness and commenced felling the trees, the Spirit of God commenced the work of preparing the way for the seed of truth and the establishment of the Church in the wilderness. Some of the emigrants had been brought to God by the instrumentality of the Methodist preachers in the more thickly populated portions of the state at the east, and they did not leave their religion behind them.

Rev. Glezen Fillmore gives the following account of the rise of Methodism in that now flourishing and wealthy portion of the state of New York which lies west of the Genesee River.

David Hamlin came from Honeoye, and settled in a place called Pine Grove, now Clarence, in 1804. He was a Methodist, and kept up family worship. On the Sabbath he read one of Mr. Wesley's sermons to his family and such of his neighbors as desired to be present. He occasionally held meetings in other places, where he prayed and exhorted, thus acting the part of a John the Baptist in preparing the way of the Lord. For three years the few scattered sheep in the wilderness sought spiritual edification in

listening to the reading of a sermon and to the exhortations of a pious layman on the Lord's day. God was with this good man, and kept his spirit alive until the needed relief came.

At the Philadelphia Conference, in April, 1807, Peter Vannest was appointed a missionary to the Holland Purchase. He forded the Genesee River near the place where the city of Rochester now stands, and in the month of June preached his first sermon in what is now Ogden Center. The first class was formed in August, in that part of the town of Clarence, now Newstead, at the house of Charles Knight, who had emigrated the previous spring from Eaton, Madison county. The following is a list of the names of this class. Charles Knight, Lydia Knight, Leonard Osborn, Lydia Osborn, David Hamlin, Sen., Rebecca Hamlin, David Hamlin, Jun., Anna Hamlin, Rebecca Hamlin, 2d, Jedediah Felton, Persis Felton, and Persis Haines. The last named still lives, and is the oldest resident member of the Methodist Episcopal Church within the bounds of the Genesee Conference. All the others died in the faith, and now belong to the glorious company of heaven. Charles Knight was the first leader.

Daniel Hamlin's house was one of the best homes for the preachers in the Holland Purchase. He sometime met more than one eighth of the claim upon the whole circuit. He died at an advanced age. When near his end Dr. Smith, who attended him, said to him: "We have long seen how you have lived, now we wish to see how you will die. How do you feel now? What are your prospects?" The dying saint lifted his eyes toward heaven and exclaimed, "An ocean of glory!" and breathed his last.

Mr. Vannest held a sacrament at some point, probably in Middlebury, and had five communicants. He returned, according to the Minutes, fifty members.

1808. George Lane and Thomas Elliott were appointed to the Holland Purchase mission. Mr. Lane held the first

camp-meeting west of the Genesee River. This meeting was held in Caledonia, now Wheatland. This year a quarterly meeting was held in Clarence, at which James Herron presided, but left no very strong impression. He had contracted the habit of an extraordinary variation in his voice from a very high to an exceedingly low tone. Mr. Lane was unwearied in his labors, and was esteemed a very holy man. He reported ninety members.

The following extract from Mr. Lane's diary has been furnished us by his excellent lady, and will give the reader a good idea of his labors and dangers on this new field, and the spirit in which he bore himself under them:

"This day I started from the house of Brother Bush, where I formed a society of eight members, for Buffalo, a distance of fifty miles.

"At Cattaraugus I fell in company with a man and his wife, and a child eighteen months old, and two single men, who were all traveling in the same direction. The gentleman and his wife and infant, and one of the other men rode in the sleigh. The other man and myself were on horseback.

"When we came to the lake we were obliged to travel on the ice along or near the beach. The wind had blown the ice into such ridges it was nearly impossible to cross them; in some places they were very high, and the cakes of ice were frozen together so loosely that we were in danger of falling through into the water. The wind blew like a hurricane, and caused the snow to fly as though it had been falling fast from the clouds. We were all the while nearly blinded by the flying snow, and we found it almost impossible to proceed on our way.

"After traveling about nineteen miles on land, and six on the ice, the night closed in upon us. What to do under the circumstances we could scarcely determine. The horses driven to the sleigh gave out. The snow had fallen to such a depth that it came above the body of the sleigh, which greatly increased the labor of the horses. For some dis-

tance the winds had kept an open space between the rocky shore on the right and the snowdrifts on the left. This space had been wide enough thus far for the sleigh and horses, until at length the drift crossed this open space, and closed it up so that we could proceed no farther. What to do we knew not; we first tried to force our horses through the drift. We who were on horseback first made the attempt; the snow was not only deep, but very hard packed by the strong wind and intense cold. The horses reared and sprang, and reared again, and struggled hard to get through, and appeared as though they were floundering in deep mire, and after a long while they succeeded.

"After getting safely through ourselves, I left my horse with the other gentleman and went to aid in bringing the sleigh through. After treading down the snow as well as we could, the owner of the horses took one side and I the other, with whip in hand, and tried to force them through the drift, which was accumulating at a fearful rate. But the horses, after repeated attempts, gave up the struggle, and would make no farther exertion. What expedient to try next, for a moment, we were at a loss. The night was upon us, the weather excessively cold, our animals as well as ourselves exposed to great suffering, the icicles had formed upon their legs, which rattled against each other as they traveled or stood shivering in the cold. The wind was blowing a gale from the northwest, and we were opposite a ledge of rocks which rose to the height of sixty feet for some distance along the shore, against which the snow was accumulating most fearfully. To remain where we were even for a short time would be certain death. Some of our company advised to try to find an opening through the rocks into the woods where we might encamp for the night, though we had neither fire, or food, or shelter, nor sufficient clothing to keep us warm or prevent us from freezing. But counter advice prevailed, and it was soon determined to unharness the horses and leave the sleigh. One of the travelers on horseback gave his horse to the lady, and her

husband with the child in his arms mounted one of the horses driven to the sleigh, while the other was rode by the traveler who gave his horse to the lady. Thus equipped, we determined by the blessing of God to make a desperate effort to reach the public house at Eighteen Mile Creek, many miles distant.

"To get clear of the snow-drift we were obliged to strike off on the lake, but we found the ice exceedingly rough, occasioned by the high wind when the lake was freezing. The snowdrift which we had to avoid on the shore had increased to an enormous height, and was said the next morning to be sixty feet high. We had traveled but a short distance when the horse which carried the man and child stumbled and fell, pitching both into the snow, which so completely covered them they could scarcely be seen. They were dug out however and reseated, and in a few minutes we were on our way again. My own mind had been greatly sustained and comforted throughout this journey of peril, and I confidently believed that He who saved St. Paul and the ship's company from perishing by sea would save us from perishing on Lake Erie. About nine o'clock at night we arrived safely at a public house kept by Mr. Ingleson, at Eighteen Mile Creek, and felt we were under unspeakably great obligations to our Almighty Preserver.

"The next morning the owner, with others, went in search of the sleigh, but could find nothing of it. The snow had covered it, and it could not be discovered for months. After the snow had disappeared, the sleigh with a hundred dollars of money, which had been left in it, was found, and the faithful dog who had remained to watch it was also there, dead, by the side of his master's property.

"*Tuesday, January* 24. I started again for Buffalo, but found the wind so high and the snow so drifted that, after traveling ten miles, I was obliged to stop at the house of Brother Titus. At night a few travelers came in, to whom, with the family, I was requested to deliver a discourse; but, according to a long-established practice, I sought a place for secret

prayer, and for want of a better retired to a log stable, but found no room there; so I went around the stable and cleared the snow away with my feet, (it was about two feet deep,) and kneeled there before the Lord to implore divine aid in delivering his message to the people; nor did I ask in vain, but found help from above.

"My route led me through the Indian village southwest of Buffalo, where the famous chief Red Jacket resided or frequently visited. I often called at their wigwams to inquire my way. The road was new, through woods; in winter plenty of snow, in the spring the mud very deep, the streams swollen; in many places the streams had to be forded; but notwithstanding all this, through the protecting care of my Heavenly Father I was saved from all my difficulties and dangers."

1809. The preachers upon the mission were James Mitchell and Joseph Gatchell. In April of this year Glezen Fillmore came to Clarence an exhorter. He was converted and joined the Church in Westmoreland, at Daniel Seeley's. Mr. Fillmore went to a place now called Skinnersville, to see a family with whom he had been acquainted at the East. He was invited to come there and hold a meeting, and left an appointment for the next Sabbath. On Sabbath morning he went to the place, and on his approach to it he saw people wandering about carelessly, but upon arriving at the place of meeting he found no one there except the family. Brother Wright, the man of the house, seemed distressed at the disappointment, and rising under the influence of considerable excitement said: "I cannot stand it!" He went out and returned with two persons, a man by the name of Maltby and his wife. The family and these two constituted the congregation, but Mr. Fillmore, nothing daunted, proceeded with his meeting. Mr. Maltby and his wife seemed considerably impressed. At the close of the exercises Mr. Maltby said it had been "a solemn meeting," repeating the words several times. He invited Mr. Fillmore to hold a meeting at his house the next Sabbath, to which he gave his

cordial consent. When the time arrived the house was full, and a good religious feeling prevailed. A revival immediately commenced and a society was formed. Mr. Maltby and his wife were among the converts, and he became a local preacher. Four of his sons are now members of the Erie Conference. Grand results often follow what appear to be small causes. Mr. Fillmore was licensed to preach, and continued his labors in a local capacity for the space of nine years, preaching in the newly opening settlements and preparing the way for the traveling preachers. This period he considers as one of the most useful and successful portions of his life.

We have seen that Mitchell and Gatchell were the preachers in the Holland Purchase in 1809. This year the country filled up rapidly. There was a pressing call for preaching in many places. Mitchell was very popular, and being unusually easy in his terms of membership, had a large increase. A camp-meeting was held in East Bethany, in the Bennett neighborhood, which was very successful; some were converted at this meeting who did good service to the Church.

1810. John Kimberlin and William Brown are the preachers. Kimberlin was occasionally very eloquent and produced strong impressions, and on other occasions he was depressed and made failures. Brown was eccentric. He carried with him a quotation Bible, and seemed to think that the way to explain and enforce the word of God was to group together the same words and phrases. As a specimen of his preaching take a sermon on the text: "A man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." First he has a great number of places where "a man" is found, then a large number where "a hiding-place" occurs, then "the wind," and "a covert," and so on; winding up his discourse with a multitude of words and phrases similar to those employed in his text without reference to their connections; but as he seemed "to have the Bible all by heart," and would quote "book, chapter,

and verse," although his quotations amounted to nothing, and no one remembered one out of the hundred of his references, some called him "a great preacher."

William Brown, however, was zealous in the cause, and labored hard for the salvation of souls. He once said, if he should preach a fortnight and see no conversion he should think that he had missed his calling.

The last quarter of the year Brown was sent to Chautauque, and Ralph Lanning came on in his place. At the end of the quarter he reported one hundred and fifty members in that new field. He once had an appointment across the Conawango when the water was very high. He swam his horse across the turbulent stream, and, on reaching the opposite shore, became entangled in a grape vine. He finally succeeded in cutting away the brush with his pocket-knife, and thus made his escape.

Such adventures, perfectly common in those early times, go to illustrate the state of the country and the character and pluck of the old pioneer preachers. Traveling through the wilderness and crossing streams was then a laborious and a perilous business; and yet the old preachers faced the danger and fought their way through like heroes, as they were. It is a doubtful question whether a man should run the risk of his life, and that of his beast, to say nothing of becoming thoroughly drenched, on a cold day, merely to meet a small congregation. Perhaps, however, the question would not now by most persons be considered a doubtful one, but would be decided in the negative without a long debate.

SENECA CIRCUIT.

1805. Joseph Jewell is presiding elder on Genesee district. Some few changes in the occupants of the circuits.

This year the preachers on Seneca circuit were Thomas Smith and Charles Giles. They have both left a record of the labors of the year. Mr. Giles says:

"This ample circuit covered all that tract of land be-

tween the Cayuga and Seneca lakes, south and west of the Seneca lake and north to Lyons; encircling a large extent of country, thinly peopled; the inhabitants mostly poor."

Mr. Smith gives us the following particulars of his toils, dangers, and successes:

"*May* 1, 1805. Conference was held at Chestertown, Maryland, and I was appointed to Seneca circuit, in the Genesee country, state of New York. I was six hundred miles from the field of my labor. The distance around my circuit was three hundred miles, and the distance from one appointment to another was from five to fifty miles..

"*May* 16. I set out for the north to my circuit, the field of my labor for the ensuing conference year. On my way I passed through Asbury, New Jersey, where I put up with my esteemed friend Mr. M'Cullough, and on a short notice had a congregation, to which I preached. The next day I renewed my journey. On coming to the Blue Mountain, and passing through the Water Gap, I was waylaid by a man waiting to kill me, from whom I made the narrowest escape. He missed his blow, or he would have had my life, with my horse, and money, etc. Before he could renew the charge I was escaped as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

"*May* 21. I preached in Wilkesbarre, a handsome town on the Susquehanna. I put up with a Mr. Penson, who treated me politely and kindly. The next day I renewed my journey toward the wilderness of Genesee.

"*June* 3. I reached my circuit, and the next day I preached to my backwoods friends, and was comforted with their company and conversation. I have passed through various scenes in coming to this circuit since I left Maryland. I will instance one, a trying one to me, when I was lost and bewildered:

"Having got out of my way on the side of a mountain, and aiming for the top in an Indian path, I ascended to where my horse could not turn round. I then alighted, and went on foot to see if I could get around the mountain. I believed that I could, and returned to my horse.

To undertake to turn him about would be to cause him to fall some hundreds of yards; to go forward he could but die. I tied the lash of my whip to the end of his bridle, to keep as much space between me and my horse as I could, and led him, the mountain still extending up some hundred yards further: we went on till we came to the point of the mountain which projected over the Susquehanna River. This was the trying moment. Behold a man and horse in a sloping path, twelve inches broad, on a shelving rock, suspended as it were in the air, or projecting from the mountain's peak, hundreds of yards above the river's bed! How dreadful! Through the providence of God I got safe with my horse to the valley, when I dedicated *one hour* to God in prayer. I was told by the inhabitants that men and horses had fallen from this point of the mountain, and that, consequently, this way had long been abandoned. I have been in perils in the wilderness, in perils among venomous animals, in perils among the red men of the forest; and yet I live. May it be to glorify God on earth and to win souls to God!

"*June* 8. I passed through the Catherine Swamps alone and lonesome, only here and there passing a red man's house or Indian wigwam.

"*June* 13. I came to the cottage of Dr. Chamberlain, where I was most cordially received; but I had not long been there when a little girl came and inquired if I were a minister; if I were, her father wished to see me, for he was dying. Mrs. Chamberlain desired me to go and see the dying man while she prepared me some dinner. I did so; and when I returned the ash-cake was baking, and the bear-meat broiling. After I had eaten and prayed with the family, I set out for my next appointment on a hungry horse. Late in the afternoon I came to another preaching place. On riding up to the house a plain-looking man came out, and said: 'Art thou he that shall come, or do we look for another?' I said: 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord

To which he rejoined, 'Welcome in, thou servant of the Most High: in his name come in.'

"*June* 14. Having preached twice and rode forty miles, and night coming on, I rode up to a cabin. 'How do you do, friends. Do you know one Thomas Smith, a Methodist preacher?' 'No, sir; we don't know him.' 'I am the man: can I stay here to-night?' 'You cannot.' 'Good-by.'

"*June* 27. I preached at Geneva, a handsome town on the outlet of Seneca Lake. The people are very civil, very polite, making money, and some striving for heaven. Lord, grant that they may obtain the heavenly goal!

"*June* 29. I preached at Mr. M'Gregory's. Here were some warm-hearted people, who loved God and them that served him. And here were more Indians. They were very polite, but without the fear of God. They drink rum, and get drunk. Poor souls! Lord, have mercy on them!

"*July* 3. This day I swam my horse across a dangerous river, and passed through several Indian towns. There were the shining tomahawk and the glittering scalping-knife. I preached twice, and returned unhurt. To God be the glory!

"It has been said by some people that ministers preach for the sake of ease and profit. I know one that has rode four thousand miles, and preached four hundred sermons in one year; and laid many nights on wet cabin-floors, and sometimes covered with snow through the night, and his horse standing under a pelting storm of snow or rain; and at the end of that year receiving his traveling expenses and *four* silver dollars of his salary. Now if this be a life of pleasure, ease, and profit, pray what is a life of labor and toil?

"*July* 24. After preaching I was taken with a fever, and lay in a cabin six days on three old chairs; but the people were kind, and God was with me, and all was well.

"*August* 9. A camp-meeting was held on my circuit, which was kept up almost day and night. Preachers and people were at their posts, and all at work for God, and sinners were deeply affected, and came pleading with God

for mercy and pardon; and every morning's sun brought new subjects of rejoicing in souls converted. The red men of the forest came to the meeting, stood amazed, shed tears; then wiped their eyes, and said, 'Poor Indian, born to die!' A gentleman from Kent county, Maryland, came to this meeting, and spoke to one of these Indians, asking him some questions; the Indian gave the Christian a stern look in the face, and said: 'Sir, if you have anything to say to me you must wait till preaching is over.' Poor Christian, how justly rebuked by the heathen! A camp-meeting was a new thing in this new country. This was the first that was held in these parts, and much was said by some against preachers and people; forgetting that while their tongues were swelling the reproach of falsehood and shame, they were lighting up the road for a painful march to the sorrows of the dead.

"*August* 18. We have already gathered in considerable fruit of our camp-meeting. Our societies are increasing.

"*September* 7. I am bending my course northward, and preaching in many barren and destitute places, where the Gospel is new; and here and there I find a lost sheep willing to return to the fold. After preaching twice to-day, I put up in the evening, tired and hungry.

"*September* 10. I was at a camp-meeting on Cayuga circuit. On Sunday a gentleman was put up to preach who was not of us, a very learned and talented divine. He took occasion in that sermon to underrate the Methodist preachers, and represented them as anything but gentlemen and scholars. He then told us that God from all eternity had decreed whatever comes to pass; and that the number to be saved and the number to be lost were so definite that there was no adding to the one or diminishing the other. When he had closed his subject, an elder in his Church rose and said that his minister had preached doctrines that day he had never heard him preach before, and if that doctrine was true, he could not see why he should give him twenty-five dollars a year for preaching

to him; for if he were to be lost, lost he would be, if he were to give him his whole estate; and if he were to be saved, saved he would be, if he gave him not one dollar. 'And now,' said he, 'I am no more a Presbyterian; from this time I am a Methodist;' and that week himself and ten others came and joined the Methodist Church. I do not believe there was a sermon preached on that ground that did the Methodist cause so much good as those few remarks of our friend Bailey.

"*October* 12. In the afternoon I came into a new settlement, and called at the house of J. G. for entertainment, and was kindly received. Had myself and colleague been two angels from heaven Mrs. G. could have received us no more kindly. We preached that night; and the next morning, on leaving, Mrs. G. made Brother Giles a present of what he greatly needed.

"*October* 16. My appointment brought me to Lyons, where I preached in the evening. Here we had a respectable society and a small meeting-house. But the people of Lyons were generally wicked: they took pleasure in unrighteousness, in deriding the ways of God, and in persecuting the humble followers of Jesus Christ. They interrupted and insulted us in our religious worship, and on this evening they were worse than usual. I paused until I got their attention, and then remarked that I should not wonder if Lyons should be visited on the morrow in a way that it never had been before, and perhaps never would be again to the end of time. We then had quietness to the close of the meeting. When the congregation was dismissed, and I had come out of the house, the people gathered around me, and with one voice cried out, 'For God's sake, Mr. Smith, tell us what is to happen here to-morrow?' I replied, 'Let to-morrow speak for itself.' I went home with brother D. Dorsey, a short distance from the town. After breakfast the next day I said to Sister Dorsey, 'I wish you to go with me into Lyons this morning, as there are some families to which I cannot get access without you.' She, being acquainted with

the place, readily consented. At nine o'clock A. M. we entered the town. Scores from the country were already there, and the place was in commotion. We went to the house of Mr. ——, where we were politely received. I knew if we could storm *that* castle the day was ours. After conversing some time, I remarked that Mrs. Dorsey and myself were on a visit to Lyons, and, if it were agreeable, we would pray before we parted. 'By all means, Mr. Smith; by all means, sir.' Before prayer was over there were scores of people at the door, and by this time the order of the day began to be understood; and they that feared God were at their posts, coming up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. We then went, in large procession, from house to house, entering every door in order, and praying for the souls of the families. Our little band soon increased by some three or four hundred. When we came near the tavern, where we had been so derided, it was inquired, 'Will they admit us?' But the doors and windows being open, we entered in, and was there ever such a shout while storming Lucifer's castle? At four o'clock in the afternoon we called a halt, to see what was done; and forming a circle on the green, the new converts were invited within the circle, when *thirty-two* came in, who that day had found the pearl of great price, Christ in them the hope of glory. These thirty-two, and eight more, were added to the Church of God on that afternoon. Thanks be to God, this was another good day's work in the Lord's vineyard. This meeting produced a pleasing change in Lyons, and Methodism gained a footing in that place it never had before. To God be the glory!

"*October* 22. I preached at Wagoner's Mills. Here the enemy of souls had long reigned in the hearts of the children of disobedience, and he was enraged at the prosperity of our Zion, so newly established here. In time of preaching a mob roared upon us, and broke us up, and threw the congregation into confusion. But the civil authorities interfered, and Lucifer and his fiendlike crew were subdued,

and the flock was again collected, when I renewed my subject by preaching it over to them: the people got engaged in prayer; and the God that answereth by fire, spake as never man spake. Satan's kingdom shook! Some cried for mercy; some ran away; some fell to the floor, crying, 'Save, Lord, or we perish.' Several were converted to God, and joined the Church on probation. We met class and had a good time. Surely this has been a day of great conflict; but God has given quietness to his lambs, and fed them in green pastures, and led them beside the still waters.

"*December* 26. I set out before day for my next appointment, and after riding fifty miles through a steady rain, late at night I called at a tavern, and after supper and prayers I called for a room, that I might retire. But finding it wet, and the wind and rain driving into it, I asked the landlord to let me return to the fire and sit by it all night, or otherwise I should get my death. He consented, and in the morning I gave him fifty cents, and rode twelve miles for breakfast, and that day preached three sermons, and retired at night much fatigued.

"During the month of December, although nothing special has been done, yet we have faithfully attended our appointments, and nothing has been left undone. We have preached, administered the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and baptism, and met the classes, which have been well attended.

"*January* 1, 1806. This day the Lord gave light to my mind. We had a good time in class. The Lord added three to our number. Though our discouragements are many in this section of the Lord's vineyard, yet the peace of God, the hope of heaven, and the prosperity of Zion, sweeten labor, and open in the soul a little heaven.

"*January* 14. I have suffered much from the cold, and uncomfortable lodgings, exposed to snow and rain beating on me through the night; yet my health has been astonishingly preserved, and my soul has been happy in God. This morning, rising before day and roasting some potatoes, I got some milk and ate my breakfast; then getting my

horse, I was off, leaving the family asleep. In the course of the day I fell in with Brother Charles Giles, my colleague. At night we arrived at Brother G.'s. The weather was extremely cold, and we met with a cold reception from the family until Brother G. came in, when we felt more pleasant. We preached that night in a school-house, about a mile from Brother G.'s. When the meeting was dismissed, Brother G. went out with the people and left us. Thus circumstanced, Brother Giles and myself concluded we would stay in the school-house all night, and brought in wood enough to last till morning. But after having built up the fire and laid us down, Brother G. came in, and made an apology for leaving us. We then went home with him; and I will leave it to Brother Charles if we had not a hard time of it. You remember our sufferings at the barn, and how we hugged each other, and cried with cold and hunger. Shall we not remember it in heaven?

"*January* 17. I preached on the head waters of the Seneca lake, and had a good time. The word of truth and power came like a two-edged sword to the sinner's heart. Some obtained mercy and salvation, and went home justified in Christ Jesus.

"*January* 20. I went to the Charlestown quarterly meeting, to see the presiding elder on business of the Church. I was pleased with that part of the Genesee settlement. Bloomfield township is a splendid place. There is in it a straight road, which for three miles has houses on both sides. But Charlestown township excels in grandeur. To a stranger it would seem as if the kings of the earth had gathered together there, and made the place their residence. Both their dwellings and churches are grand. It was settled by Presbyterians.

"*January* 25. I left Charlestown and returned to my circuit. Coming from that beautiful spot made my field of labor look dreary. But the word of God preached in Charlestown did not profit more than in the wilderness.

"*February* 10. For two weeks past the weather has been exceedingly cold. People have frozen to death on the road.

The snow on a level is nine feet deep in the fields and woods; but the public roads being open, we have the finest sleighing I ever saw.

"*February* 12. I preached on John iii, 16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That word *everlasting* sounded well in the ears of believers. The congregation was small, but they received the word joyfully.

"*February* 13. I preached, and the Lord was with us. Some ladies cried, and wiped their eyes, and wished they were good.

"*February* 20. For the last week the weather has been more moderate, and our congregations larger, and our prospects brighter. To-day I got lost in a dreary wilderness, and the consternation of my mind was great until I met with some hunters, who very kindly conducted me out of my difficulties, and I arrived at Brother Brainard's in time to meet the congregation, and had a comfortable time with my forest friends, while I preached on John xx, 13: 'Woman, why weepest thou? She said unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord.' While explaining this text, mercy and love were poured down in abundance, and God's dear children were filled with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

"*February* 23. I rode thirty miles through one of the most severe snow-storms I ever saw, in order to meet a congregation at night, but on account of the severity of the weather none attended.

"By coming into this part of the country, and in Seneca circuit, I became acquainted with the character of Miss Jemima Wilkinson, from New England, known by the appellation of the Universal Friend. She professed herself to be the *Son* of God, and said she had power to convert the soul, and sanctify believers, and bring them to heaven, and to condemn and sentence to eternal misery all that rejected the offers of mercy from her. She admitted that

her present body was the body of Jemima Wilkinson, but contended that her *soul* was in heaven; that when she died her body was the most pure female body in the world; and therefore the divinity of Jesus Christ, as she says, entered her person *bodily*, that the redemption of mankind might be accomplished. For, says she, 'As there were two jointly in the fall of man, that is to say, the male and the female, so there must be two jointly in the atonement, the male and the female, or the redemption of man could never have been completed.' She has a splendid church and dwelling on Crooked Lake. Her disciples are many; among whom are some of the most wealthy people of the state of New York. Those who join her Church must pledge themselves to live singly, and if they have families they must abandon their wives and children. Some forty men and women have dedicated their natural lives to her service, that she may save their souls when they die.

"At the request of some, I preached a sermon in the green woods near her dwelling, exposing her system and doctrine, from Rev. ii, 20: 'Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach, and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.' Many attended this meeting. It was the largest concourse of people I have seen in this country. On this subject I said all I could, and closed the meeting, when the multitude disappeared, and Jemima's disciples gathered around her to rehearse what they could to her. She wept, and then put the black mark of reprobation on me.

"*March* 3. I preached on Isaiah xxxv, 10: 'And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion,' etc. We had a solemn time. The word of God made a deep impression on all; and while the spirit of weeping and mourning was manifested by some, the spirit of rejoicing and exultation was felt by others. This was a good meeting.

"*March* 17. The weather has been wet and cold; but zeal and hope, and love for souls, will bring a man through

many difficulties. I preached on Luke xii, 32: 'Fear not, little flock,' etc. I thought I could see in the countenances of the people a disposition to respond, 'Amen; Lord, give us the kingdom.' We met class, and had a gracious time. I received three on probation.

"*March* 23. Brother Giles and myself met to form a plan of the circuit. We leave for our successors four thousand miles to be traveled in twelve months, and four hundred sermons each to preach. The Lord give them grace and strength to perform all we have left them to do, and what we ourselves have done; 'so shall the wilderness blossom as the rose, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.'"

FATHER KENT'S VISIT TO OTSEGO AND CHENANGO CIRCUITS.

The scenes described in the following letter were laid in the older portions of our territory. Brookfield and Middlefield were strongholds of Methodism at the time of Father Kent's visit, and for many years subsequently; and although the places were located some thirty-five miles apart, yet the members of the two classes were familiar with each other, and interchanged visits at their quarterly meetings.

"REV. G. PECK: MY DEAR BROTHER,—Your sketch of the society in Middlefield, N. Y., in the Advocate, revived afresh in my mind the gracious season which I enjoyed with that people about the first of March, 1805. I had a brother living in Smyrna, and another moving thither from the eastern part of Vermont, who desired me take his wife and child in my sleigh, and aid him in his journey.

"We stopped in Middlefield about noon to feed our horses; the tavern crowded. One man eating his bread and cheese, called for a half pint of cider. 'A half pint,' said the landlord, 'why, that is a Methodist draught.' The man was rather indignant at being suspected a Methodist, and the man of the bar explained himself. The reason I said so was this: if Methodists call for anything to drink

they only call for half as much as other people.' Good, good, thought I; and I should like to get acquainted with some of those Methodists. He ordered a mug of cider for the men, and the matter seemed settled.

"I found my brother next door to my good friend and brother, Dr. Grant, who had lived in Whitingham, Vt. On Sunday I went with his family to quarterly meeting in Brookfield,* and heard Brother Timothy Dewey preach a warm discourse. Brother J. Jewell, presiding elder, gave out for love-feast next morning in the *barn* where we then were, and told them who he wished would attend, and who he hoped would stay away, in a style that was new to me. He said: 'We don't want any *swearing* Universalists here, nor *drunken* Baptists, nor *lying* Presbyterians; we have enough of this sort of people among ourselves, and we don't need to import any.' In quarterly conference Brother Charles Giles was recommended to the Philadelphia Conference for admission. Great gathering at love-feast, and the house surrounded by sleighs; a good supply of preachers; J. Husselkus, Benoni Harris, Ebenezer White, and J. Billings. Some of the shouters had remarkably strong voices. Brother Harris placed his own emphasis upon *amen*, and the season was a time of refreshing.

"Toward the close some mischievous fellows broke into the stable window and poured in like a flood. Some tried to stop the current, but it only made a tumult. The barn was large, but could not contain the people. The presiding elder gave out he would preach in the house, and have Brother Kent to preach in the barn, and retired, and most of the preachers with him. Some were shouting, or singing, or exhorting in different parts of the barn, and vain triflers, full of glee, talking and laughing without restraint. I asked a brother how we should get the people quiet. He said he could not tell. I arose but could not be heard but a

* Rev. Loring Grant, who was at that quarterly meeting, says it was held at Underwood's, in Columbus. It was within what was the township of Brookfield, until the very year of Father Kent's visit, 1805, when the township of Columbus was formed.

short distance, and said to this effect: 'I am a stranger from Vermont and want to tell you a story.' This I frequently repeated, and as my voice extended they became silent until all was quiet, and I spoke in substance as follows: 'There is an idea in New England that the people in York state are Sabbathless and uncultivated, and irreligious in their manners, for it is said they have *no law* to enforce the observance of the Sabbath, etc.; but I crossed the Green Mountains last spring into this state, and passed down to New York, attending meetings by the way, and was exceedingly pleased with the good behavior of all the congregations which I saw. When I got home I told our people they were mistaken about the Yorkers, that they behaved as well at meeting as our people do in New England; but I have thought this morning whether I must go home and tell them I have found one congregation of a different character?' By this time every eye was fixed, and all were as quiet as possible. I found great freedom and enlargement, and indeed it seemed good to be there. I doubt not but scores were much more comfortable in that barn in the winter, with the great doors open to give us light, than thousands of modern delicate hearers in their warmed churches, with carpeted floors and cushioned seats.

"I was obliged by reason of a thaw to leave my sleigh and return on horseback. Parted with Brother Jewell on Tuesday morning, who told me where to call in Middlefield at night, (I have forgotten the name,*) and tell them that I directed you to call there, and they will keep you over night. I called on the Dutch family, a little distance to the left of the main road, and told the lady at the door my errand. She paused and said: 'We have a meeting here to-night, but you may come in.' Being cold, I had a good excuse to keep on my overcoat, in hope not to be suspected. A local preacher was there, J. Crawford,† who I

* It was at Nicholas Writer's, or Recter's, as the name was always spoken.

† An eccentric, almost deranged man, whom we often saw at the paternal mansion in those days. He told a wonderful experience. He was

found was to preach. After supper I sat in the corner; numbers had come in whispering and querying about the stranger. Soon Brother Crawford came and asked me various questions, which I answered freely, such as 'Where do you reside?' 'In Vermont.' 'On what circuit?' 'Athens!' 'Who are the stationed preachers?' 'They are Asa Kent and James Young.' He went back to the brethren and appeared to report. A brother started to come, and I said to myself, he will not be so modest as Brother Crawford has been, and I shall be found out. His name was Peck,* and he asked me what he might call my name, I told him. O you are the man that preached at Brookfield last Sunday! we have heard of you, and now you must preach to-night. I thought of the landlord's slur, and wanted to see how such Methodists worshiped, but no excuse would be accepted. I spoke on 'The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree.' We soon found ourselves in a heavenly element, and we drank freely of the waters of salvation. It was equal to our best meetings upon the Green Mountains. Next morning the woman of the house said: 'When you came last night we thought you were a rogue.' 'And how came you to think so?' 'Because a young man put up with one of our brethren as a Methodist a few weeks ago, and they asked him to pray and he refused, saying that he was not good at praying, was better at speaking. He was going west, and we thought you might be the one, and was returning, and if you had been we would have found you out!' 'That is just right. If a stranger puts up with you as a Methodist, you ought to find out whether he is one, and if he is honest at heart he will like you the better for it.' "A. KENT.

"NEW BEDFORD, *June* 3, 1851."

1806. There is no change in the Genesee district this year, excepting the addition of Lyons circuit. Some

brought almost through the pains of hell into the kingdom. He was a simple-hearted, good man, but we know nothing of his subsequent history.

* Luther Peck, the class-leader, and father of the author.

changes among the preachers. Thomas Elliott, James Kelsey, and Amos Jenks are admitted, and appointed within the Genesee district. There is a decrease of thirty members within the district.

1807. The presiding elder is the same. The Holland Purchase Mission is added to the number of charges, with Peter Vannest in charge. Clement Hickman, Aaron Baxter, George M'Cracken, and Samuel Talbott are admitted, and appointed within the district. There is an increase this year of three hundred and forty-two.

1808. This year there is a new arrangement of the districts. Susquehanna district is transferred to the Philadelphia Conference, and takes in a considerable amount of territory which formerly was embraced within the Genesee district. Tioga, Canisteo, Holland Purchase, Caledonia, Ontario, Lyons, and Seneca are within this territory.

Cayuga district, with Peter Vannest presiding elder, in the New York Conference, embraces Chenango, Otsego, Westmoreland, Pompey, Scipio, Cayuga, Black River, Western, and Herkimer.

Within the Susquehanna district Canisteo and Caledonia are new circuits.

The circuits which were embraced within the Genesee district when Mr. Colbert traveled on it, in 1803, now contain a membership of five thousand two hundred and eighty-eight, the increase being larger than that of any former year.

1809. The districts are reported this year the same as last, Susquehanna, in the Philadelphia, and Cayuga in the New York Conference. The increase is still encouraging. Gideon Draper is presiding elder on the Susquehanna district, and Peter Vannest on Cayuga.

We have before us a general summary of the old Tioga circuit from the hand of the venerable Loring Grant, who, it seems, commenced his itinerant life on this circuit during the present year. This is the proper place to introduce it, and we are sure it will be read with interest.

"Going back of your inquiries, I commence by saying that in 1807, when I was some eighteen years old, my oldest brother, Isaac, and myself moved within the bounds of old Tioga circuit. Brothers Burch and Burgess were the circuit preachers; and in the fall of 1808, Brother Best and Brother Kimberlin being the preachers, I was licensed to preach, at the house of Brother Stevens, in Randolph; the presiding elder opposing it, on the grounds, first, that no one had ever heard me; and next, I was fashionably dressed. I was called in and informed by his reverence that the vote was unanimous for granting a license, but for his part he was at a loss for reasons for such action, and wanted to know how I would feel before a congregation with my two-breasted coat, short vest, and high pantaloons. At the next quarterly meeting held on Sugar Creek, in the winter of 1808 and 1809, at which time, as a matter of course, being rather more modest and diffident than now, I was afraid of the presiding elder as I should have been of a bear; but he dragged me to his side in a rude pulpit, and made me exhort. The Lord helped me, and the old bachelor became my friend. At that quarterly conference I was recommended to the Philadelphia Conference to travel, and being asked if I was ready to take a circuit, I said I had not yet clothed myself like a Methodist preacher. That, he said, would make no difference; it was a small matter, and could be arranged at my own convenience. He wished me to take the place of Brother Best on the Tioga circuit till he should return or I get my appointment. Accordingly, on the first day of March, 1809, that is, forty-eight years ago next Sabbath morning, I left my father's house in Smithville (where you have often been) and rode to Coventry, and that evening preached at Squire Elliott's; from that over on to Susquehanna, a short distance below Bainbridge; thence to Oquago, and then to Randolph; and after visiting Osborn Hollow, I returned to Oquago and preached at Squire Brush's. From Squire Brush's I crossed the Oquago Mountain to old Brother Hale's, the deer hunter, but

good man, and, as you know, the father of the girl the notorious Joe Smith stole and made a wife of. From Brother Hale's I went to Brother Comfort's, father of the Rev. Silas Comfort, of the Oneida Conference, who at that time was a little boy. Brother Comfort, Sen., professed to be awakened by reading C. Giles's 'Dagon of Calvinism; or, the Young Hammerer.' What do you think, doctor, of that as the means of a man's conversion?

"From Brother Comfort's I returned down the river to a Brother Rood's, then to Chenango Point, or Binghamton. Ten miles below, at Choconut, lived a Mr. Cafferty, an old Methodist from New Jersey, full of anecdotes, mostly relating to the early Methodist preachers, their talents, masterly efforts in bringing sinners to Christ, and their great skill in vanquishing the enemies of Methodism; of that class there were many in those days. They (ministers) were considered in those early days as the false prophets that were to come in the latter days deceiving, if it were possible, the very elect. It was thought by many, and not unfrequently by the clergy, to be an evidence of great moral courage, and even a Christian duty, to attack and abuse our ministers; and yet, strange as it might seem to some, God always gave them words of wisdom and power by which their persecutors were confounded. One of our ministers with whom I was acquainted was collared in the pulpit by an Episcopal clergyman, and peace was restored by the aid of a magistrate; but the Lord gave him words of wisdom and power, and his antagonist was overpowered by the truth. It was in that neighborhood (Nanticoke) that Christopher Frye preached on a quarterly meeting occasion with such power (physical) that he split off all the ornaments from the top of the pulpit, which fell, with startling effect, on the congregation below.

"From this place I went near Owego, where I met my colleague, and in a little canoe that might have been carried on a man's shoulder, Palmer Roberts and myself started down the river to an appointment, the wind blowing like a

tornado, threatening to engulf us; but Brother Roberts sung the familiar lines:

> 'Sometimes temptation blows
> A dreadful hurricane,' etc;

and at length sung out, "Brother Grant, you paddle and I'll pray.' We finally succeeded in making land, which we had but little expected. Our circuit led us over the mountains on to the waters of the Wyalusing Creek, and at Brother Canfield's we found a most hearty welcome. One night I recollect being in company with a young Methodist preacher, Mrs. Grant with her little babe being with us, the night dark, so much so as to be able almost to feel it. The roads never having been leveled, or the old logs removed, we worked our way on, lifting our wagon over stumps and logs, and sometimes in the greatest danger; one going before and leading the forward horse, the other jumping from side to side to keep if possible the wagon right side up, Mrs. Grant in the meantime in the back end on a side-saddle. So we kept on until we broke our thills, when each took a horse, one carrying the babe, the other Mrs. Grant, till some time before day we met a hearty welcome from one of the brothers Canfield. Although he was awakened a little earlier than usual, yet he received us gladly.

"On the Creek lived a brother Ezekiel Brown, one of the firmest friends of the itinerant. Those were days when, if we had greater toils than now, we had *warmer friends*. Near this, in the winter of 1810–11, in crossing the creek, or river, from our friend Luckey's, (cousin of Dr. Samuel,) the water was running over the ice like water from the tail of a mill; suddenly my horse fell through the ice without a moment's warning, yet I was enabled to leap from my horse to the ice, portmanteau in hand, holding to my bridle. My horse was several times carried under the ice, the water running swiftly, about ten feet deep; but speaking quick to him, and at the same time pulling with the bridle, he would breast the current. At length he seemed to swell up, and threw his fore feet upon the ice, and, with the blessing of

God upon the efforts employed, out he came. The call for help brought the neighbors some time after the horse was safe on *terra firma*, and my portmanteau well filled with water. Of course my effects were well drenched and my books spoiled.

It was in this neighborhood that I was left by my presiding elder, (the second time I was sent to the circuit,) having received my appointment from the bishop at the first session of the Genesee Conference, (held in Judge Dorsey's storehouse, near the now village of Lyons, in 1810,) to hold my quarterly meetings, without the presence of a single preacher; myself, only twenty-one years of age, having the charge of a circuit four hundred miles around, with thirty preaching places, over the rivers, and hills, and far away. This circuit extended down the Wyalusing to its mouth, then up the Wysox, and from the mouth to the head waters of the Towanda, and on to the head waters of the Lycoming Creek, being thirty miles between appointments. At this appointment among the hills we used to see a good old lady, who uniformly attended meeting, coming ten miles to preaching on a week day, living only twenty miles above Williamsport, on the west branch of the Susquehanna. One day, having rode thirty miles in the rain, on horseback, (that being the only mode of traveling in those days,) without food or shelter, I concluded the good old sister would disappoint us, but on arriving at the house, lo! the faithful Christian was ready to alight from her horse at the time that I did. 'So, sister, the rain did not keep you from the house of worship.' 'No,' was the reply; 'if our ministers can come thirty miles in the rain without refreshment, I think I can afford to ride ten to hear them.' From this the circuit extended over to the Sugar Creek, thence to the river again at Sheshequin. At old Sheshequin, at the house of Captain Clark, I preached, and on one occasion there was a lad of about sixteen, or a little rising, by the name of H. B. Bascom, (later Bishop Bascom, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South,) to hear me preach, and during the

sermon wept much; in the class meeting he professed conversion, and joined the Church as a probationer. But it was not until the General Conference of 1828, at Pittsburgh, that I knew that the green boy that I took into Church at Captain Clark's was the man of world-wide popularity. This I learned from himself. From Sheshequin we went on to Tioga Point, then up to Waverly, where I found Renaldo M. Everts, and licensed him to exhort; then up to Newtown, or Elmira, then back to the main river, up to Owego, then to Caroline, then across over into Lisle, so on to Green to the place of beginning."

In the mean time the work had been prospering in Canada, and two flourishing districts, under the direction of Samuel Coats and Joseph Sawyer as presiding elders had been organized, containing fourteen circuits and a membership of two thousand five hundred and forty.

1810. This year terminates the burdensome process of going to New York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore, to Conference. The plan which Bishop Asbury had for some time revolved of a new conference was perfected this year, and the preachers stationed within the Susquehanna, Cayuga, and the two Canada districts were notified to meet at Judge Dorsey's, in Lyons, on July 20. There the Genesee Conference was organized, embracing the districts notified in the Minutes of the previous year, with the exception of the Lower Canada district, consisting of five charges, which was retained in the New York Conference until 1812, when it was transferred to the Genesee Conference, with Nathan Bangs presiding elder.

The war between Great Britain and the United States put a stop to the intercourse between the United States and Canada, and this deprived Mr. (now Dr.) Bangs of his charge, and deprived the Genesee Conference both of the district and the incumbent. When peace was restored the district came back, but the old presiding elder was fixed in New York. The new conference came very near drawing a great prize; but for the memorable war of 1812 Nathan Bangs might have become a Geneseean.

CHAPTER V.

SKETCHES OF CHARACTERS.

ANNING OWEN.

This famous pioneer preacher was *the apostle of Methodism in Wyoming*. We have seen that he was in the Indian battle in Wyoming, in 1778, and that he was then for the first time brought to a fixed determination to seek the salvation of his soul. In the memoir of him in the Minutes for 1814, it is said that "he was a native of the state of New York," and that "he experienced the pardoning love of God in the early part of his life, and soon after attached himself to the Congregational Church." He may have been a member of the Congregational Church from early life for aught we know, but we have received the most reliable proof that in the relation of his Christian experience he always dated his convictions and conversion at the time of the battle.

Mrs. Garland, of Brooklyn, Pa., says that she heard Father Owen tell his experience in love-feast, when he was presiding elder, and it was on this wise: "When the retreat commenced on the battle-field he thought he should almost certainly be killed, and should go straight to hell. He began to pray, and determined that, should he be shot, he would fall on his face, and his last breath should be spent in calling upon God for mercy. He secreted himself under a grape-vine on the margin of the river, and there he gave his heart to God, and had never taken back the pledge. He found peace to his soul before he left the place, being there several hours." The story was told with so much feeling that it produced a wonderful effect upon those who were present. Sally Owen, his daughter, jumped and shouted.

Mrs. Fanny Cary says: Once in a love-feast Roger Searle spoke. "Ah, Brother Searle," said Father Owen, "we both

had like to have gone to hell together from under the grape-vine."*

Mr. Owen became acquainted with the Methodists at the East, whither the New England people who escaped the rifle and tomahawk fled after the fatal third of July, 1778. He returned to Kingston in 1787 or '88, put up a cabin for the accommodation of his family, and commenced working at his trade as a blacksmith. He at the same time commenced conversing with his neighbors upon the subject of religion, and finding some who were religiously inclined, he proposed to them to come to his house and join him in a prayer-meeting. This was the commencement of the movement which we have previously sketched.

In due time Owen became a local preacher, and was ordained a deacon before he commenced traveling. He was admitted on trial in 1795, but we find him connected with no charge on the Minutes of this year. He undoubtedly had an appointment, and it not appearing is an error in the Minutes. The series of appointments which Mr. Owen filled, and which we shall proceed to give, is the best possible illustration of his character. They show him to have been a man of great self-denial and of indomitable perseverance.

In 1796 and 1797 he traveled Seneca circuit. This circuit was then in a new country, and far from his home. The next year, 1798, he traveled Albany circuit, on the Hudson. In 1799 he was stationed on Flanders circuit, in New Jersey. In 1800 he is upon Bristol circuit, near Philadelphia. He had occupied these extreme points for five years, and had not removed his family; of course was nearly all the time from home. His next appointment affords him some relief. In 1801 he is appointed to labor on Wyoming circuit. In 1802 he goes to Northumberland. This is not very far away; but in 1803 he goes to Strasburgh and Chester, in Chesapeake district, in the state of Delaware. In 1804 he is on Dauphin circuit, near Harrisburgh. During the three

*Searle had been in the battle, and lay near Owen in the water on that memorable occasion.

ANNING OWEN'S COTTAGE.

years succeeding he is presiding elder on Susquehanna district. He now could make comparatively frequent visits at his humble cottage in Kingston, but not long to remain. In 1808 he is appointed to Lycoming circuit, among the hemlock and spruce swamps of Center county. In 1809 he is on Canaan circuit, made up of small settlements at distant points to be traversed over bridle paths and most horrible roads.

All this time Mr. Owen's family had lived in a comparatively comfortable little house, which he built himself, still standing in Kingston, where industry and economy presided. Mrs. Owen, a neat little body, and her daughters, took in work when they could get it, and earned a great part of their living. Mrs. Owen, as is now remembered, often came to Mrs. Myers's with yarn which she had spun for her, and carried home necessaries, which she received in compensation for her labor. She wore a plain, clean dress, a check apron, a white neckerchief, and a strap cap, all beautifully clean and smoothly ironed. Her conversation and manners were plain, simple, modest, and pious. Such was the woman that Mr. Owen felt himself called to leave in charge of his affairs for weeks and months together, with the privilege of earning much of her own living, and providing for and directing her children.

In 1810 Mr. Owen is appointed to Cayuga circuit; and now, for the first time, he removed his family. In 1811 he is on Seneca circuit; and in 1812 New Amsterdam, a portion of the old Holland Purchase mission, constitutes the scene of his labors. With this year his effective labors terminate.* He had a strong will and iron nerves, but nothing can stand intense and protracted friction. He had seen more than threescore years. During all these years, after he reached his majority, his motto was, Work! work! work! this world is no place for rest. His face was wrinkled, his head bald, and what of his hair remained was as white as snow. The concluding paragraph of the memoir in the Minutes of this brave old soldier of the cross is as follows:

"Anning Owen labored faithfully, and endured much hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and has been rendered a great blessing to many souls. In 1813, in consequence of bodily debility, he received a superannuated

* Mr. Draper says that Mr. Owen did not take charge of New Amsterdam, but after attending a few quarterly meetings for him, while he was at the South on business, he retired to his place in Ulysses.

relation, in which he remained till he expired at his own house, in the town of Ulysses, Cayuga county, in the state of New York, in the month of April, 1814, of the prevalent epidemic. His wife also, about twelve hours after his decease, followed him to the world of spirits. He died in the sixty-third year of his age. He manifested great patience and resignation in the midst of his affliction; his confidence remained firm till his latest struggle. He was entirely willing to leave the world, and, without doubt, died in peace, and is now receiving the reward of his labors. Surely the last end of the good man is peace."

Mr. Owen was a man of an earnest spirit. He labored with all his might. He had a great voice, and he did not spare it. He thundered forth the terrors of the law in such tremendous tones, and prayed with such energy and power that he was often called "bawling Owen." It was not all voice, however. He was a man of great religious sympathy, and of mighty faith. Under his preaching sinners trembled, and sometimes fell to the ground like dead men.

There was, indeed, a certain want of polish and delicacy of expression about the old blacksmith which often gave huge offense, but which sometimes was telling, and cowed opposers. An eye and ear witness related to us, many years since, a somewhat characteristic assault upon a man of note in Wayne county. He was a land agent, and a zealous Presbyterian. The preacher aimed a blow at "land-jobbers." They were, he said, like a land-jobber of old, who offered to give away all the kingdoms of the earth, when the poor devil had not a foot of land in the world. The gentleman was uneasy under the sarcasm, but kept his propriety until a terrible bolt fell upon the head of "the Presbyterians;" then he arose and said: "It is too bad, and I cannot endure it." "Sit down, sir!" thundered the preacher. The enraged hearer took his seat and held his peace for a few minutes, when another shaft brought him to his feet again. "I won't endure such insults!" said he.

"To be called an eagle-eyed Presbyterian and a blue-skin by you, sir, is more than I will put up with!" "If you are not silent until I get through, sir," said the preacher, "I will complain of you to a magistrate and have you taken care of." The gentleman sat down, and concluded there was no better way than to stand the storm, as he was too proud to flee.

The following illustrations of Owen's character are from a communication from Mr. Anson Goodrich, of Salem, Wayne county. He says: "Father Owen was a zealous, good man, very eccentric, and at times quite eloquent. I never listened to the man who would excel him in preaching the terrors of the law against the workers of iniquity. In the winter of 1806 I was sent to school at Wilkesbarre. A quarterly meeting was held in the court-house. On Saturday evening there was a ball held at a public house, so near that the sound of the violin could be distinctly heard. The old gentleman prayed most fervently that the Lord would 'shake the company over hell, and put a stop to that hog-gut and horse-hair squeaking.' The next morning, when he was preaching from the text, 'He that believeth not shall be damned,' the boys put some brimstone under the back log in the south fire-place, and were waiting on tip-toe to see the result. When the effluvia was perceptible by the knowing ones, the preacher exclaimed with a voice like thunder: 'Unless you repent and are converted you will all be damned!' And with his strong voice raised to its highest pitch, and with a stamp of his foot on the floor, and bringing his fist down upon the judge's desk, he roared out: 'Sinners, don't you smell hell?'

"The old gentleman seemed in his element when he was debating the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation. On one occasion, when he was preaching at Major Woodbridge's, the Rev. Seth Williston was present by the major's invitation. The text was: 'Who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.' He urged that Christ died for all, not *a part*, as some men

preach, and labor to make people believe. These hirelings, wolves in sheep's clothing, would find it as difficult to make men believe such palpable nonsense as to make a horse-nail out of cold iron. They find the sheep in the mud, pull the fleece off, and then say, 'Poor sheep, poor sheep!' After the sermon Father Owen said: 'Brother Williston, will you close by prayer?' 'No,' was the response. Mr. Williston retired to an adjoining room, and told the major he believed Mr. Owen to be a deceived man; upon hearing which, the next day, Father Owen replied: 'Tell Mr. Williston, if it is so it was decreed from all eternity.'"

Mr. Owen was a shrewd man, and sometimes quite witty. In one of his sermons he was rallying the worldlings. "A man," said he, "who is seeking happiness in the world, is just like a cat chasing her own tail; she is often just on the point of catching it, but it flies away, and she never quite gets hold of it." Some rowdies in Huntington once shaved his horse's tail. In the morning he came out with his saddle-bags upon his arm, to mount his trusty beast standing by the bars; and observing the poor animal's degradation, after a moment's surprise he threw his saddle-bags across the saddle with an amusing expression of submission to the insult, and a disposition to make the best of a hard fate, and a mixing of the pious and the ludicrous, which was not uncommon with him; "Glory to God!" said he, "he is not like Samson, for he is as strong as ever." As a matter of course, his indignant host fell into a fit of laughter, and exchanged his purposes of retribution on the perpetrators of the indignity for admiration of the patience and good-humor of his insulted but worthy guest.

Mr. Owen was a ready man. It did not take him long to prepare a sermon under almost any circumstances. Mrs. Bedford relates a singular instance in point. He had an appointment at her father's house, but did not arrive until the people had waited for a long time, and were about to leave. He came in, and in a hurried manner sung and prayed, and opening the large family Bible which lay upon

the stand before him, he read for his text the first words which he saw, and went on with his discourse. After the meeting was closed and the people had retired, Mrs. Sutton said: "Brother Owen, how came you to take your text from the Apocrypha to-day?" "The Apocrypha!" exclaimed he in surprise; "the book of Ezra is not in the Apocrypha." "No, indeed," says Mrs. Sutton; "but you took your text from the first book of *Esdras*." "Did I, indeed?" said he; "well, sister, say nothing about it; the people will not know the difference."

The old soldier sometimes made chance shots which did great execution. On one occasion he fell in with a gentleman, like himself, traveling on horseback, to whom, as was his custom on almost all occasions, he broached the subject of religion. He found the stranger to be skeptical, and he entered into an argument with him upon the claims of revelation. So far as he could judge, his reasoning produced no impression upon the mind of the gentleman. They came to a fork in the road where they bade each other a civil adieu. The itinerant preacher, as though seized by some sudden inspiration, turned hastily about and called out: "See here, my friend, I have two more things to say to you which I wish you not to forget." "What are they?" demanded the stranger. "Hell is hot and eternity is long!" was the answer. Several years elapsed, and the interview with the stranger had passed from the mind of Mr. Owen, when after meeting, perhaps a quarterly meeting, he was accosted by a gentleman, who referred to the conversation by the way and asked him if he did not remember it, adding: "Those two things which you wished me not to forget fastened themselves upon my mind, and I never got rid of them until I sought and found the Saviour." He had then been for years a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and had desired to meet with the man who had so mysteriously been the instrument of his conversion, not knowing who he was or where he could be found.

Anning Owen was a plain, blunt man, sometimes un-

ceremonious and rude, but always conscientious and zealous for God and the truth. He feared neither men nor devils; he spared no vice, no error, nor had he much respect for the feelings of those who abetted either. A Presbyterian of high character and standing, who often listened to him in the days of his vigor, remarked to us a few days since: "Mr. Owen was down on the *isms*. He had a passage in almost every prayer against them. It was this: 'O Lord, put a stop to Mohammedanism, Judaism, Heathenism, Atheism, Deism, Universalism, Calvinism, and all other Devilisms.'"

It was evident that our Presbyterian friend considered Mr. Owen's classification of the *isms* somewhat defective, still the passage from the prayer was quoted with great good-nature. The fact is, Owen was rather a licensed character, scarcely held amenable to the common laws of taste and social propriety. He had a standard of his own, and cared very little whether it was approved by others or not. His mission was to reprove the vices, errors, and follies of mankind, and to turn sinners to God; and he was successful. Whether his measures were the best that could have been adopted is not now the question; that he was an instrument of much good is historically true. That he had admirable qualifications for the rugged work of a pioneer preacher, is not a debatable question. The wisdom of God is manifested in no part of the history of the Church more strikingly than in the selection and the adaptation of the agencies which were employed in the establishment of Methodism in Europe and America; and the history of the Methodist movement in the interior does not furnish an exception to this rule.

Mr. Owen had a wonderful command over his feelings. He encountered some domestic afflictions. His only son sickened and died; his name was Benjamin, and he was as dear to him as the youngest son of Jacob, by the same name, was to him. Mr. Owen preached the funeral sermon of this beloved and only son. His beloved Sally was taken

sick when he was on one of his distant circuits. He was sent for, and came, but Sally was in her shroud. He was not disappointed, for, as he alleged, as he was pursuing his way at night he saw Sally arrayed in a clean white robe, and heard heavenly music. This he took for a warning that she was no more among the living. He preached her funeral sermon, and while he spoke of her conversion and pious life, and of the vision which he had on the way, the great tears rolled from his eyes in quick succession. His sunburnt and wrinkled face, and his snow-white locks, associated with the tenderness of his expressions, together with a sight of the cold clay of the lovely girl, wrung tears from all eyes, and left impressions which time could never efface. It was the predominance of the religious sentiment in Mr. Owen, and not the want of natural sympathy, which forced him into a position which in another would hardly be excused.

The following sketches, from an able pen, will furnish a suitable conclusion to the portrait which we have attempted. They are copied from articles on "The Wyoming Valley," in the Northern Christian Advocate, by the Rev. David Holmes:

"Physically, Anning Owen was a little above the ordinary size, with a dark complexion, piercing eye, athletic in appearance, and in fact possessed of a constitution capable of great endurance. His mental character, though good, was not strongly marked with any extraordinary feature. Justice requires us to say, however, that he possessed a sound mind, discriminating judgment, united with great firmness and decision of character. Convinced he was right, and his purpose once formed, nor men nor devils could turn him aside. Physically and intellectually, he was by natural constitution just the man for a Methodist preacher in the day in which he lived.

"His literary acquirements were small. Unblest with early advantages, and having commenced his ministry at an advanced period of life, it could not be expected he would

distinguish himself in the departments of science. Besides this, the nature of the work in those days threw almost insuperable difficulties in the way of this kind of improvement. The circuits were often hundreds of miles in extent and the roads almost impassable; the rides were long, and nearly every day in the week filled with an appointment. Under these circumstances the acquisition of literature was scarcely to be thought of; and yet such a man as Owen could never be at loss for adequate means of communication with the people. He regarded the Gospel as perfect in itself, not *needing* the embellishments of rhetoric or the tinsel of human learning to make it efficacious; and if he might not draw materials from scientific sources, yet he had a resort which never failed him, namely, the Bible, common sense, and a knowledge of human nature. His figures were natural, not fantastic; not the unreal creations of a wild and unchained imagination, but chosen from real life, and adapted to impress the mind of every grade of hearers. His speech was not with 'enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and with power.'

"The zeal of Owen was limited only by his ability. He seemed never to forget that his appropriate business was to save souls;

'To cry, Behold the Lamb!'

hence wherever he went, whether in the populous town or 'in the country waste,' in public or in private, he was in quest of souls for whom the Saviour died; and if perseverance in exhortation, entreaty, warning, supplication, and prayer could prevail, he never failed of the object.

"His warnings and reproofs were sometimes delivered with a bluntness that would no doubt offend the delicate ear in these days of refinement and fastidiousness; yet the fruits often illustrated the saying of the wise man: 'A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.'"

Anning Owen was a man of mighty faith and persevering prayer. It is said by those who knew him when presiding

elder, that the people always expected conversions at his quarterly meetings. He made his appeals direct to the heart, and if he saw the sinner affected under his preaching, he was sure to seek him when his sermon was ended, and seldom left him until happily converted to God. Often has he spent most of the night in prayer for the conversion of a single soul.

Owen was greatly fond of singing, and sung much himself; not that kind of singing which sacrifices piety and sense to *mere sound*, but spiritual singing, that which makes "melody in the heart to the Lord." His voice was strong and flexible, and distinguished for its richness and melody. There was one hymn which more than any other he delighted to sing. It was called "The Band of Music," and commences:

"O how charming!
O how charming!"

This hymn he sung at camp-meetings and quarterly meetings, in love-feasts, prayer-meetings, and class-meetings; he sung it on horseback as he traversed the wilderness in quest of souls, and on the day of his death his last strength was employed in singing

"O how charming!
O how charming!"

his voice failed, and an angelic band bore him away to unite in the "music" of heaven.

WILLIAM COLBERT

was a man of deep and ardent piety. His love for God and his fellow-creatures was the controlling principle of his life. His zeal was a steady flame. No labor or hazard turned him aside from the path of duty. He counted not his own life dear to him so that he might finish his course with joy. He traveled in all extremities of weather, and endured the greatest privations in his Master's service. He preached incessantly, and suffered no interest of the Church committed to his trust to languish for want of attention.

In this country Mr. Colbert was properly a missionary, and his work was missionary work. He broke up as much new ground as any other man of his period, and then the itinerant work mostly consisted in surveying and opening new fields of labor. Of what he passed through as a pioneer preacher we of the present generation can form but an imperfect estimate. In making up the account we must not merely take the measure of his labors in new fields, but we must consider who he was and what obstacles presented themelves in his vast and numerous fields of missionary toil.

Mr. Colbert was a native of Maryland, and had been accustomed to the comforts and luxuries of refined society. The contrast between the comfortable and elegant homes of Maryland and Delaware and the log-cabins and the stinted and homely fare of the New England settlers in Western New York, was so great as to shock the sensibilities of his nature, and fill him with disgust and loathing. When he wanted retirement, to be compelled to sit down among a troop of noisy children, and, at his quarterly meetings, to be crowded to suffocation at his lodging places by a flood of company, to such a mind as that of Mr. Colbert was more disagreeable than the terrors and gloom of a howling wilderness. The poor cookery, cold houses, dirt, and insects of a new country were to him real evils, for he had not been accustomed to such things. These, with a thousand and one unmentionable troubles, our missionary endured for the sake of Christ and the love of souls. In labors he was abundant. In journeys, exposure, frequent preaching, persevering, earnest efforts to extend the reign of Christ and save souls, he had few equals and perhaps no superior.

In his missionary tours in Tioga and the lake country in 1792 and 1793, his want of that immediate success which attended many of the old pioneers must have been exceedingly trying to his faith and patience. He labored four months in Tioga and only "joined three persons in society." Everywhere there seemed to be a stolid indifference to

religion; the only symptom of any interest on the subject of Methodism often was sharp opposition. There were exceptions to this condition of things, noble exceptions, but they were mere exceptions. Some of the better class of settlers received him to the hospitality of their hearths; but even these, while they treated the messenger with respect, rejected the message. Still he held on, bore himself nobly, having confidence that the seed which he was scattering would not all fail to vegetate; and after nine years of absence he returned to his old field of labor to find many green spots which were sterile when first visited by him. The hard blows which had been struck had caused the solid rocks to crumble, and the way was now comparatively plain. What strength of will, what plodding industry, what patient endurance, what hope, what far-reaching faith were necessary during those hard old times, when Colbert first climbed the mountains of the Susquehanna and waded the swamps among the lakes! And all these he had.

Mr. Colbert was a good preacher, sound in doctrine, clear in method, plain and practical, cogent in reasoning, and earnest in his appeals. His object was not so much to shine as to do good.

He was a true-hearted Methodist. The New England theology, with which he came into frequent contact, was an abomination to him. The rules of the Discipline he tried to *keep*, and not *mend*. But he was no bigot; his arms of charity embraced all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

The diary from which we have so largely quoted shows that our missionary was a student. He read the best books, as his scanty time and opportunities allowed, and profited by them. His keeping a diary, and keeping it up to the end of his long life, as we are told he did, is an evidence of his literary taste, methodical habits, and indomitable perseverance. The facts of this diary, simple and unstudied as it is, are a legacy to his family and to the Church beyond price. He was rather under size, well developed in physical

form, neat in person, somewhat sensitive, and always doing something.

Mr. Jesse Bowman, of Brier Creek, Pa., recollects the subject of this sketch perfectly, and has furnished us the following note of some of his peculiarities: "Mr. Colbert was a small, slender man, about one hundred and twenty-five pounds, not more; wore buckskin breeches, or small clothes, which he furbished up and repaired with yellow ochre, with which he was always supplied."

From a letter which Mr. Colbert wrote to Judge Dorsey, bearing date March, 1805, we learn that he was married to Miss Elizabeth Stroud on Nov. 1, 1804. From this time Stroudsburg, Monroe county, Pa., was Mr. Colbert's home. He located in 1811, was received again into the Philadelphia Conference in 1826, but did not do effective service. He lived much respected until 1833, when he was called to his great reward. His body reposes in the old graveyard in Stroudsburg, there to await the sound of the last trumpet.

BENONI HARRIS.

Among the men of small talents, and yet of great piety and marked character, who took a part in the labors of the itinerancy in our field, is the man whose name stands at the head of this section. Benoni was shabbily dressed, and was too simple to meet the taste even of those times of comparative simplicity. His exceedingly plain manners and his eccentricities mortified the preachers, and sometimes offended the people, and at the conference of 1810 a concerted effort was made to get rid of the poor little fellow, which proved successful. A record on the Journal of that year says: "Benoni Harris was charged with improprieties relative to dress, and a singular method of preaching, and he was advised to locate." This advice he followed, and the conference raised a collection of fifteen dollars for his benefit.

Thus closed six years in the itinerancy of one of the best,

and yet the most singular men who ever entered it. He was a very short man, not more, we should think, than five feet. He traveled Otsego circuit in 1805 and 1806, and we recollect him well. Short as he was, he was *loud*. When fairly under way he would put his hands to his ears and then dash them down, and stamp with his feet till he made things jar.

His stamping propensities once resulted in a most ludicrous scene. He was preaching in a sap bush, and, having no stage provided, he took his position upon the head of a hogshead. He preached and stamped until his foundation gave way, and down went the little man into the hogshead! The people laughed, but supposed the scene would soon be changed, when the eccentric little preacher should take another position. But how was their amusement increased when he went on with his sermon without the interruption of a sentence! his bald head just in sight, and his hands first flung up above his head, and then taking hold of the chime of the hogshead! When his sermon was concluded he was assisted out of his awkward pulpit, and, after a powerful prayer, he dismissed the people.

His *amens* were astounding, sometimes even to the earnest old Methodists, but often much more so to the wicked. The turnpike from Albany to Cooperstown was constructed during the time of his traveling Otsego. It passed our father's house, where Benoni often called. One morning he rode on west, and a gang of "the turnpikers" were moving along in the same direction. He was wretchedly mounted, and made anything but a respectable appearance. A wag of the company bantered him to trade horses, but he made no reply. They jeered him incessantly, while he did not appear to hear them, or even to know they were there. Finally one of them sung out, "Lord bless Brother Harris." Then he broke silence, and his response was "A—men," with a voice of thunder. The whole gang were taken down. They paused and let "Brother Harris" pass on without further molestation, which he did without uttering another

word, or turning to see what had become of his troublesome traveling companions.

In those days we were from eight to ten years of age, and Benoni was about our height, but considerably heavier. We saw him baptize, by immersion, in Red Creek two full grown young men, one of them Benjamin G. Paddock, and a young lady, and there we marveled at his physical strength, for he did the work manfully.

We were often deeply impressed under his earnest sermons, but were prodigiously mortified at his slovenly appearance, the rack of bones which he rode, and his saddle and bridle, which in sundry places were tied up with tow strings. He was as happy as a king amid all the horrors of poverty, dirt, and rags. He was a good man, without economy. He died in peace, and now needs no sympathy.

In justice to the memory of Benoni Harris, it ought to be said that, notwithstanding his shabby appearance and his oddities, he sometimes made a successful dash into the enemy's camp. He once called upon a vile opposer, and asked the privilege of praying in his house. At first he received abuse, and was peremptorily ordered to leave the house. But he kindly and earnestly expostulated with the enraged man, when, perhaps, his smallness of stature and his child-like simplicity were his only protection from personal violence. He knelt and prayed while the fellow swore. His prayer concluded, he asked him to go that evening and hear him preach. The proposition was rejected with cursing and bitterness. Nothing daunted, the little meek poverty-stricken saint says: "You will go, I know you will, and you will be converted." The enraged infidel was utterly surprised that any human being could hear such abuse with such patience, and half dumb with astonishment, and from a desire to get rid of his unwelcome visitor, he promised to attend meeting, and Benoni left. His friend was at meeting in good time, and received extra attention from the preacher. The result was that before the meeting closed

the infidel was on his knees. He was soundly converted and became a strong and influential Methodist.

Benoni made several efforts to regain his standing in the conference, but the body was inexorable. He bore his disappointments with Christian meekness, and continued during the rest of his life to labor in the capacity of a local preacher, and received many marks of affection from the people, whose kind consideration kept him fed and clothed; and this was all he cared for, so far as temporal interests are concerned.

JONATHAN NEWMAN.

Our earliest recollections are associated with the objects and aspects of a newly settled country. Our native town was partially settled before the Revolutionary war, and the settlers shared a common fate with that of their neighbors in Cherry Valley, when this portion of the country was overrun by the Indians and Tories. The portion of the inhabitants not able to bear arms fled in dismay; some were cruelly murdered, women and children were made prisoners, houses were consumed by fire, and the infant settlements were wholly laid waste.

After the acknowledgment of American independence by the mother country, the scattered inhabitants returned to their desolated homes, and erected dwellings, such as they could, and set out anew to live. When a boy we often listened to tales of suffering and bloodshed from the people, male and female, who were actors and sufferers in those troublous times. Our first recollections reach back to the period when most of them were still living in their log-cabins. There were only some three or four exceptions in the neighborhood, and two of these were public houses. The settlements were small and widely separated, the roads were terrible, and, of course, the people poor.

This was the state of things when the Methodist preachers first visited the frontier settlements in Otsego county, state of New York. Of the sufferings and privations which

these men had to endure, the present generation can have but a very imperfect idea. Their very existence depended upon the immediate impression which they made upon the minds of the rustic population; for they came with no other claims for shelter and food but those which were to be inferred from their divine commission to bring to the hungry sheep of the wilderness the spiritual food which they needed, and with which none as yet had supplied them. God opened the heart of many a Lydia, and almost miraculously supplied the wants of his faithful, self-denying servants.

The leading characteristics of the first preachers in the interior of this state were simplicity of manners, ardent piety, untiring perseverance, and a zeal for God which manifested itself by a vehemence of manner, both in prayer and preaching, which many in these days would consider downright rant or fanaticism. We do not say this was the case with all. There were some who were eminently sons of consolation; but the *thunderer* was the ruling spirit of those times.

The opposition with which they had to contend was fierce and often foolish. We recollect an anecdote related to us by Mr. Garrettson, who was the "elder" under whose supervision the first preachers were sent "out West" in 1791, which will illustrate the case. He was traveling on horseback, on a visitation to some portion of his district, when he fell in with a man traveling in the same way, who, after a little conversation, sung out, with earnestness, 'Have you heard the news?"

"What news, sir?" asked Mr. Garrettson.

"Why, sir, the king of England has sent over a parcel of spies that they call Methodists, and they are ransacking the whole country; you can scarcely go amiss of them."

"My friend," answered Mr. Garrettson, "these men are not spies sent from the king of England, they are the servants of the Most High, sent by him to warn sinners to flee the wrath to come, and I am one of them." He then be-

gan to belabor the stranger in old-fashioned Methodist preachers' style, when the exhortation proving too warm for him, he put whip to his horse and made off.

The Methodist preachers of those early times, as a class, were fine-looking men. With few exceptions they were not meanly dressed, and were respectably mounted. The people loved them, and were ever ready to share with them their small resources. These means might now be considered scarcely sufficient to keep soul and body together. To travel and labor night and day for six months or a year, and only receive *four or five dollars in money*, would be thought an absolutely desperate case in these times of abundant supplies and small sacrifices. This, however, was often done in those early times.

The manners and habits of the first preachers who visited our paternal residence made a deep and an abiding impression upon our memory and heart. They came to pray, to sing, and to exhort both parents and children to love the Saviour. Their religious exercises in the family were marked by solemnity and earnestness, and they always left a blessing behind them. Their sermons consisted mostly in strong appeals to the conscience, and often produced the most marvelous results.

One of the first two preachers stationed on Otsego circuit was Jonathan Newman, a man of marked character. He was received on trial and stationed on this circuit in 1791, with Philip Wager, and reappointed in 1792, in connection with James Covel. In 1793 he traveled on the Herkimer circuit with David Bartine. In 1794 he was stationed in Albany circuit with the same, and "Thomas Woolsey was to change with Jonathan Newman in six months." In 1795 his name stands among those "who are under a location through weakness of body or family concerns." There are *thirty-two* names in this list this year. In 1796 his name does not appear, but he probably occupied the same relation, and in the following year he is on the Herkimer circuit again. In 1798 he is on Chenango; 1799, Mohawk;

1800, Delaware; 1801, Oneida and Cayuga; 1802, his name is wanting; 1803, Herkimer; in 1804 he is again "under a location through weakness of body or family concerns," the latter we presume was the cause. After this his name does not appear, and he probably from this time became permanently located.

His location, we believe, was more the result of domestic embarrassments than a preference for secular occupations. He had a numerous family and an afflicted, nervous wife. It was difficult for him to remove his family; besides, if our impressions are correct, and they are derived from the conversations of those who knew the facts, his children greatly needed the constant supervision of a father. The long absences from home to which a traveling preacher of that period was subjected, were not always consistent with the demands made upon him by the state of his household.

"Father Newman," as he was called, entered into business, but, we believe, was not very successful. His residence was somewhere on the head waters of the Susquehanna, we believe in Otego, but precisely where, we never knew. He became the proprietor of a 'carding machine,' and drove a small trade in various articles, which often called him to Albany; and in his way he always made our paternal residence his stopping-place. We recollect with what mortification we often assisted in providing for the three skeleton horses which he usually drove before an old lumber-wagon, loaded with diverse sorts of merchandise. Our love for the old apostle, however, never declined, and we were always much gratified with his visits, especially when he arrived on a Saturday afternoon and preached on Sunday.

In 1810 or 1812 the old gentleman applied for readmission into the conference, but, on account of the state of his domestic concerns, his application was rejected. This act so grieved and disaffected him that he left the Church, and united with the people called Christ-ians. Of course he

wholly lost his influence with the Methodists; and although he several times preached in our neighborhood, while in connection with that society, we never heard him preach an entire sermon. Once we ventured to eavesdrop, for a short time, while he was preaching of an evening in the school-house hard by. We recollect that his drift was to show the evils of the division of the Church into *sects*, and prove, or rather *predict*, that "the separating walls would all soon be abolished, and that the *small stars* would all be united, and would constitute one glorious sun, which should warm and illuminate the whole earth."

Our childish heart grieved over Father Newman, and we recollect once to have ventured to express to a preacher our disapprobation of the act of the conference, by which he was tried, as the result proved, beyond his strength. We were, however, much comforted to learn, about the period of the commencement of our itinerant career, that our old favorite had renounced the peculiar notions of the "Unitarian Christ-ians," and returned to the Methodist Episcopal Church, in whose bosom he spent the remnant of his days. We saw a small tract which he published, in which he asked "the pardon of God and man" for being the means of bringing that erratic sect into that part of the country. If he was oversensitive, and seriously erred in leaving the Church of his early choice, he made such amends as he could for the error he had committed, and by that means regained the confidence of his brethren.

Jonathan Newman was a man of about five feet eight or ten inches, of heavy build, and inclined to corpulency; dark complexion, with a mild black eye. His voice was heavy and clear, capable of an immense compass. He spoke deliberately, and when in his highest strains was not heard with pain or uneasiness. When he was fairly under way he slightly drew one corner of his mouth in the direction of his ear, and rolled out peal after peal like the roaring of distant thunder.

He was listened to with great attention, and often his pathos so told upon the heart that a commotion was raised around him which would nearly drown his stentorian accents. Sometimes he preached unreasonably long. We recollect hearing our beloved and now sainted father give an animated account of a sermon delivered by Father Newman at a quarterly meeting. He preached on beyond the proper time for closing, and yet seemed to be waxing warmer and warmer, louder and louder, when the presiding elder, who sat behind him upon the stand, gently pulled the skirt of his coat as a signal for him to close. This act seemed to unchain the tempest which raged within him, and had been long struggling for a free and full utterance. He turned around, and thundered out: "Let my coat alone; I am determined to give the people a faithful and solemn warning before I sit down;" and on he careered for half an hour longer.

The first sermon of which we have any recollection was preached by Jonathan Newman in the first house of which memory now takes cognizance, the old log-house, not where we were born, but in which we spent the earliest period of early childhood which leaves permanent traces in the memory. The text of that sermon is to be found in Ezra i, 9, and consists in these words: "Nine and twenty knives." What use was made of the text we have not the slightest idea, but we recollect that the sermon was matter of conversation in the family and the region round about for years, and it was thought a most masterly production. Whether he used his knives to cut up "the old evil one," dissect infidelity, to prune the garden of the Lord, to pierce the heart, or for all these purposes, we cannot now tell; but there was evidence enough that they were neither suffered to be idle nor used in play, but were made to serve a purpose which was connected intimately with the destinies of many. Indeed, he flung them in so skillful a manner directly into the hearts of the people, that terrible paroxysms of godly sorrow were produced.

This sermon must have been preached when we were in the neighborhood of four years of age, and yet our recollection of the position and manner of the speaker, and the squeezing which we received by the crowd, while sitting in "the little chair" by the side of our dear "mamma," is perfectly fresh and distinct. The remark is often made, that we have very little idea of the power we have over the minds of children, and especially of the permanence of the impressions which we make upon their young hearts. This fact in our own early history is an instance of the truth and importance of a remark which has become trite, and is not sufficiently appreciated.

The following has been communicated by a friend:

"Jonathan Newman was born in the city of New York in the year 1770. He left his father at the early age of sixteen, and went and learned the tailor's trade, at which he continued to work until after the close of the Revolution, with the exception of three years that he was in the American ranks and served as a regular soldier. Soon after he was ordained by the New York Conference, and continued to travel and preach until he located at Hartwick, Otsego county. He was very much esteemed by his friends and brethren, and honored by all who knew him, for the love and attachment that he manifested toward the cause of Christ, and particularly for the untiring zeal and steadfast integrity that he exhibited to the world.

"As the facilities for a traveling minister in those days were very limited, he labored under a great disadvantage. Ofttimes was he obliged to travel by marked trees through the woods, and to endure all kinds of weather, as the country was new and thinly settled. He often had to retreat to some old tree to shelter himself from the raging storms and tempest. Notwithstanding all of this his heart swelled with devotion toward God, who directed his steps through the wilderness of life, and sustained him by his infinite power and goodness. Thus he continued his philanthropic course until old age and domestic requisitions put an end to his travel-

ing, which was a cause of much grief to him the remainder of his days. After he had been located a number of years, he was seized with a fatal disease, called the black jaundice, which confined him to his bed but six weeks before it deprived him of life. He had his senses until the last, and appeared to be calm and composed, willing to die, and with but a faint struggle he resigned his spirit. Thus ended the days of a venerable father and a useful minister of Christ.

"He was buried near Hartwick village, on Otego Creek. He has a beautiful marble monument erected at his grave which was purchased by the Church and his neighbors."

TIMOTHY DEWEY.

Of the birth and early history of Mr. Dewey we know nothing. Of his death we learned from one of his sons, in 1859, that he had departed in peace a few months before. We shall here attempt a sketch of his character, and furnish reminiscences which will shed some light upon it.

Timothy Dewey commenced his labors as a traveling preacher in 1795, and located in 1804. He traveled on Redding, Pittsfield, Cambridge, New Rochelle, Vershire, Granville, and Pompey circuits. As a traveling preacher he labored with great zeal, and with equal success. In 1798 he was stationed on Cambridge circuit with the celebrated Lorenzo Dow, and between the two there existed an intimate friendship ever after. His location is a matter which is involved in some mystery, and was far from being satisfactory to himself. We have a few shreds of the story in our memory, derived from him, which amount to this: Bishop Asbury wished him to take an appointment at the south, but he was not willing to be removed to that part of the work; indeed, the health of his family rendered it morally impossible for him to comply, and the bishop was told that Brother Dewey would prefer a location to such an appointment as was proposed. But that he did not wish or expect to locate at that conference is perfectly evident from the whole tone of the letter which he wrote to

Mr. Colbert, just before the session of the conference, and which we have copied from his journal. For the same reasons which he gives in that letter for not attending the conference, he certainly could not remove a great distance. The unyielding Asbury acted upon one of his settled maxims—"We wish men to labor where we say, and not where they may choose;" and, quite unexpected to himself, Mr. Dewey learned that he was returned located on the Minutes. He was grieved, as he had reason to be; and although to the end of life he was proof against all temptation to leave the Methodist Episcopal Church, yet he never could be prevailed upon again to enter the traveling ranks.

For many years Mr. Dewey resided upon the great northern turnpike, between Chittenango and Manlius. His house having been built for a barn, was neither elegant nor convenient. Subsequently he lived in a comfortable cottage in Pompey Hollow, but removed from that place further west before he finished his course. His companion was rendered a perfectly helpless cripple by rheumatism, and heavily tasked the inexhaustible kindness and patience of one of the most affectionate husbands that ever lived. He lifted and carried her as though she had been an infant, and a portion of the time, when she was being moved, her joints cracked, and her frame seemed to rattle like a mass of dry bones in a sack.

Mr. Dewey was not remarkable for his ability as a financier, or skill in getting money, and was consequently poor as to the things of this world. He farmed on a small scale, but had he not been affectionately remembered by the good brethren among whom he occasionally labored, the necessities of his family would scarcely have been met. The health of Mrs. Dewey necessarily confined her husband much at home; but he often made excursions through the country, and remained for several weeks at a time, filling some opening, or attending to some special call of the Church.

Our acquaintance with Timothy Dewey commenced soon

after we entered the ministry, and then he was becoming venerable for age, and was called *Elder*, or *Father Dewey*. His power in the pulpit was then famous, and he was considered a man of rare attainments both in theology and upon general subjects.

Our quarterly meetings were then not entirely modernized, but were still considerable occasions. The people of a large circuit would come together, often from a distance of twenty or thirty miles. On Saturday, at eleven o'clock, the congregation would be large, and on the Sabbath would sometimes number thousands. Two sermons in succession were often preached, both on Saturday and Sabbath. One sermon never made up the complement without an earnest exhortation or two by some preacher or preachers present. Elder Dewey often made his appearance at these quarterly meetings, and preached "a great sermon;" always containing some rare exposition of scripture, or some pregnant passages which stirred up the souls of the people, and furnished a theme of conversation for months and years. Sometimes he made choice of a text which seemed to ordinary minds inexplicable—a text which they never had heard preached from, and which, when announced, they would naturally think, if they did not whisper, "What in the world will he make out of that text?" He once preached a sermon at a quarterly meeting at Utica, upon Hosea vii, 9: "Gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not." "Gray hairs," said the preacher, "are an evidence of decline." There is a theme, thought every one, as quick as a flash. *The decline of Christians* was the topic of the sermon. O how he pointed out the "gray hairs!" Every one felt that he had some of them, and felt the fact to lament and mourn over it. Notwithstanding religious decline or backsliding was a perfectly familiar topic, in this instance it was so marked with "gray hairs" that it assumed the character of novelty, and a powerful impression was made. The illustrations and general course of remark were all in the preacher's own peculiar style. His

analogies were all rare and striking, and "the sermon on gray hairs" was long a theme of remark among the people of that region.

Father Dewey was a man of eccentricities, and being firm to the very verge of obstinacy, he was incurable. His course was often strange, and apparently absurd; but when admonished of the fact it would appear that it had been a matter of reflection. Sometimes his reasons would be at hand, and at others the querist would be given to understand that he was meddling with what did not belong to him.

He had thoroughly studied all the difficult and controverted questions of theology, and would frequently grapple with them in his sermons with the strength of a giant; but it was not always that curious inquirers received from him satisfactory answers. A good sister once wanted her doubts resolved upon the difficult subject of God's foreknowledge. She asked the old sage "if God did not foreknow all things." "I don't know what God foreknows," was all the answer she could obtain.

Infidelity and the various erroneous dogmas afloat often received at the hand of this powerful thinker the most withering rebukes, and the most triumphant refutations. He brought to his aid philosophy, history, criticism, and logic; and woe to the opponent who stood in his way. Indeed, we believe few ever openly assailed him. It was quite enough for an errorist to see his foundation torn up and scattered to the four winds of heaven in one of his great sermons, without coming into personal conflict with him. He seldom preached without giving evidence that he was not only a sound, well-read divine, but that he was both a historian and a philosopher. Often when he did not happen to be known did he take the people by surprise. He was a plain man, even careless as to his personal appearance, and at first sight might be taken for an old plow-jogger. When he took the stand he made no great promise to the stranger. But when his text was announced, perhaps something that

no one had ever thought of making the foundation of a discourse, the question most natural was: "Is that some foolish old man who does not know what he is about, or is it some *wonder*, some great man from a distance who has not had time to change his linen? Who can it be?" In a few minutes he would stand out head and shoulders above all around him. The people would see the preachers straining their eyes and smiling as though they were listening to one of the old apostles just arisen from the dead. And as he warmed up the doubt would be dispelled, and all who had ever heard a description of him would be likely to say to themselves: "That must be Elder Dewey, or somebody very much like him." Those who had no knowledge of him at all would wonder where such a plain old man ever gathered up such a fund of knowledge, and how he had qualified himself to criticise the critics, and to stand up as an original thinker amid the greatest scholars and authors of both ancient and modern times. To those who knew the man all this was plain. He was a man of strong powers of mind, a profound thinker, an acute reasoner, and a great reader.

Father Dewey often made bold and unsparing assaults upon errors in manner and slight departures from what he considered the better mode of doing things. We once heard him at a camp-meeting undertake to modify the shouting, and some other exercises which in those days often accompanied it. It gave a terrible shock to a class of ranters present, but did not reform them. The preacher only expected to put upon their guard those who had not been carried wholly into the whirlpool of fanaticism, and save them from the danger, and in this he succeeded.

When we were stationed in Utica our people had some trouble about the singing. Some were for a choir in the gallery, while others wanted old-fashioned congregational singing. The two parties, in advance, had exerted themselves to secure the ear of the old patriarch, well knowing that he would be very likely to undertake a settlement of

the controversy by a bold stroke when he should take the pulpit. He heard them without giving any opinion, perhaps simply remarking: "This singing is a troublesome business." When he took the pulpit on Sabbath morning he announced for his text: "Man shall not live by bread alone." His position upon the text was taken on this wise: "People are prone to magnify some one thing, and often a very immaterial thing too, into everything, to make it all and in all. That is their 'bread,' and they want nothing but 'bread.' Sometimes it is this, and sometimes that, and sometimes the other thing. Sometimes it is a learned ministry, sometimes an eloquent ministry, and at other times plain, old-fashioned preaching; sometimes fine churches, and at others plain, small churches; sometimes singing in the gallery, and at others singing on the lower floor; but 'man shall not live by bread alone.'" All saw his position at once and anticipated the result. That result was, that both parties took a severe castigation for magnifying a small matter beyond due bounds; neither from that time looked to Father Dewey for sympathy, and the controversy abated.

At camp-meeting Father Dewey was in his glory. He needed the stimulus of a great occasion to spring his powers into vigorous action. He had a splendid voice for the open air: it had strength and compass, it was grave and manly, and as clear as the sound of a trumpet. When the lion in him became fully aroused his mighty soul needed no better avenue to the ears of the people than the wonderful vocal power with which the God of nature had endowed him. His mighty sentences would peal through the forest far beyond the bounds of a large encampment, and often arrest the attention of groups of strollers, who were beyond the circle of tents seeking their own amusement. On one occasion he rose upon the stand to address a vast concourse, which the presiding elder had labored long and in vain to persuade to become quietly seated. The old gentleman rose and slowly advanced to the front of the stand, and

without the least apparent excitement or straining of voice, he roared out: "What is the matter? why all this restlessness? What are you after? You wander about as if you knew not wherefore you had come together." He then commenced reading his hymn, and in a few minutes all were quietly seated.

We recollect attending three camp-meetings during the summers of 1816 and 1817 where Father Dewey was *the great man*. One was at Plymouth, on Lebanon circuit; one in Truxton, Cortland circuit; and the other on Broome circuit, six miles above Binghamton. At the meeting in Truxton he preached two or three powerful sermons, which did great execution. One of these sermons was preceded by a prayer which commenced in this wise: "Lord, have mercy upon wicked Presbyterians, hypocritical Baptists, and backslidden Methodists." This language gave great offense to some of the parties concerned, and was made a matter of no little complaining. The sermon which followed was based upon a portion of the epistles to "the seven churches of Asia."

At the Broome meeting he preached four sermons, every one of which was characterized by a holy unction, and made deep and lasting impressions. On Sabbath afternoon he was specially assisted. The sun shone directly in his face, and he perspired freely while he thundered and lightened, and almost made the earth tremble beneath his feet. Near the close of his sermon a young man in the congregation fell upon the ground, and struggled as if in the agonies of death. A prayer-meeting was commenced around him, and after a short period of deep distress he was happily converted. Thenceforward to the close of the meeting the work progressed powerfully, and many were brought into the liberty of the Gospel.

During this meeting a young man, who had just commenced experimenting upon his preaching propensities, was put up to preach. He undertook to preach a great and learned sermon, but made a total failure. What was par-

ticularly vexatious was that he seemed to think he was doing wonders. The preachers manifested great uneasiness, and some of them left the stand. When he had concluded his talk, having exhausted an hour and thirty or forty minutes, he came into the preachers' tent and asked "what was the matter" with a certain preacher who seemed to be particularly fidgety. "It is no wonder at all that he was uneasy," answered Father Dewey, "for you made awful work of it." The poor fellow just then shrank down into his natural dimensions and immediately evaporated, and we have not heard one word about him from that day to this. We hope he outlived the shock, and finally found his appropriate place in the Church.

At the camp-meeting at Plymouth there was no move among the people for several days; the devil seemed to dispute the ground inch by inch. A host of disorderly, noisy people were constantly prowling about the ground, and it seemed impossible to secure their attention. The faint-hearted were ready to despond, and the faith of the Church seemed weak. This was the very time when the soul of Father Dewey would be likely to be aroused, and then he would enter the arena girded with strength. On an evening when the ground was thronged with careless, disorderly people, the venerable man took the stand, and after a powerful prayer, one which waked up and melted the hearts of Christians, he gave out for his text these words of the prophet Amos: "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." It was soon evident that the old warrior had taken up his heavy battle-ax and was about to use it to purpose. After a few introductory remarks he began to ply the consciences of sinners with the terrors of God's law, and to shake over them the rod of divine justice. His earnestness increased; his powerful voice pealed through the forest, sentence after sentence, in an ascending scale, both as to earnestness of manner and weight of expression, until his great soul seemed to be in a perfect tempest of excitement, and his warnings came down upon the people like tumbling rocks

precipitated from the hill-top by an earthquake. We were in the congregation, at some distance from the stand. The preachers in the stand were weeping and crying aloud, while the devout among the people were following closely in the wake.

At the height of his career the preacher paused for a moment and then broke out: "O sinner! sinner! are you determined to take hell by storm? Can you brave the vengeance of a righteous God? Can you dwell in devouring fire? Can you stand everlasting burnings? Is your flesh iron, and are your bones brass, that you dare to plunge into hell fire?" By this time the preacher had become profoundly sympathetic, and his mighty voice had softened down into tremulous tones of tenderness. The people, saints and sinners, together wept and sobbed.

The venerable man called on the prayer-meeting before he sat down, and we moved up toward the altar, whither the broken-hearted were making their way in great numbers. Near the altar we noticed a young man, greatly agitated, holding to a limb of a tree, and reeling to and fro like a drunken man. He said nothing, but continued for some time holding fast to the limb. Finally he broke his hold and came to the ground. He was removed to the altar, where many were seeking salvation. That night was our triumph; many were born into the kingdom of Christ who will praise God in eternity for Father Dewey's sermon.

The disturbers were either converted or frightened from the ground, for by ten o'clock in the evening not a careless, disorderly person could be seen.

The next morning we noticed a young man among the converts whom we knew; it was the same who held himself up by the limb, although we did not learn that fact until years afterward. This same young man has been for many years a member of the New York Conference.

The Rev. Timothy Dewey was a portly man, of perhaps five feet seven inches in height, dark complexion, black eyes, coal black hair, which hung in heavy curls upon his

shoulders. He was a great and good man, although not a little eccentric and occasionally intractable. He was ardently pious, a true-hearted Methodist, never moved by temptations to forsake the Church, although these were numerous and often urgent. He was flung out of his appropriate sphere when he was located, and this was a great loss to the Church and a source of serious embarrassment to him. Still he labored on to the close of a long life to promote the glory of God and the interests of the Church of his early choice, and he turned many to righteousness who will deck his crown in the day of his rejoicing.

BENJAMIN BIDLACK.

The Methodist preachers who planted the Gospel standard in the interior of this state were the *pioneers of the country*, and many of them officers or soldiers of the Revolutionary army. They were consequently men of nerve, and capable of great endurance. Were we to give our readers a catalogue of the appointments filled by the subject of this sketch, with only such an idea of their distances from each other and the extent of territory they covered as we might be able to furnish, without first giving some idea of his physical abilities, the facts would now scarcely be credited. Before we proceed to any details of his labors and character, we will take a birdseye view of his history previous to his entering upon the work of the ministry.

Benjamin Bidlack was of New England origin, and came with his father to the Valley of Wyoming in 1777. The history of his family is identified with the romantic period of the history of that far-famed valley. The father, when quite advanced in years, was captain of a company of old men, organized for the defense of their homes, while their sons entered the regular service, and were called away to other points of danger. He was surprised by a company of Indians, and suffered a distressing captivity, which only terminated with the war. One son was made prisoner on

Long Island, and "was starved to death by the British." Another was captain of a company in "the Indian battle" in Wyoming, and fell at the head of his company, only eight of the whole number surviving that fearful tragedy.

Benjamin was seven years in the service. He was at Boston when Washington assembled his forces to oppose Gage; at Trenton at the taking of the Hessians; at Yorktown at the surrender of Cornwallis; and in the camp at Newburgh when the army was disbanded. We have heard the old gentleman relate with the greatest interest the events which occurred on those great occasions under his own observation, and of which the historian has taken no note. When the Hessians were captured, he said General Washington passed along the lines of the little half-frozen army, the day being excessively cold, and exhorted the men not to drink to intoxication. His language was in this wise: "My brave fellows, God has given us the victory, but the enemy is close at hand in force; should you become helpless through drink, you will almost certainly fall into their hands." This warning he repeated over and over as he passed on from one point to another.

At Yorktown the French were ready to open upon the enemy first, and were impatient to commence, but Washington held them in. When the order was issued it seemed as if the heavens and earth were coming together. There was an incessant thundering and blazing night and day, the flame from the mouth of the cannon being so bright and constant that at any moment of the night you could see to pick up a pin. The British general called for a parley, but not being ready to comply with the terms of the American commander, "Now," said he, "give it to them hotter than ever," and the thunder of the cannon began again to shake the solid ground. The surrender soon succeeded.

He gave us an account of the encampment at Newburgh, building the road across the marsh, erecting "the temple of liberty," the debates on the subject of disbanding the army, "the Armstrong letters," the religious services on Sunday,

the "splendid singing" they had on those occasions, and the like. After all the many deliverances from death, he came near being killed by an accident just at the close of the war. At this time he drove a team, and upon throwing a bomb from the wagon it ignited, and sent the fragments like hail about his ears. This event made a deep impression on his mind. He truly concluded that the hand of God was concerned in his safety from the stroke of the deadly missiles which came within a hair's breadth of him on every side.

When peace with the mother country was concluded, he returned to the lovely Valley of Wyoming, as he hoped, to live in quiet, and to give succor to his aged sire in the decline of life. But, alas! he came to this spot, rendered so beautiful and lovely by the hand of nature's God, to see further exhibitions of the malignity of the human heart. "The Pennamite and Yankee war," a fierce and even bloody conflict between the Connecticut and Pennsylvania settlers for the title of the soil, was then renewed, and young Bidlack was what the Pennsylvanians called a "wild Yankee." He was not disposed to engage in the fray; for although he was as good a soldier as ever breathed, he had a kind heart, and, of course, hated this unnatural war. He engaged in business, and made a trip in a boat down the Susquehanna to Sunbury, about the distance of fifty miles. Here he was seized by the Pennsylvania party and put in jail.

He was a jovial fellow, and manifested so much good-nature, and was so fine a singer, that a company from the neighborhood frequently assembled in the evening to hear him sing songs. On one occasion he told them that he had a favorite song they had never heard; it was "The Old Swaggering Man;" but he could not sing it without more room, and he must have a staff in his hand, as the effect depended much on the action. Nothing suspicious, they gave him a cudgel, and allowed him liberty to make his sallies into the hall. All at once, as he commenced his chorus, "Here goes the old swaggering man," he darted out of the door, and in a trice was out of their reach, out-

distancing the fleetest of them. The next day he was safe at home, and was never more disturbed.

Bidlack having a most splendid voice, and being full of fun and frolic, was not unfrequently the center and life of sporting and drinking parties. Still he had religious notions and religious feelings, and, wild and wicked as he was, he would go to the Methodist meetings and lead the singing; sometimes, indeed, when he was scarcely in a condition to do it with becoming gravity.

At length he was awakened and converted to God, and henceforth he "sowed" no more "wild oats." He soon began to exhort his neighbors to flee from the wrath to come, and to sing the songs of Zion with a heart and a power that moved the feelings while it charmed the ear. "Ben Bidlack has become a Methodist preacher," rang through the country, and stirred up a mighty commotion.

The circumstances of his conversion have been given in another connection. His first circuit embraced his own neighborhood, and even the *jail* from which, but a few years before, he had escaped, shouting, "Here goes the old swaggering man." The appointment at least shows the state of the public mind in relation to him where he was best known, and is very much to his credit.

Mr. Bidlack was married, and, we think, had three children when he commenced traveling. During his effective relation to the conference he had sixteen appointments, standing in the following order: Wyoming, Seneca, Delaware, Ulster, Herkimer, Mohawk, Otsego, Chenango, Pompey, Seneca, Lyons, Shamokin, Northumberland, and Lycoming. Look at his removes. One year he goes from Wyoming to the Seneca Lake, and the next from that to the Delaware! This was itinerancy in deed and in truth. Any one who can recollect what was the condition of the roads forty years back, in the regions in which he traveled, and through which he removed his family, can in some measure appreciate the labors which he performed.

Mr. Bidlack was removed every year during his itiner-

ancy, with the exception of three. His first wife died, and he married the widow of Lawrence Myers, Esq., of Kingston, Wyoming, Pa.

In 1804 Mr. Bidlack was stationed on Otsego circuit, with John P. Weaver. It was during this year that we first saw him, and we well recollect the time, place, and circumstances. We were seven years of age, and had hold of the hand of our natural guardian.

In 1811 he located, but after an experiment of three years, he found worldly occupations incompatible with that freedom of soul and extent of spiritual enjoyment which he prized above rubies. Accordingly he again proffered himself to the conference in 1815, and did effective work for four years. Infirmities now accumulating upon him, he received a superannuated relation to the conference, and continued in this relation until his death.

At the period when we had our first sight of Mr. Bidlack he was a venerable looking man, and his bearing and conversation impressed us with a high degree of reverence for him. He removed his family to our neighborhood, in Middlefield, and occupied a *parsonage*, which was built, perhaps, for his special accommodation. But such a *parsonage* as it was! The location was in a field, at a distance from any road, in a most isolated and unfrequented locality. At the east were stretched out fields, and a few farm-houses were visible at the distance of one and two miles. At the west lay a deep gorge, in a steep slope of the hill, across which was the old "graveyard," or rather a number of graves, with a dilapidated post and rail fence around it; at the south a deep dell, covered with a growth of large white pine and hemlock trees, through which murmurs "Red Creek;" and at the north and northwest two houses, the nearest of which was within a quarter of a mile.

The reader may wish to know what sort of a house was this same parsonage. It was made of large pine logs, slightly hewed on the inside, with the openings between them "chinked," and plastered with mud. It was roofed

with boards and slabs, and, we should think, was about fourteen by sixteen feet. Here *stayed* the preacher's family, *alone*, during his long absences upon his circuit. He had three daughters, with whom we became somewhat acquainted, meeting them at school and at meeting.

Mr. Bidlack was now in the pride of his strength. He stood something over six feet, erect, with a full, prominent chest, broad shoulders, and powerful limbs. His black hair, slightly sprinkled with gray, hung upon his shoulders, and his large, open features bore an expression of gravity and benignity, mingled with cheerfulness, which at once prepossessed one in his favor. His voice was powerful and harmonious. So far back as our first knowledge of him, his tones seemed to have lost some of their melody, and to have acquired a little roughness from excessive preaching in the open air, in barns, and in other places but ill securing the speaker against currents of air. Naturally his voice was the very soul of music, and much of its melody remained until he was very far advanced in life.

Benjamin Bidlack was an effective preacher, though not a profound thinker. His sermons were fine specimens of native eloquence, and were often attended with great power. One of his favorite discourses—at least it was a favorite with his hearers—was upon the words: "They that turn the world upside down have come hither also." In laying out his discourse on this text he proceeded: "First, I shall show that the world was made *right side up*. Secondly, That it has been turned *wrong side up*. And thirdly, That it is now to be turned *upside down;* then it will be *right side up again*." Here he had the main doctrines of every old-fashioned Methodist sermon directly in his way. First, man was created holy; secondly, he has fallen; and thirdly, he is redeemed by Christ, and must be regenerated by the Holy Ghost; then came the *exhortation* to sinners to "repent and be converted."

The sermons of Mr. Bidlack were plain expositions of Scripture, and manifested a thorough knowledge of the Bible,

and considerable acquaintance with the writings of Wesley and Fletcher. He was sometimes argumentative, always earnest, and not unfrequently truly pathetic. We have heard him preach most excellent, not to say great sermons. He often came out in his happiest style at camp-meetings and at conference, when it seemed that the circumstances by which he was surrounded affected him somewhat, as did the sound of the battle when he fought for the liberties of his country. He was respectably read in theology and history, although his early opportunities did not afford him the means of even a thorough English education. On one occasion it was his lot to follow a very finished speaker, and the natural impression upon his mind was, that there would be a great contrast between the elegant diction of the brother who had just taken his seat, and his old-fashioned, plain style of speaking; he, however, flung off all embarrassments, and set himself right with the audience by dryly remarking: "I don't understand grammar *as you fix it now-a-days;* but I suppose I can tell you some plain truth, in plain language." His "plain truth" took, and the old-fashioned preacher soon felt that he was appreciated by his hearers.

"Father Bidlack," for such we shall style him hereafter, was upon the superannuated list for twenty-five years; and during most of this period he was able to preach frequently, and he took a lively interest in all the movements of the Church. He preached a great many funeral sermons, and often these discourses were the very soul of sympathy. His words of comfort to the bereaved mother, when called to part with her idolized babe, were "as ointment poured forth." These occasions laid hold of his heart-strings, and often wrung from his eyes a flood of tears. But while he felt at his heart's core and wept, his tremulous voice fell upon the ear and the heart of grief as soothingly as angel whispers. "Dear, bereaved mother," he would say, "the Saviour says, 'of such is the kingdom of heaven.' O you will meet and embrace your dear babe on the other side of

Jordan. Don't mourn that your loved one has become a cherub, is glorified in heaven, and is in the arms of Jesus."

It has often been said of Bishop Asbury that "he was mighty in prayer." The same might be said of Father Bidlack; but it can be said more emphatically that he was *mighty in praise.* His "Glory to God!" had in it a power which was unusual. There are many still alive who recollect a most unearthly scene which occurred at a camp-meeting near Rice's, in what is now called Truxville, in the summer of 1825. The saving power of God was eminently present from the very commencement to the close of the meeting. The first service was crowned with the conversion of souls; and while the tents were being taken down, and the people were dispersing, scores were engaged in prayer before the stand, and more than a score were earnestly seeking salvation. At a particular stage of this meeting Father Bidlack became almost entranced. Many of his neighbors and acquaintances, young and old, had been converted, and the work was rushing on with the power and sublimity of a tornado. The veteran soldier of the cross had won so many battles, and now seeing the cross waving in triumph over such masses, with a prospect of still moving on in its conquests indefinitely, he felt that it was a fit occasion for exultation. With his staff in his hand he moved out of his tent, and walked across the ground, apparently unconscious of the presence of any human being, shouting aloud: "Glory to God! Glory to God in the highest!" The noise of prayer and praise arising from hundreds, seemed for the moment to settle down to a murmur; all listening with unspeakable pleasure to the solemn thundering tones of praise and triumph of the old hero of the cross. Tears flowed, hearts throbbed, then again burst forth a volley of praise from the multitude, which almost made the foundations of the neighboring mountains tremble. It was a solemn, a glorious, a holy, and a heavenly scene; such a scene as we scarcely hope to witness again upon this earth. O it was a green spot in the history of many, very many,

either now living on earth or glorified in heaven! It was a scene worth crossing oceans, worth a life of toil and suffering to witness. Tears of gratitude flow while faithful memory recalls it, and the pen is attempting, but in a feeble way, to transfer the impression to the minds of others.

At the time of the session of the Oneida Conference, in Wilkesbarre, in 1843, Father Bidlack was in second childhood. He wished to see the conference once more, and was, by his son, brought to the church and conducted in. We met him at the door, and supported him while he proceeded to the altar. He took the bishop's hand, but the fire of his eye had departed: instead of joyous greeting, there was little expression in his countenance, and his eyes exhibited a vacant stare. His hearing was imperfect; and his head becoming dizzy, he was soon obliged to retire. "The strong men bow themselves, and all the daughters of music are brought low."

The few last years of the life of our subject were years of suffering and comparative inactivity. He was afflicted with a cancer in his nose, which made gradual progress until it became a source of much pain, and it is probable that it finally shortened his days. He died in peace on November 27, 1845, in the eighty-seventh year of his age. Here our story ends, where ends the history of all human beings. The patriot, the Christian, and the Methodist preacher, after a long life of severe discipline, during which he won laurels from his country, and gained stars for his crown in the day of his rejoicing, finally triumphed over the terrors of the grave, and went to his great reward.