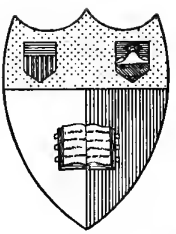

SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

JOHN LACEY,

A

Brigadier General in the Revolutionary Army.

BY

W. W. H. DAVIS, A. M.

PRINTED PRIVATELY.

1868.

This Sketch

OF A

DISTINGUISHED REVOLUTIONARY HERO

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

TO HIS DESCENDANTS.

PREFACE.

THE following sketch of the life and character of General John Lacey was written a few years ago for a popular magazine of the day. The most material facts were taken from the General's papers which fell into the hands of his son-in-law, the late distinguished Dr. William Darlington, of West Chester, Pennsylvania. It is now printed in book-form, at the instance of some of my literary friends, who are kind and partial enough to believe that it is of sufficient interest to be placed in a shape that will be more likely to preserve it than the pages of a magazine. I claim no merit for the sketch other than being a truthful memoir of one of those grand old patriots who fought to establish constitutional liberty in the United States.

W. W. H. DAVIS.

Doylestown, Pa., August, 1868.

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

JOHN LACEY.

CHAPTER I.

JOHN LACEY, a captain in the Continental Army, and a brigadier-general in the militia of Pennsylvania, during the war of the American Revolution, was a native of Bucks county, Pennsylvania. He was born in the township of Buckingham, on the fourth day of February, in the year 1755,* and made

NOTE.—The date of General Lacey's birth, as given above, has been called in question. Three years ago Thomas Warner, of Bucks county, addressed the following letter to the author on the subject of "The Lacey Family," and published in the Doylestown *Democrat*, which is considered of sufficient interest to be inserted entire:—

Died in Wrightstown, on the 16th of 1st month, 1866, Benjamin Lacey, a much respected citizen, in the 71st year of his age.

Perhaps it will not be inappropriate, at this time and in this place, to give a little account of the Lacey family. Their primogenial ancestor here was William Lacey. He emigrated from England, we believe from the Isle of Wight, and was among the early settlers in the neighborhood of Wrightstown. His son John married Rachel Heston in 1718. From this connection there were eleven children, four or five of whom died in their minority. Only three of the whole number married, namely: Rachel, to John Terry, in 1738; John to Jane Chapman, 1746; and Joseph to Esther Warner, in 1749 or 1750.

the place of his nativity his home, until near the close of the war, when he removed to the State of New Jersey. His ancestors were followers of the great and good Penn, and educated in the strict tenets of the Society of Friends. They came among the first settlers, who followed the fortunes of the founder of Pennsylvania, to the New World, and took up their abode in Bucks county. He was the son of John and Jane Lacey, and the grandson of John and Rachel Lacey. His paternal great-grandfather emigrated from the Isle of Wight, England; and his grandmother, whose name was Heston, was a native of New England, whence her family removed to Bucks county at an early day. His mother was the daughter of Abraham and Susan

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John Lacey and Jane Chapman had eight children—and inasmuch as one of them became a noted man in his day and generation, perhaps it will be as well to mention that there is a register of the family, among the records of births and deaths kept at Wrightstown. A copy thereof, *verbatim et literatum*, is as follows:

Rachel Lacey, daughter of John and Jane, born 15th of 9 mo., 1747; Susanna Lacey, daughter of John and Jane, born 19th of 2 mo., 1750; John Lacey, son of John and Jane, born 4th of 12 mo., 1752; Abraham Lacey, son of John and Jane, born 4th of 1 mo., 1754; James Lacey, son of John and Jane, born 11th of 8 mo., 1756; Benjamin Lacey, son of John and Jane, born 23d of 7 mo., 1758; Elizabeth Lacey, daughter of John and Jane, born 4th of 12th mo., 1760; Wm. Lacey, son of John and Jane, born 9th of 2 mo., 1765. Of the above, Rachel died 16th of 6th mo., 1760; Abraham, 28th of 10th mo., 1764, and James on the 29th of 10th mo., 1759.

The paramount object in presenting this record here is to show the time when John Lacey, jr., was born, who afterward became General Lacey, of Revolutionary memory. Historians, in referring to this matter, have fixed upon a different period. They have it that General Lacey was born on the 4th day of February, 1755. The writer had some correspondence with Dr. Darlington, his son-in-law, on this subject, in 1862. He stated that he had the popular time of General Lacey's birth from himself, which was in 1755, and presumed it was authentic.

We apprehend it is a very singular circumstance that there should be such a disparity between the two accounts. Instead of harmonizing, as they ought to, there is a difference of two years and two months between them. Perhaps this is the first time this matter has been noticed in a public manner. It is something for the historian as well as the antiquarian to think of. Such a discrepancy as this will be likely to puzzle them a little, for it seems to be irreconcilable.

Chapman; and his maternal grandmother was an Olden of New Jersey. The ancestors of this distinguished man were all farmers, and he was proud, up to the very day of his death, in being the descendant of such a reputable and useful class of people; and, in accordance with the mild doctrines of him to whom they looked up, as "Prophet, Priest and King," were opposed to all wars and rumors of wars. Oppression drove them from their pleasant homes and fertile fields in England, to seek an asylum in a strange land, and when they set up their altars in this new-found promised land, they discountenanced strife and contention of every kind.

At that day the Society of Friends, in whose "faith

General Lacey married Anastasia Reynolds, daughter of Col. Thomas Reynolds, of Burlington county, New Jersey, and had one son, Thomas R., and three daughters, Eliza Bud, Kitty Reynolds, and Jane Chapman Lacey. Eliza Bud married William L. Smith, in 1800; Kitty R., Dr. Darlington, in 1807; and Jane C., Jonathan Hough, in 1814.

The only son of General Lacey, Thomas R., is now living in Burlington, New Jersey, and will be 79 years old on the 17th of this month. He has, or had two daughters, but only one son, William N. Lacey, who has two boys, John and William.

Joseph Lacey and Esther Warner, though they had eight children, there is now, since the decease of Benjamin, (noticed at the beginning of this article,) only three survivors of the name among their descendants.

Of the brothers and sisters of John Lacey, (commonly called General Lacey,) but very little seems to be known. They all left the place of their nativity and went to a more southern latitude. William and Susanna removed to and settled in the State of Georgia. Elizabeth married and settled in the neighborhood of the city of Washington; Benjamin also married and settled in Georgetown, in the District of Columbia. He left two sons—Charles, who died a lieutenant in the navy, and John, who settled in or near Washington.

The Lacey family was once quite numerous in this section of country; but instead of going on increasing with every generation, they have been diminishing. But seven of the name are now living that we have any certain knowledge of, and these have been previously mentioned. Unless the name is perpetuated by some of the number who now are, it will be likely to run out in the course of another generation. T. W.

Wrightstown, 2d mo. 1st, 1866.

and practice" young Lacey was reared, took but little pains in the education of their children, deeming it amply sufficient for every purpose of life if they could read and write their native tongue. His parents being of this class, and having but a limited education themselves, did not see the necessity and advantage of learning, and thought their son fitted to make his way in the world with the same amount of information they possessed. For this error of judgment he was a sore sufferer in after years. Under these circumstances he enjoyed but very limited advantages of education. He was early sent to such schools as there were in the neighborhood, but they afforded very slight opportunity for the acquisition of knowledge. He has left upon record that the teacher of the school he went to could neither read nor write correctly, and knew not the meaning of grammar; and that in the neighborhood in which his father's family resided, the only books allowed to be used in the schools were the Bible, the Testament, and Dilworth's Spelling-book. These books, it must be admitted, were not very well calculated to advance his literary pursuits; and that a boy, educated in such seminaries of learning, would not be very well prepared to discharge the duties of life.

Young Lacey was kept at these schools until he was thirteen or fourteen years of age, when his father considered his education finished, and set him at work; being employed on the farm, in the saw or grist-mill, or in the cooper's shop. He was not unmindful of the disadvantages he labored under, in point of education, and after he left school endeavored

to remedy them as much as possible, by reading and private study. He spent most of his leisure moments from work in reading such books as he could borrow in the neighborhood; and in the mill, while attending to his work, would often have his favorite author in his hand, and would devote every leisure moment to its perusal. In this manner, by constant perseverance and application, he was enabled, in some manner, to overcome the disadvantages of his youth; but in after life, when called to fill stations of honor and responsibility in the service of his country, he felt very sensibly the defect in his early training, and deplored, with deep regret, the misfortune. His experience should be a warning to parents, of the present day, not to neglect the education of their children, when the means of acquiring knowledge are within the reach of every one, and to be had almost "without money and without price." In this country, where every avenue is open to all, and the son of the humblest citizen may be called to fill the highest station under the constitution, education is of the first importance. It then becomes the duty of every parent to educate his children in such a manner, that they will be able to discharge all the duties which may devolve upon them in after life.

For some years, the youth of General Lacey was spent without any occurence of note to mark his history. His time was principally divided between the farm, the mills, and the cooper's shop, reading and study in his leisure moments, and now and then taking half a day for a fox-hunt. Thus life, with him, moved

smoothly on, knowing but little of the great world beyond the narrow limits in which he "lived, moved, and had his being," until the month of July, 1773, when an event occurred which somewhat changed his course of life. He had had, heretofore, frequent longings for a peep into the outside world, but no opportunity offered for the gratification of his desires; but now the time seemed at hand, when he could realize his wishes. At the monthly meeting, held that year, in July, at the Wrightstown Meeting House, his uncle *Zebulon Heston*, who was a preacher among the Friends, stated he had had a call to make a missionary visit to the Delaware Indians, then settled on the Ohio river, and asked permission to make the pilgrimage, with a recommendation to the "Meeting for Sufferings, of Friends in the city of Philadelphia." Mr. Heston was now an old man of 70 years, and in his youth had been on terms of close intimacy with many of the young men of this tribe, who then lived along the Delaware in Bucks county, which accounts, in some degree, for his great anxiety to visit them. Young Lacey was present at the meeting that day, and when he heard his uncle make his proposition, it appeared to him to be a good opportunity to see the country, and he made up his mind to try and obtain permission to accompany him. So, when the meeting was out, he waited upon his uncle, and proposed himself as a companion on his journey, giving as the reason for wishing to go with him, that he was old and infirm, and would want some assistance on the way. His uncle appeared pleased with the offer, and the next

day spoke to his parents about it, who gave their consent for their son to accompany him. His name was included in the certificate of the Wrightstown Meeting, and all things being in readiness, they set off on their journey, and reached Philadelphia the same day. Here his uncle transacted the necessary business with the "Sufferings Meeting," and on the 9th they commenced their journey for Pittsburg, being accompanied by John Parish, a pious Friend, in whose hands was placed a sum of money for their expenses, and also to purchase a few presents for the Indians.

They reached Pittsburg on the evening of the 18th—nothing worthy of note occurring on the way. They traveled the whole distance on horse-back, crossing mountains, fording rivers, and suffering a good deal from exposure. The roads were so bad as to be wholly impassable for wagons, and all the goods then taken west had to be carried on pack-horses, of which they met a large number on the way. The new scenes that young Lacey saw on the journey, struck him with astonishment, and he says, afforded him "much for contemplation." They remained in Pittsburg two days, and left on the 20th for the Indian town of Newcomer's-Town, situated on the Muskingum river. They crossed the Allegheny river in canoes, swimming their horses, and set off through the wilderness, to the North West. They were accompanied, as guides, by John Gibson, an Indian Trader, and Captain White-Eyes, an Indian chief. They reached Newcomer's-Town on the 25th, and were received in the most friendly and cordial manner by the king, *Ne-tow-hele-*

mon. The king immediately called a meeting of the sachems or chiefs at his palace, when the visitors had a formal presentation to the great men of his tribe, after which they were assigned to their quarters. On the 28th, the nation assembled in the great council-house, when Messrs. Heston and Parish presented their credentials from the meeting in Wrightstown and the meeting of Sufferings in Philadelphia. These were interpreted to the Indians, after which Mr. Heston made a prayer and proceeded to address the assembly, every word of which was explained to the Indian listeners. Captain White-Eyes also made a speech and delivered a belt of wampum to the visitors, in token of their friendship and good-will. They remained several days at Newcomer's-Town, during which time the missionaries held frequent meetings for religious worship, which the Indians freely attended, and behaved with decorum. During this time Lacey was not idle. He was a close observer of every thing he saw and heard around him—he mixed freely among the Indians, and learned as much as possible of their manners and customs. He kept a journal, in which he noted down every thing of interest that came under his notice, and by this means carried home with him a large fund of knowledge, which, at that day, could not have been obtained from any other source. Having concluded the object of their mission, they set out on their journey home by way of Virginia. Young Lacey reached his father's house on the 14th of September, having traveled upward of one thousand miles, and been absent two months and seven days.

The following interesting abstract from his journal, we copy entire, as it will throw some new light upon the manners and customs of the aboriginal inhabitants not generally known, and which I have never seen recorded elsewhere. He says:—

"After we had been presented to the king and council, we were conducted to an empty log house or cabin—such as are made by colliers, at iron-works—covered with palisades and bark. There were three berths erected in it, on crotches set in the ground; on each was spread, or laid, a course of split plank or palisades, wide enough for two persons to lie on. On these planks were spread one or more deer or bear skins, for beds. No floor but the bare earth was in this house, and many others in the town. Indeed few only had floors, and these, I believe, were confined to the nobility alone; none others, that I saw, had any boards in them. The king's and Kill-buck's were tolerably well furnished, and their bed-rooms were up stairs. The skins, however, made comfortable beds, and we could not complain of our lodgings. Between sunset and dark, our habitation was surrounded by a large number of (some twenty to thirty) young Indian girls, dressed in their best apparel, who kept up an almost incessant serenade on jews-harps. Although Quakers, neither my friends nor myself showed any signs of disapprobation. If we had, we should have been obliged to let them play on. They would approach the door, but venture no farther. We all supposed that their design was a mere compliment, an honor conferred on us as friends and strangers, and

took no further notice than apparently to be pleased with their music, which continued night after night, for nearly the whole of the first week of our residence. Two white men, traders—John Freeman, and James Forbes—had a store of goods in this town—with whom I made an early acquaintance, and was often invited to dine and sup with them. On the second or third day of our residence, while at dinner, Freeman asked me if I did not observe the Indian girls playing on jews-harps, at our lodgings, and asked if I knew their meaning. I answered in the affirmative, and that I supposed it was out of compliment. He said it was a custom when a stranger comes to reside at the town, for ever so short a time, the girls, or single women, present themselves in that way, in token of their willingness to enter into a contract for such time as his business required his stay there; during which they acted as housekeeper, and performed every necessary service, in the care of your baggage or goods, cooked, washed, and conducted in all things with punctuality, honesty and care, as well of your person as goods; that if you were in danger of insult, they would give you the earliest notice—and in that respect they were sometimes peculiarly useful; no part of their contract would be neglected, but in all things they would perform their duty as a good housewife ought to do. You must pay for all these services, in money or clothing, according to your agreement.

"Being thus master of this secret—of which I knew my companions to be ignorant—I could not refrain from laughter at the simple credulity of my uncle, and

Friend Parish, who seemed to be tickled and exhilirated with the young squaws' music, as they crowded the threshold of their habitation. Although they would crowd and jostle each other for the possession of the door, they did not venture into our apartment. After some time, finding their music to have made no impression upon us, and that we were not inclined to accept their services, they disappeared, which my companions seemed really to regret—sorrowfully saying they believed the girls had got tired of them, which I have no doubt was really the case.

"I believe this custom to be not only licensed, but approved and encouraged by the chiefs of the nation, as I observed Captain Kill-buck's daughter, with her harp, among the crowd, and one of the foremost to approach the door. She had a sprightly, innocent countenance, and a fine person. The number of inhabitants, according to Captain Kill-buck's account, amounts to upward of three hundred, at this town; and their young men—which they counted as warriors—upward of one hundred."

On his return home, Mr. Lacey again commenced work at his former occupations, his father giving him the principal care and management of the mill. In this manner we find him engaged until the spring of 1775, when the difficulties between Great Britain and her then colonies had assumed an alarming aspect, and foreboded open rupture. As the difficulties waxed warmer and warmer, the people began to take sides and array themselves for or against the mother country. From the first, Mr. Lacey had been a close

reader of the various publications, and observer of the occurrences which took place, and was induced to believe the claims of Great Britain unjust and cruel. Hence, from the beginning he was an ardent patriot, and espoused the cause of his country with all the enthusiasm his nature was capable of; and he defended the cause of the struggling infant colonies with so much zeal and ability, as soon to draw upon himself the notice of the neighborhood in which he lived. His non-resistance principles, in which he had been trained from his early youth, and taught to consider the very acme of his faith and practice, were scattered to the wind, and he announced his determination to enroll himself under the banner of his country, and assist in her defense. In this resolution it was his misfortune to differ with his family and most of his relations and friends, which, with many, caused a breach that was never healed in future years. A majority of the religious sect to which he belonged took the side of the mother country, and were anxious that his assistance should be given to the same cause; but he was far too indignant at the conduct of Great Britain to take sides against the land of his birth. Every other consideration was lost sight of but his love of country, and the duty he owed to her and posterity; and he was determined, at all hazards, to devote his service to the cause of liberty. His feelings were manly, just, and patriotic, and he knew no other course than to follow in the path of duty. This path he took and it led him on to usefulness and glory.

When the difficulties assumed the aspect of open hos-

tilities, we find Mr. Lacey one of the first in the field. As early as July, 1775, he was chosen the "*Standard Bearer*" in the second battalion of the Bucks county militia. About the same time, the young men of the neighborhood, fired with patriotism, formed themselves into a volunteer company in order to learn the use of arms and be in a better condition to serve their country. Many of them, like himself, were members of the society of Friends, and took this step in direct opposition to the known wishes of their parents and friends. Mr. Lacey was elected their captain, which was a well-merited compliment to his activity in the cause of his country, and which at this early day made him a "man of mark" in the neighborhood where he was best known. But now came a trying time to the young Quaker captain, and his patriotism had to pass through a severe ordeal. His company was no sooner organized, and he had hardly yet had an opportunity to make a bow to *Mars*, when the Friends' Meeting took the matter in hand, and used their most strenuous exertions to break up the organization. Those of the "Manor Born," were warned of the path of sin they were treading in, and recalled back into the fold. They all obeyed the summons except Lacey who remained true to his colors; and seeing that he was more stubborn than the rest, and still persisted in his new calling, the society took harsher means with him. Although he was proof against all their persuasions and appeals, they did not dream that he dare resist the official power of the church, and therefore they thought to frighten him back to what they considered his duty,

by reading him out of meeting. But they little knew the man with whom they had to deal. He was, therefore, in due manner and form excommunicated and declared to be without the pale of the church of his fathers. The following *Friendly* Bull was issued upon the occasion:

"Whereas, John Lacey, Junr., hath had his birth and education amongst Friends, but hath so far deviated from the principles of Friends as to learn the art of war, and having been treated with on that account, but not coming to a sense of his error, we give forth this testament against such practice, and can have no further unity with him as a member of our society, until he comes to a sense of his misconduct and condemns the same to the satisfaction of Friends, which that he may do is our sincere desire for him.

(Signed) "Jos. Chapman, Cl'k."

Resistance to this proceeding was a severe trial. He was strongly attached to the society of Friends; in its mild and peaceful tenets he had been reared and educated—his earliest and dearest affections and associations were connected with it, and he had been taught to yield a ready obedience to all the requirements of the society; it had been the faith of his fathers for generations, and under these circumstances it required no ordinary effort to tear asunder these ties, and place himself in hostile opposition to his family and friends. His heart was torn with conflicting emotions, but in the emergency he acted promptly, and as became a hero and a man. The pathway of duty was too plainly marked out before him to hesitate and

falter. The call of patriotism was louder than that of sect, and his duty to his country was more urgent than obedience to churchly creeds. He acted a noble part upon this trying occasion, and this single circumstance shows him to have been a young man of much more than ordinary nerve and capacity. A man of less firmness and ability would have given way under the pressure that was made upon him, but nothing could shake his indomitable resolution, or cause him to turn aside from what he believed to be right. All honor is due him for the course he took, and his devotion to the cause was soon rewarded by his admiring country. He has left behind him the following record of his own feelings in reference to the course he took, and which contains so much high-souled patriotism that we cannot forbear to insert it at length. He says:—

"I alone stood the ordeal of the Quaker Society—of which I was then a member. Moved by an irresistible impulse to espouse the cause of the colonies—to support the liberty, the independence, and the political safety of my native country against the strong arm of British oppression; and offering upon the altar of the public weal, the sacrifice of my private interest and social felicity—my career was not to be controlled. The recital of dangers only increased my ardor. Thus wound up in the political enthusiasm of the times, to be inactive was to me an intolerable burthen, which at that period I could not brook, and thus my ardor led me to accept a captain's commission in the troops to be raised to oppose the British army, then in possession of Boston."

In the autumn of 1775, the Committee of Safety of Pennsylvania, on the call of the Congress then assembled in Philadelphia, issued orders for the raising of six regiments of troops, as her quota for the Continental Army then being formed for the defense of the colonies. Mr. Lacey was commissioned a captain in one of the Pennsylvania regiments, on the 5th day of January, 1776. He received his recruiting orders on the 20th of the same month, and although the winter was very cold, he set about raising his company with great zeal, and such was his activity and good fortune, that by the 12th day of February he had enlisted his complement of eighty-five men, and was ready to march to the scene of action. His company was made up principally of young men in his own neighborhood, farmers' sons, whom he had always known, and who had every confidence in him. His is said to have been one of the finest-looking companies in the Pennsylvania line, and was attached to the 4th Pennsylvania regiment, commanded by Colonel Anthony Wayne. Captain Lacey, with his company, marched for Chester, on the Delaware river, on the 12th, by order of the colonel. They reached Darby on the 14th, where they were quartered on the inhabitants. They remained here until the 21st of March, when they were marched to Chester, where they drew their arms the next day. The regiment, which was now all assembled at this place, was ordered to New York. They embarked in shallops for Trenton, from which place they marched overland to their place of destination, where they arrived on the 28th. Such was the

energy displayed by Captain Lacey in his new sphere of duty, that he had his company uniformed before any other one in the regiment, and being first ready to march, was sent on in advance of the other companies, which were to follow as they should be equipped. When they arrived in New York they were quartered in some empty houses on Broadway, which had been vacated by the owners in consequence of the rumored approach of the enemy. Here they remained until the 14th of April, when, on the arrival of Captain Robinson's company, they were encamped on Long Island, under the command of Major Houseker, who had also joined them. The remaining companies of the regiment soon after joined the camp, and on the 27th of April Col. Wayne arrived in New York and assumed the command. Captain Lacey at this time thus describes the uniform of his company: "Our regimental coats were deep blue faced with white, white vests, and overalls, edged with blue cloth; a very beautiful uniform, but on experience was found much better adapted for parade than utility in the hardships of a camp, as it too easily became soiled and was hard to clean."

Immediately upon the arrival of Colonel Wayne at the camp on Long Island, he ordered Captain Lacey to return to Darby and settle the men's board, while they were quartered there, and a part of which it appeared had remained unpaid. He returned and arranged the matter to the entire satisfaction of those interested, and immediately retraced his steps to New York to join his regiment. In the meantime, on the

27th of April, an order was issued by the commander-in-chief for six more regiments to march for Canada, and join the troops already sent in that direction. They were at once got ready, and embarked and sailed up the river for Albany. Captain Lacey reached camp on the 11th of May, and found that five companies of his regiment, among which was his own, had gone to Canada, the balance remaining in camp under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Johnston and Major Houseker. Lacey's company had been given to Captain Moore, who was a great pet of Colonel Wayne, and Moore's, which was unarmed, was left behind with orders for Lacey to take charge of it until he should join his regiment. Captain Lacey felt himself justly aggrieved at this procedure, and laid his complaint before the general officer who commanded on Long Island. He directed Lieutenant-Colonel Johnston to send Captain Lacey to overtake his company, with a letter to Colonel Wayne explaining the reason of his being in advance of the balance of the regiment. He embarked immediately at New York in a vessel for Albany, in company with several other officers who were going to join their regiments, and reached the army on the 30th, encamped on the east side of Lake Champlain, about half way between Crown Point and St. John's. He presented himself at Colonel Wayne's quarters, and reported for duty with his company; but Wayne refused to allow him to take command of it until at such time as Moore's should arrive; he was to continue his rank, and act as a volunteer in the meantime. Although sorely chagrined at this unjust

treatment from Colonel Wayne, Captain Lacey, like a good soldier and true patriot, resolved to be of all the service he could; he even overlooked wrong for the sake of his country.

On the 31st of May the troops embarked and sailed down Lake Champlain in about two hundred vessels of various kinds. The tents were used for sails; Colonel Wayne's division leading the van. Thus, with a fair wind they moved in beautiful array over the smooth surface of the lake, toward St. John's, where they arrived the same day, after dark. The troops encamped at the head of the river Sorel, about sixteen miles below the *Isle aux Noix*. They remained here until the 3d of June, when they marched by land to Chamblee, except a few men who went with the boats to conduct them safely down the rapids. As soon as the boats had arrived, they again embarked and sailed down the river to its junction with the St. Lawrence, where the army encamped on the bank of the river. Notwithstanding the misunderstanding that had taken place between Colonel Wayne and Captain Lacey, the former sent the latter, while they lay at Sorel, the following invitation to dinner, which is inserted more as a matter of curiosity than from any other cause:

"Col. Wayne's best compliments wait on Capt. Lacey, and begs the favor of his dining with him on a roasted pig, at 2 o'clock this afternoon, by the edge of the woods.

"To Captain Lacey, Present."

Under the circumstances, this seemed very much like endeavoring to heal up the wounded honor of

Captain Lacey with a good dinner; but he did not feel at liberty to decline, and hence Captain Lacey politely accepted the invitation, and particularly as an opportunity to dine on "roasted pig" was not of every-day occurrence.

On the 5th of June Captain Lacey was sent for by General Sullivan, and ordered to carry dispatches to General Arnold at Montreal, an account of which trip we will relate in his own words.

"A post-chaise, or rather a common chaise, without a top, (what they call in Canada a calash,) stood at the door of the general's quarters, the letters were handed to me by one of the general's aids, with some hard money to pay the drivers at the end of each stage, and some verbal directions how to proceed. I instantly jumped into the vehicle, to which was geared a small chunk of a horse, and the coachman drove off in full speed up the east side of the Sorel river. We left head-quarters about 4 o'clock, P. M., and after two changes arrived within six miles of Chamblee, having traveled all night, crossed the river in a boat, pursued my course on foot to La Prairie, came to Montreal about 12 o'clock, and delivered my letters to General Arnold, with whom I dined. In passing up the river Sorel I had an agreeable and fine prospect of the adjacent country. On the margin of the river, and as far back into the country as I could see, the soil appeared to be a sandy loam, and very fertile. The banks, and for some distance (as far as I could see) the land, lay a considerable height above the water, but very level. Some of my drivers could speak English.

They informed me that back from the river there was a great body of swamps, or marshy ground, and the country uninhabited. Along the bank and margin of the river, the villages seem to unite with each other, so that it might almost be said to be a string of villages from the Chamblee to the mouth or junction of the Sorel with the river St. Lawrence. At every cross-road, or vicinity of a church—of which there appeared not a few—was erected a cross or crucifix, attached to a large post fixed in the ground. As we passed each, my driver never failed to pull off his hat and make a low bow, as he sat in our calash, turning his face toward it, and muttering at the same time a few words in French, which I did not understand. I could not help reflecting on the force of prejudice and education, on seeing these poor, ignorant Canadians so very attentive and exact in their devotion to those inanimate posts of wood.

"About 4 o'clock the same day, June 6th, I received other letters from General Arnold to General Sullivan, at the Sorel. The General ordered five men to accompany me in a large canoe. We hoisted a blanket for a sail, and had a fine, fair and easy wind down the river, until we came off La Prairie, where we were overtaken by a squall of wind and rain. We steered for the shore, expecting every moment to be overset, the waves ran very high; we were afraid to take down our sail, and kept nearly before the wind, so as to make the first land in our course. Luckily, we made out to reach the land, but the instant our canoe struck she sunk. Fortunately for us, the water being shoal,

we reached the shore in safety. Being thus cast away, in an enemy's country, we conceived it unsafe to apply to the inhabitants for assistance. As none of us could speak a word of French, even if they were disposed to assist us, we could not make them understand what we wanted. Providentially, however, we discovered a batteaux on the shore, near the place where we had landed, which we supposed had been either found adrift or stolen, and drawn up out of the water. It proved to be a good one, with four oars in it. After considerable efforts we launched it into the river, the wind and storm abating, we got under way, although the waves were still greatly agitated, and our new vessel very leaky, and continued our course down the river all night. In the morning the wind shifted, being ahead, we had hard rowing. Having no provisions with us, we landed on one of the islands, with which the St. Lawrence abounds; got plenty of bread and milk of one of the inhabitants—to whom I offered paper money—but the mistress of the house, (the man not appearing,) refused to take it, saying "*no bonne.*" I then paid her in specie, when she seemed to be quite overjoyed, brought us more bread and milk, and, as well as she could, invited us to eat. We re-entered our boat, and after hard rowing reached the mouth of the Sorel river about 10 o'clock, and delivered my letters to General Sullivan. I had set out precisely at 4 o'clock, P. M., on the 5th went to Montreal, said to be 45 miles and more by land; delivered dispatches to General Arnold, received others from him, and returned to Sullivan's head-quarters, at the mouth of the

Sorel, by 10 o'clock, A. M., of the 7th; having performed the journey in less than two days, and traveling on foot from the river Sorel near Chamblee to La Prairie, opposite Montreal, on the south side of the river St. Lawrence, about 15 miles. The road, from the Sorel to La Prairie, was tolerably good, but swampy and causewayed in many places; here and there a habitation and improvement, the people appearing to live very poor, the land level, and broken by the swamps. Those parts above the water appeared fertile and very natural to grass, producing also strawberries in abundance."

On the return of Captain Lacey to the camp at Sorel, he found the Pennsylvania troops had gone down the St. Lawrence to Three Rivers, to reinforce General Thompson and Colonel St. Clair. General Sullivan complimented him highly for the manner in which he had executed his mission to General Arnold, and desired him to remain with him at the Sorel until he joined the army below, which he expected to do in a few days. The British had erected strong works at the Three Rivers, which the Americans intended to surprise and capture. The attempt was made on the 8th of June, which failed, and our troops suffered a heavy loss, besides being much disorganized in the retreat. In this attack General Thompson and Colonel Irvine of the 6th Pennsylvania regiment were made prisoners. On the 10th, General Sullivan ordered Captain Lacey, with a party of ten men and one officer, to proceed down the St. Lawrence until they should meet the retreating army, and show them the way to

camp, which they did not all reach until the evening of the next day. In this engagement Captain Lacey's company lost seventeen men, most of whom were captured.

A council of war was held at head-quarters on the night of the 13th, when it was deemed advisable to evacuate Canada, concentrate the American army at Ticonderoga, and there make a stand against the approach of the British. The movement was begun on the morning of the 14th; the army marching up the river by land, and the baggage and military stores being transported in batteaux by water, after a most laborious and fatiguing time the army and baggage reached the Isle aux Noix, and encamped there on the 19th. The sick and invalids were sent off in batteaux the next morning, but the army remained encamped on the island for nearly a week, until the boats returned from Crown Point. While the troops were encamped here they were truly in a pitiable condition. The situation was a very unhealthy one, and both officers and men seemed to contract all the ills that "flesh is heir to." In order to show the reader more clearly what they suffered here, we will give Captain Lacey's account of it, in his own words, and let it be borne in mind that this suffering was endured in order to secure to us the many blessings we now enjoy. We should never forget the immense price that was paid for our Liberty!

"Having nothing to do, curiosity led me to visit the New England camp. Here my feelings were indescribable; some men in, and some out of tents, sick,

on the bare ground, infected with fluxes, fevers, small-pox, and overrun with legions of lice; and none but the sick to wait on one another. My eyes never before beheld such a scene, nor do I ever desire to see such another. The lice and maggots seemed to vie with each other, creeping in millions over their victims; and the doctors themselves either sick or out of medicine. The estimate in both camps was that from 15 to 20 died daily. I examined the burying-ground of each camp; found two large holes dug in the earth, one for each camp. While there, I saw several corpses brought—carried in a blanket by four soldiers, one holding each corner. On their arrival at the pit or grave, those next it would let go of the blanket, while the other two giving it a hoist, rolled the dead body into the pit—where lay several bodies already deposited in the same way, with no other covering but the rags in which they died, heads and points as they happened to come to the place. In this manner the burial continued all day. As soon as the breath had left the unfortunate victim, the body was laid on a dirty blanket, and thus toted off to the silent tomb, without a sigh from a friend or relative, or a single mourner to follow it. In the evening the dirt in front of this general grave, or depository of the dead, was thrown over the bodies, leaving a new space open for the next day. This scene of human wretchedness and misery engrossed my attention, and induced a daily visit. The New England and New York camp was most infected with small-pox, and scarcely a single one survived an attack of that disease. The whole army was

computed to be about five thousand men ; of which it could not be said that more than one-third was fit for duty. Our retreat was certainly a wise measure, and was well conducted."

The army all reached Crown Point by the 1st of July, when General Gates assumed the command. Here they remained until the 9th, when they moved up to Ticonderoga, where they encamped. On the morning of the 12th, the three remaining companies of Wayne's regiment, which had been left behind at Long Island, joined the camp, and for the first time the whole regiment was together. In the meantime, the difficulty between Colonel Wayne and Captain Lacey was not settled, and the situation of the latter became so unpleasant, that he determined to resign his commission as soon as the campaign should draw to a close. The breach between them became widened instead of reconciled, and Captain Lacey found it impossible, under the circumstances, to remain in the service with any degree of satisfaction ; and although he regretted deeply the necessity which impelled him to this step, he considered that his honor and duty to himself required it, and he gave notice to that effect to his commanding officer. His friends persuaded him to remain, but he was inflexible in his determination to resign at the conclusion of the campaign, and when he could be of no more service to his country in the position he then occupied. It is not our place to take any part in this difficulty between these two officers, but as a faithful chronicler of events, we could not pass over them unnoticed. The history of both has become

part of our national glory, and whatever faults either may have committed, which led to this unfortunate misunderstanding, their valuable services in the cause of Independence are ample enough to cover them all up. Captain Lacey was ordered by Colonel Wayne, on the 13th, to take command of his own company, which he did; and Moore, who had had charge of it, was ordered to his own. He found his company in a sad condition, exhibiting an entire want of care; having lost since he parted with it on Long Island, two sergeants, two corporals, drummer and fifer, and twenty-eight privates. He immediately exerted all his energies to put it in a good state of discipline, and he devoted all his time to this object not required by other duties. On Sunday, the 14th, he was sent with one hundred and fifty men and fifty batteaux to Crown Point, to bring to Ticonderoga the 6th Pennsylvania regiment, which he accomplished without loss.

While the army occupied this position, the New York, New Jersey, and New England troops were encamped on Mount Independence, and the Pennsylvania regiments within the old French lines, north-west of the old fort. The men were put to work in strengthening the redoubts and breastworks, and deepening the ditches, and were thus employed for several weeks in making every necessary preparation to resist the enemy, who, it was supposed, would follow and attack them at this place. The works had gone very much to ruin, and it required a good deal of labor to repair them, and place them in a proper posture of defense. In addition to the heavy fatigue-duty both officers and

men were obliged to undergo daily, they were also exercised in various military manœuvres, such as rushing to the alarm posts, manning the lines, and going through the necessary firing to repel an attack. The health of the army was now much better than heretofore, which was caused, in a great measure, by their regular duty and better supplies. The sick from Crown Point were sent to the barracks at the south end of Lake George, where they were rapidly recovering. Much of the sickness that had prevailed to such an alarming extent, while the troops were in Canada, was caused by the unwholesome as well as scanty supply of food that was furnished to the army. The men were obliged to eat rusty pork, and coarse, unbolted meal, and there was not even a supply of this poor fare; there seldom being issued more than half a ration at a time, and sometimes not that much. There is no wonder then, that men living on such provisions, much exposed and hard at work all the time, should sicken and die.

Captain Lacey makes the following note of the reception of the *Declaration of Independence*, viz.:

"Lieutenant-Colonel Johnston brought with him the Declaration of Congress, on the 4th, of the Independence of America. It made a little buzz, but soon subsided, and was forgotten. A few officers left the army in consequence of it, among whom was Lieutenant-Colonel Allen."

In the beginning of September large reinforcements arrived at the camp from different quarters, and affairs assumed a more warlike aspect; and it was expected

that, before the campaign closed, they would have an opportunity to meet the enemy. The works were completed the 13th of September, when the officers and men were publicly thanked for the industry and energy they had exhibited in their completion. During this time Captain Lacey was almost constantly in command, either in the entrenchments or on picket-guard, and in every instance acquitted himself with great credit.

Among the papers of General Lacey are many of the orders of General, then Colonel, Wayne, by which it appears that he was a very strict disciplinarian, and at the same time something of a martinet, in regard to the personal appearance of his men. After the severe labors of repairing the works at Ticonderoga were ended, he paid considerable attention to the cleanliness and appearance of his regiment, as the following order will show:

COLONEL WAYNE'S ORDERS, SEPTEMBER 19.

"The 4th battalion are to be all under arms, on Sunday next, at 9 o'clock, A. M., and, as soap is now plenty, and new shirts ready to be delivered to such companies as are in want, no excuse can be admitted for appearing dirty or indecent. All officers and soldiers will be particularly careful, on that day, to appear on the parade as neat as possible; for which purpose the officers will see that the men have their hair well-powdered and neatly tied and plaited."

The soap he speaks of was, without doubt, much

needed; but, with our modern notions of soldiering, we cannot see how the plaited pig-tails sticking out from the hinder part of the head could add any thing to the martial appearance of the men.

They had been waiting the approach of the enemy for some time, expecting every day to hear of their advance toward Ticonderoga, as our spies had brought word that they had a fleet of armed vessels on the lake, nearly ready for operations, and that their army only waited orders to move from Isle aux Noix and Isle La Motte, where they were encamped. In the beginning of October General Arnold, with a fleet of gun-boats, sloops, etc., met them some distance beyond Crown Point, when a severe action took place. Arnold fought bravely, but was defeated with considerable loss, and many of his vessels fell into the enemy's hands. Upon this defeat, the British army marched upon Crown Point, six miles from Ticonderoga, which they took possession of on the 15th. Upon this near approach of the enemy General Gates had every thing placed in readiness to resist an immediate attack, and the necessary orders were issued in rapid succession. The American army was in high spirits at the prospect of an engagement, and looked forward with much confidence to victory. Word was brought by the scouts, on the morning of the 28th, that the enemy were approaching the American lines by land and water. The alarm-guns were fired, and the troops marched to their respective positions, prepared for battle. All was excitement and bustle. This movement, however, proved only a feint to cover a recon-

noitering party, and the troops, much out of humor, were marched back again to their encampments. From this time to the 13th of November nothing of importance took place, when information was received that the British army had evacuated the works at Crown Point and retired to St. John's, in order to go into winter-quarters, thus closing the campaign and giving up the contest until the opening of the next spring, when they hoped to be better prepared to carry on operations against the colonies.

The retirement of the British army into winter-quarters also closed the campaign of 1776, on the part of the Americans, on the northern frontiers. A part of the troops returned home, the balance went into winter-quarters, and Colonel Wayne was placed in command, by order of General Gates. He ordered one officer from each company to return home to enlist men for the war, to fill up the ranks of those then in service. Captain Lacey was one of those selected for that duty, from the 4th regiment, and, as Colonel Wayne approved the selection, he immediately prepared to return home. The following is his account of the journey homeward:

"In a few days after, we left the encampment, crossed Lake George in batteaux, proceeded on through Albany, and down the North River by water, about sixty miles, when we struck across the country, to avoid the enemy; came through the town of Esopus, and struck the river Delaware some distance above the Blue Mountains; crossed the river and continued our course through Pennsylvania; passed the Wind-Gap

in the Blue Mountains; came by Nazareth and Bethlehem; crossed the Lehigh river at the last mentioned place; and, after traveling a few miles, I left the other officers, and came to Durham, and from thence took the main road through Bucks county to my father's, in Buckingham township, where I once more arrived in safety, about the first of December, and found the family all well."

CHAPTER II.

CAPTAIN LACEY found, on his return home, that quite a change had taken place in his own neighborhood and in the county generally. When he left, in the winter, every thing was quiet and peaceful; but now friends and acquaintance were arrayed in hostile opposition. As the war had progressed, and especially since independence was declared, the people had taken sides for and against the cause of the colonies, and were extremely bitter in their feelings toward each other. He says: "A sullen, vindictive and malignant spirit seemed to have taken hold of a large portion of the people of the county, whose hostility to the Revolution was too apparent not to be noticed, and seemed only to be waiting for a good opportunity to break forth openly in favor of England, and against their own country. Happily for the Whigs, however, the Tories were a set of poltroons and cowards, afraid openly to espouse their cause and declare themselves; while the Whigs, on the other hand, acted openly, avowed their intention and determination to live free

and independent, or die gloriously in the struggle for their rights. The Tories sneakingly continued to act under cover, giving secret information whenever they could to the British; ridiculing the American officers, and using every means they could invent to discourage the Whigs and to dissuade them from joining the American army or militia." He further says, that "the hostility of the Tories to independence was so violent, that nothing but cowardice prevented their taking up arms and openly declaring themselves in favor of and joining the British army. They actually did every thing they dared to do, by encouraging the youth to go over and join the British; and many of the young men were thus sent."

Among those who were thus hostile to the cause of their country was his own family, and most of his immediate friends and acquaintance. As soon as he returned home, his family made a powerful effort to detach him from the cause of his country, and to induce him to take up arms in favor of the British. They brought every possible argument and persuasion to bear upon him, and even went so far as to promise to secure him a commission of field-officer in the British army, if he would quit the cause of the colonies. His uncles were particularly anxious to win him over to the English; and his uncle Abraham Chapman waited upon him, as the representative of the others, and held out many inducements for him to turn traitor. Four of his cousins had already gone over to the British, his uncle told him, and it seemed only to require his disaffection to make the treason of the family com-

plete. But all their efforts made no impression upon him, other than to strengthen his attachment to the cause he had espoused. He was a patriot from the purest motives, and no earthly inducement could cause him to change his allegiance; neither would he allow any private difficulties with others, in the same service, or real or imaginary injuries received from his superiors, to shake his adherence to the cause of the independence of the colonies. When his uncle Abraham found he could not win him over and make a Tory of him, he then asked him not to betray him, but keep what he had said a profound secret. They never again mentioned the subject to him, but gave him up as a hopeless patriot, past redemption.

Captain Lacey now determined to put in execution the resolution he had made several months before, of resigning his commission at the conclusion of the campaign. He was in a situation to do this with entire propriety, and without causing any reflection to rest upon him, which might have been the case if he had resigned while in the enemy's country. But before he took this step, however, he consulted his uncle, John Wilkinson, esquire, who was one of the earliest friends of liberty in the county, and who had helped to form the State constitution, and was then an active member of the Assembly. He laid all his grievances before him, and, upon his advice, he resigned his commission to the Council of Safety, then sitting in Philadelphia, and accompanied it with a narrative of the circumstances that compelled him to take this course. The resignation of his commission was not

in accordance with his feelings, but induced by what he deemed a sense of duty to himself, in which he considered his honor and reputation were at stake. He had become much attached to the service, being exceedingly martial in his feelings and prone to the profession of arms. The service lost a valuable officer, but it was not long ere he was called to act in a capacity of greater usefulness to his country. His resignation was accepted, and he retired to the private walks of life.

He was not allowed to remain long in peace and retirement; his services were needed for his bleeding country, and he was again called to duty. A new constitution was adopted for Pennsylvania, in 1776, and the Legislature was in session for the first time under it, in the city of Philadelphia, in the winter and spring of 1777, busily engaged in organizing the new State government. In order to arm the people, to oppose the advance of the British the coming campaign, it was deemed necessary to reorganize the militia of the State. To accomplish this desirable object a new militia law was passed the 17th day of March, 1777, to go into effect immediately. The act provided for the appointment of five military officers, one lieutenant with the rank of colonel, and four sub-lieutenants with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, for each county, who were to constitute a sort of civil and military tribunal, to carry the law into operation. This tribunal, among other things, "were to hold courts; to class and district the militia, and organize them into regiments and companies; to hold the election for officers; to call out

the classes and find substitutes in place of delinquents: to assess, and cause the assessments on delinquents to be collected and paid into the State treasury; with other extensive powers, enumerated in the law." John Kirkbride, esquire, one of the members of the Assembly, was appointed lieutenant, and Messrs. John Gill, John Lacey, Samuel Smith and Andrew Keichline sub-lieutenants, for the county of Bucks. The commission of Captain Lacey was dated the 22d day of March, 1777. They immediately entered upon the duties of their appointments, and met at Newtown, within a few days, to organize and proceed to business. They divided the county into five districts, each of which was to furnish a regiment, with the requisite officers, to be elected by the men. They appointed reliable persons in each township, to take the names of all persons between the ages of eighteen and fifty-three years, who speedily made a return of the same, when an election was held for officers, the names of which were sent in to the Executive Council for commissions. Such was the dispatch with which the several duties which devolved on Colonel Lacey were discharged, that when he carried in his return to the council, he was complimented on being the first to make return. Much of the energy displayed in these proceedings was due to him, whose superior knowledge of military organization enabled him to discharge his duties with promptitude, and at the same time he infused some of his own energy and perseverance into his colleagues. John Armstrong, esquire, of Cumberland county, was appointed major-general, and Messrs.

John Cadwallader, Samuel Meredith and James Potter were appointed brigadier-generals. The militia of the district in which Colonel Lacey lived chose him their lieutenant-colonel, as this office did not interfere with that of sub-lieutenant. His commission was dated the 6th day of May, 1777, when he immediately assumed the command in accordance with his rank.

At the opening of the campaign of 1777 every apprehension was entertained by the Executive Council, that Pennsylvania would be made a point of attack by the British; and feeling the necessity of being fully prepared to meet such a crisis, the president of the council addressed a strong letter to each of the sub-lieutenants in the several counties. He entreated them, in the strongest terms, to exert themselves to the utmost to have the militia in readiness to meet the enemy at any point at which they might appear, and also be prepared to answer any requisition the commander-in-chief might make upon them. This letter is dated the 16th day of April, 1777, and signed by Thomas Wharton, Jr., President of the Council; it breathes a lofty spirit of patriotism, and could not help having the desired effect upon the militia, and rousing up both officers and men to great exertions. The apprehension of a visit from the British army appears to have increased with the State authorities, and soon afterward the following circular was addressed to each lieutenant of the several counties:

("CIRCULAR.)

"June 15th, 1777.

"SIR:—The council have received undoubted in-

telligence that the enemy are on their march with a numerous army to invade this State. In my letter of the 13th inst. I have ordered that the first class proceed immediately to camp, and that the second be in perfect readiness to march when called upon. Since the express set off with that letter, the movement of the enemy makes it absolutely necessary that the second class be also ordered instantly to camp; and as you value your Freedom we entreat you to exert yourself to have the third class ready to march at a moment's warning; for, next to the blessing of Providence, our Liberty and safety depend upon the virtuous efforts of the people. A letter has been written by the general officers to you and the other lieutenants of the counties, to order out the whole militia. Although this has been done with a good intention, as they are zealously attached to the cause, yet the council are of opinion it may tend to confusion, and that these gentlemen did not properly consider the embarrassment which would ensue upon such a step.

"You are, therefore, hereby ordered, without loss of time, to march the first and second class to Bristol, and to put in readiness the third class also, as there is too much reason to suppose they will be ordered out as soon as they can possibly be equipped. A compliance with the militia law is the only means whereby the fines and forfeitures of delinquents can be recovered. It is therefore recommended by the council, that a strict attention be paid to the direction of the law, and particularly that the greatest regard be had to that part of it which directs the procuring of substitutes—

which you are to exert yourself to obtain by every means the law will justify.

"As there are many worthy persons who may not fall in either of the classes mentioned, whose warm attachment to the cause of Freedom may induce them to turn out as volunteers, the service of these gentlemen, at this important and critical time, will be most thankfully received by the council, which I beg you to make known as opportunity may offer.

"I am, Sir,

"Your very humble servant,

(Signed,) "THOS. WHARTON, Jun., Pres't.

"To JOSEPH KIRKBRIDE, Esq.,

Lieut. Bucks County."

Colonel Lacey appears to have been opposed to calling out the militia *en masse*, and, with the council, entertained serious apprehensions that such a course would derange their whole system, and do much harm. But at the same time if it was deemed best to pursue such a course, he signified his willingness to give all the aid in his power. He seemed to have only one desire, and that was to defeat the enemy and establish the liberties of his country. He wrote his views fully to Colonel Kirkbride, on the 16th of June, from Buckingham, and sent the letter by his brother.

In the meantime the enemy had embarked from New York for the Chesapeake, and there was no longer any doubt but that Philadelphia was the point of attack. The whole country became alarmed, and the most patriotic appeals were made by the State authorities to the militia, to induce them to turn out promptly

to repel the invasion. Washington with his army was hastening from the East to the supposed point of attack, and the Executive Council, in Philadelpnia, were doing all in their power to support the commander-in-chief. They issued frequent orders to the lieutenants of the several counties to have their forces in readiness, and were active in their efforts to further the cause of their country. The officers of Bucks county were very energetic during this period, but none exhibited as much efficiency as Colonel Lacey, whose previous experience fitted him in a peculiar manner to discharge the duties which now devolved upon him. The president of the council wrote to Colonel Kirkbride, on the 31st of July, that two hundred and twenty-eight sail of the enemy's fleet were at the capes of the Delaware, and urged him to have the class of the militia ordered out marched to Chester as soon as possible. During the latter part of the summer and fall, several drafts were made from the militia to join the main army, under Washington, and in every instance Bucks county furnished her full quota. The battle of Brandywine was fought on the 11th of September, and on the 26th the British army entered Philadelphia in triumph. Washington, with the American army, crossed the Schuylkill, and took up a strong position on the Skippack creek, and the 4th of October he attacked the British in their encampment at Germantown, at daylight, but again failed in his object, and was obliged to retreat. Colonel Lacey was in this action, but had no command; he appears to have been a volunteer upon the occasion. As a matter of general interest to the reader, we here

insert his own account of the engagement. He expresses himself with much clearness, and exhibits no mean knowledge of military affairs.

"General Howe having placed a part of his troops on the heights of Germantown, a village about five miles from the city, General Washington conceived this to be a suitable object to strike at. He accordingly put his troops in motion, and made a vigorous attack on the enemy, who were unapprised of his movements, until their sentinels hailed the advanced columns of our troops. These rushing forward drove the enemy on all quarters, and took possession of their camp. This would have been a decisive day in favor of America, had not the American troops halted to dislodge a few of the enemy, who had taken shelter in a large stone house belonging to Benjamin Chew; which so retarded their progress that the enemy had time to rally; and being supported by fresh troops from the city, the Americans were arrested in their pursuit. Broken parties coming up (in pursuit of the flying enemy) to the newly formed line of the British troops, were unable to force them a second time, and had to fall back. The enemy taking advantage of their disorder advanced. The Americans not being able to form were pushed back in their turn.

"The general, finding the day lost, ordered a retreat —which was effected in tolerable order. Thus ended an affair which at the onset promised so favorably, and which we had every reason to believe, had it not been for the stoppage at Chew's house, would have resulted in a complete victory; but He who holds the destinies

of battles and events in his own hand had decreed otherwise. After this the enemy retired to the city, and General Washington encamped in a very advantageous position, on the Heights of White Marsh.

"Although I had no command at this time I was with the militia in the above affair. They were posted on the right of the American army, with orders to turn the enemy's left. Before they came to the place allotted to them, the enemy were gone; and their new line was formed so far to the left, I saw there was little likelihood of our coming in contact with them. I rode forward to where the main army was engaged, and had an opportunity of seeing the manner in which the business was conducted. We had full possession of the enemy's camp, which was on fire in several places. Dead and wounded men were strewed about in all quarters. When the order for retreat came the American troops were in much disorder. Those in front—driven back by the enemy—and falling on those in the rear increased the confusion, and rendered it impossible to form in such order as to oppose the advancing enemy. A general retreat was inevitably necessary to save the American army from a general route.

"The affair at Chew's house was not, in my judgment, the only cause of the loss of this battle. There were others equally important. General Green's division—composing the left wing of the army—was either led astray by their guides, or mistook their way, and wandered so far to the left that they never came into action. The right wing, composed of about four thou-

sand Pennsylvania militia—in like manner being so far to the right, never saw the enemy that day. Had they acted their part equally with the centre, which was commanded in person by General Washington, and pushed the enemy's flanks with spirit and alacrity, as they ought to have done, the enemy must have been prevented from forming a second line, which they did without opposition—and after rallying had none to contend with but the centre division of the American army, and only a part of that—the other portion having halted at Chew's house. Those who did advance in pursuit, being broken and out of order, were unable to make any impression upon the enemy, thus drawn up in order, and consequently soon gave way. The fate of the day, so favorable to the American arms at the outset, instantly changed. General Washington, perceiving the day to be lost, gave a general order for retreat."

The above is of interest because it was written by an eye-witness, and has never before appeared in print.

Toward the latter end of October, the Executive Council ordered out another class of the militia, to supply the place of those whose term of service was about to expire. They were ordered to rendezvous at Newtown in the beginning of November, and were placed in command of Lieutenant-Colonel Lacey. He marched from thence to White Marsh with a force of some three or four hundred men, and joined the brigade of General Potter. The British soon after took post at Chestnut Hill, when the two armies being within sight of each other, almost daily encounters

took place between them. Colonel Lacey with his regiment was in several of these combats, and in every instance behaved with great credit. The enemy, declining a general engagement, retired to the city, and General Potter's brigade took up a position on the west side of the Schuylkill, near the Gulf Mills, on the main road leading to Philadelphia. Here the Americans were attacked the next morning by the British, and a severe combat ensued. Colonel Lacey with his regiment occupied the centre of the first line, consisting of three regiments, and was drawn up on an eminence, with the right resting on the main road. The other two regiments fled at the first fire, but Lacey's stood their ground and exchanged shots with the enemy until they began to outflank him, when he fell back in good order to the second line, under General Potter, drawn up on a height, about half a mile in the rear. The enemy rushed on and in a short time compelled the second line to give way also. Lacey with his regiment covered the retreat of the flying militia, and tried, in vain, to rally them to make further resistance. Soon a general rout ensued, and he was obliged to join the main body and hasten off the field as rapidly as possible. In his efforts to rally the scattered forces he came near being captured, the account of which we give in his own words, as follows:

"I was among the rear, and having in attempting to rally the men got some distance from the road, I came to a fence, which I got my horse over with much difficulty; but on coming to a second fence, after passing over a field, (it being one side of a lane leading

from the Schuylkilll to the Gulf road, and a stout fence,) I called to the men who were passing over it to throw off a rider. All being in such a hurry, and thinking of nothing but self-preservation, they took no notice, but left me to get over as well as I could. Twice did I run my horse against the fence without effect; on the third effort it gave way. I found myself in a lane and set off at full-speed for the main road, about two hundred yards distant, on entering which I discovered a column of the enemy's horse on the top of the hill about fifty yards from me. They called to me to surrender. I halted; but on casting my eyes down the road I saw our flying troops about two hundred yards below. By a mere mechanical movement, without time to think, I clapped spurs to my horse, and, lying flat up his withers, went at full speed after them. The enemy fired their pistols or carbines at me, and I heard the bullets whisp by me. Two dragoons pursued me, and finding them gaining upon me as I came up with the hindmost troops, I ordered our men to turn about and fire. Several muskets were discharged as the men ran, by firing off their shoulders, without stopping or turning about. Conceiving myself in more danger, by this mode of firing, from my own men than from the enemy, I called upon them to desist, or they would shoot me. On my gaining the rear of our retreating troops, one of the dragoons took up his horse; but the other horse, being too mettlesome, refused to yield to his rider; they dashed in among our men and were both shot down together. The transaction was so sudden and instantaneous that

it was impossible to save either the man or the horse, more than twenty guns being fired at them in the same moment."

General Washington, in his orders, complimented the regiment of Lieutenant-Colonel Lacey for the handsome manner in which they behaved in this affair. The loss of the Americans was one officer and seventeen men. General Potter with his brigade now marched to Swede's Ford, where they met the main army under Washington, on their way to go into winter-quarters. It was about the middle of December, and the weather had become cold and wintry, yet the services of the militia in the field could not be dispensed with, and they were again ordered to take post on the west side of the Schuylkill, in order to watch the enemy and cover the main army while building their huts at the Valley Forge. A court-martial, of which Colonel Lacey was appointed judge-advocate, was here convened by order of General Potter, to try such men as threw away their arms and equipments at the Gulf Mills, in order to facilitate their escape. Some were sentenced to be publicly whipped, which sentence was carried into effect and caused much disturbance in camp. In a few days the brigade was ordered to join the rest of the militia at North Wales, under the command of General Armstrong, who was the major-general of all the militia raised in the State. On their arrival at General Armstrong's head-quarters, Colonel Lacey with his regiment was ordered to proceed to the Cross Roads, now Hartsville, near the Neshaminy. He continued his march, and encamped

on the 20th day of December in a wood about half-way between the cross-roads and the Billet, near Hatborough, in Montgomery county. He established his quarters in a house near the camp, and mentions that he there slept in a house for the first time for two months. He had only been in camp three days, when he received an order from General Armstrong, in pursuance of an order from General Washington, to march his regiment the next morning to the lower end o Germantown, without baggage, with cooked provisions, and one axe to each company, and there await further orders. Being there joined by the whole of the Pennsylvania militia, they marched toward Philadelphia, and commenced an attack on the outposts of the enemy in the Northern Liberties, with cannon and small arms. After remaining under arms for some time, without any serious demonstration being made, they were ordered to return to their camps; when Colonel Lacey marched his regiment back to his former position near the Cross Roads. As the service of his men would expire the last of December, he had only time to have them mustered and paid off before that period arrived, when they were discharged and returned to their respective homes.

CHAPTER III.

WITH the foregoing operations on the Schuylkill, and before Philadelphia, was closed the campaign of 1777 in this section of the country. Colonel Lacey, on the discharge of his regiment, returned to his father's house, in the township of Buckingham, where he hoped to be able to spend the winter in peace and quiet. But in this he was disappointed, from two causes: first, because he was soon again called into the service of his country, in a new and more useful situation; and secondly, because the Tories and Refugees in that neighborhood continually harassed him, and gave him no rest while he remained at home. He had rendered himself so obnoxious to them by his activity in the American cause that they made many threats against his life, and also threatened to burn his father's house and mills for harboring him. He complains at this time of the course the Whigs took as doing much injury to the American cause—that many of the most active were seeking hiding-places, and some were even courting the Tories in the

neighborhood, to secure their safety—that an open and notorious communication was kept up between the city and country, to carry provisions and information to the British. The opposition to the cause of the colonies had increased, and the near proximity of the British army had so much elated the disaffected that they openly threatened vengeance against all who dare oppose them. It was almost dangerous for an open, active patriot to live in the neighborhood, and at one time Colonel Lacey had serious thoughts of removing farther back into the interior, both on account of greater safety, and to get rid of the constant annoyance to which he was subjected.

This disaffection extended to such a degree throughout the country, during the time Washington with his army lay at the Valley Forge, that in many instances he found it very difficult to procure the necessary supplies for his troops. The military chest was quite empty, and the inhabitants would not furnish anything to the army without pay, unless they were obliged to do so by force. The soldiers were in great want of straw, which could not be had because the farmers, most of whom were hostile in the neighborhood of the camp, would not thresh their grain. To put a stop to this evasion Washington issued the following order, which we have no doubt brought the offending farmers to their senses:

"*By His Excellency, George Washington, Esquire, General and Commander-in-chief of the Forces of the United States of America.*

"By virtue of the power and direction to me

especially given, I hereby enjoin and require all persons residing within seventy miles of my head-quarters to thresh one-half of their grain by the first day of March next ensuing, on pain, in case of failure, of having all that shall remain in *sheaves* after the period above mentioned, seized by the commissaries and quarter-masters of the army and paid for as *straw*. Given under my hand, at head-quarters, near the Valley Forge, in Philadelphia county, this 20th day of December, 1777.

(Signed,) "G. WASHINGTON.

"By His Excellency's command,

"ROBERT H. HARRISON, Secretary."

General Lacey was not suffered, however, long to remain idle. At the opening of the year 1778 his sphere of usefulness was much enlarged by being appointed a brigadier-general in the militia of Pennsylvania, and assigned to the discharge of most arduous and important duties. He received the following communication, announcing his appointment, from the president of the Executive Council:

"LANCASTER, January 9th, 1778.

"SIR:—You are this day appointed a brigadier-general of this State, and the secretary will, by Colonel Hart, forward to you a commission empowering you to act as such.

"Brigadier-General Potter has obtained leave to visit his family, and you are to take the command in his absence.

"Two classes of the militia from the county of York, two from the county of Cumberland, two from the

county of Northampton, and one from the county of Northumberland, are now ordered into the field, and the lieutenants of the counties of Philadelphia and of Bucks are directed to supply you with twenty light-horse each, without officers, as they must be necessarily divided into small parties where officers will be useless.

"I am, sir,

"Your very humble servant,

(Signed,) "THOS. WHARTON, JR., Pres.

"To BRIG.-GEN. LACEY, at camp."

Accompanying the above was the following from the secretary of the Executive Council, enclosing his commission:

"LANCASTER, January 9th, 1778.

"SIR:—Enclosed is a commission authoring you to act as a brigadier-general in the militia of this State.

"I congratulate you on this appointment, which, at the same time it does you honor in acknowledging your merit as an officer, affords a reasonable ground of hope for benefit to the public, by calling you into the field in an important station. I sincerely wish you success, and am, with great respect,

"Your very humble servant,

(Signed,) "T. MATLACK, Secretary.

"To BRIG.-GEN. LACEY, at camp."

The bestowal of this commission was conferring a high honor upon Colonel Lacey, and when we consider that at this time he was not yet twenty-three years of age, and was promoted over the lieutenants and also the sub-lieutenants of the different counties, who were older in years than himself, and many of whom out-

ranked him, it appears more than a simple approval of merit, and exhibits the great confidence reposed in him by the Executive Council. His future activity and usefulness showed this trust was not misplaced. It would be but natural to suppose that the appointment of so young a man, over the heads of older officers, would have created a jealousy on their part toward him; such, however, was not the case, because they all knew his superior qualifications for the station he was called to fill. As evidence of the satisfaction his appointment gave to the militia officers of his own county, it need only be mentioned that Colonel Kirkbride, the lieutenant of Bucks, wrote him the moment he heard of his promotion. His letter is dated at Bellevue, 13th of January, 1778, in which he compliments him upon his appointment, while he regrets the loss of so able and efficient a sub-lieutenant. As soon as General Lacey received his commission, he prepared to enter upon the discharge of his new duties, which were onerous enough to have shaken the confidence of a more experienced officer.

This honor was none the less pleasing because it was unsolicited; as the first intimation he had of it was the notification of his appointment from the president of the council. At first he thought of refusing the commission, because of his youth and want of confidence in himself to fill so high a station; but upon reflection he concluded to accept, as it might afford him a better opportunity to serve his country, in whose cause his heart was fully enlisted. He immediately received a very pressing invitation from General Potter

to come and see him at camp; but when he arrived there he found the general had left, and things were in great confusion, of which he gives the following account. He says, "I found the camp in a deplorable condition; Major-General Armstrong and General Potter gone, the number of the troops reduced from about three thousand to six hundred; those lately departed had left their camp-equipage strewed everywhere—muskets, cartouch-boxes, camp-kettles and blankets—some in and some out of the huts the men had left, with here and there a tent, some standing and some fallen down. No one seeming to have the charge or care of them, my first efforts were made to have them collected and sent off to a place of safety. How easy it would have been for a few of the enemy to have driven the scattered militia at the different posts on the roads leading to Philadelphia. Not more than sixty rank and file being at this camp, the destruction of near three thousand stand of arms and accoutrements here might have been easily effected, which the enemy most certainly would have done had they known the unprotected state these arms were in."

The above condition of things at camp shows not a very flattering prospect under which the general was to commence his new career. The obstacles he had to contend against seemed almost insurmountable; but his iron will and steady perseverance overcame them all. The responsibilities he now assumed were arduous and harassing in the extreme, and it is cause of astonishment that he discharged them so as to give such entire satisfaction to the commander-in-chief. The

British lay in snug winter-quarters in Philadelphia, enjoying themselves amid the comforts and luxuries of the capital; while Washington and his band of heroes were quartered in rude and cheerless huts near Valley Forge, where they suffered from cold, want of provisions and many other causes. The enemy made frequent incursions from Philadelphia into the country, to obtain provisions and forage, as well as to strike terror into the minds of the few inhabitants who remained loyal to the cause of the colonies. The country people were also in the daily practice of carrying produce of all kinds into the city, which they sold to the enemy for a high price; and at the same time gave them much valuable information as to the situation of affairs in the surrounding country. These spies, for they were in reality such, informed them who were the most active Whigs, and where they lived; and it was not infrequent that strong parties of the enemy came out from the city in the night, surprised and carried off as prisoners the most useful citizens, besides burning houses, barns, mills, and doing other damage to property. Mills on some of the streams were secretly engaged in grinding grain for the use of the British army, which was conveyed into the city under a strong escort. It was the desire of Washington to break up this dangerous connection between the town and country, and to General Lacey, with his raw militia, was intrusted this important duty. The situation of Washington in winter-quarters, west of the Schuylkill, prevented him from checking these incursions, and, besides, his force was too weak

to spare any part of it for this purpose. His field of operations extended from the Schuylkill to the Delaware; and the district of country between these two rivers was placed under his jurisdiction. His situation, while it was full of responsibility, was at the same time dangerous and delicate. All the surrounding country was much disaffected, and in many parts the inhabitants were open in their adherence to the British. The enemy had declared they would have him dead or alive, and their spies watched him so closely that all his movements were well known to them. The troops he had under him were raw militia, badly armed and equipped, and almost entirely unused to the duties of a soldier; they were slow coming into the field, and often, at the expiration of their period of service, he was left almost without a command. And then, to add to his unpleasant situation, he was often obliged to dismantle the mills, and to destroy the crops and other private property of his relations, friends and neighbors, to prevent them falling into the hands of the enemy. Now when we consider that he was a young man, not yet twenty-three years of age, and without much experience in the world, when he assumed this command, we become sensible to the trying position in which he was placed. He shrunk from no duty, however unpleasant it might be, but carried out every order of Washington in the most decided manner, and with strict impartiality. He passed the winter and spring in scouring the country within the limits of his command, and during this time he was engaged in several dangerous enterprises against the enemy.

Soon after General Lacey assumed the command of his brigade, Washington addressed him the following letter, in the shape of instructions as to the line of duty he was to be employed in. It was dated:

"HEAD-QUARTERS, VALLEY FORGE,
"Jan. 23, 1778.

"SIR:—I received your favor dated the 21st inst. I must request that you will exert yourself to fulfill the intention of keeping a body of troops in the country where you are posted. Protecting the inhabitants is one of the ends designed, and preventing supplies and intercourse with the enemy and city is the other. This, perhaps, with the utmost vigilance cannot be totally effected; but I must entreat you to take every step that may render it possible. As to the reduction of your numbers, I wish you to make timely application to the President of the State, to keep up the necessary force under your command.

"I am well informed that many persons, under the pretence of furnishing the inhabitants of Germantown, and near the enemy's lines, afford immense supplies to the Philadelphia market—a conduct highly prejudicial to us and contrary to every order. It is therefore become proper to make an example of some guilty one, that the rest may expect a like fate should they persist. This I am determined to put into execution; and request you when a suitable object falls into your hands that you will send him here with a witness; or let me know his name, when you shall have power to try, and (if proved guilty) to execute. This you will be pleased to make known to the people, that they

may again have warning. Your want of whiskey I cannot remedy—we are in the same situation here, and nothing effectual can be done until the arrival of the Committee of Congress, whom we expect every day.

"I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

(Signed,) "GEO. WASHINGTON."

General Lacey first established his head-quarters at Graham (or Graeme) Park, situated near the county line, not far from where the Doylestown and Willow Grove turnpike crosses that road. He fixed his depot of provisions and stores at Doylestown, because of the security of the place, where he also stationed a small guard for their protection. He wrote the president of the council from camp, the 24th of January, complaining of the slowness with which the militia came in, and stated that his numbers were not adequate to prevent communication with the city. He says his force was as follows: "About seventy rank and file at his camp at Smithfield, and at the Spring House and Plymouth about three hundred." This was a very small force to watch such an extensive scope of country as was intrusted to him. He considered his situation too much exposed where he was for the strength of his force, and deemed it advisable to move farther into the country, to wait reinforcements. For this purpose he changed his camp to *Rodman's* farm, in Warwick, where he had his head-quarters until about the first of March, when he moved down the York road to the Crooked Billet, now Hatborough, where he encamped.

The camp at "G. Rodman's, Warwick," was on what is now known as the Poor House farm; and the Mr. Rodman mentioned was a sterling patriot of those days, and, like General Lacey, was excommunicated from the Friends' meeting for taking sides with the colonies. He answered Washington's letter of the 23d from Rodman's farm, and mentioned among other things an accident which took place in camp on the 24th. A spark of fire communicated with the cartridges, by which about six thousand were destroyed, some tents and cartridge-boxes consumed, and five men severely burned. He also states in the same letter that the communication with the city was chiefly carried on by women.

Up to the 2d of February, nearly a month after he took the command of the brigade, none of the militia, either from Northumberland, Cumberland, York or Northampton counties, had joined him, and only two horsemen from Philadelphia and Bucks. With this small force he found it impossible to accomplish any thing, and to add to his other causes of trouble, his men were so badly supplied with rations by the proper department, that two-thirds of their time, when not engaged in other duty, was employed in collecting provisions. The want of a properly organized commissariat seems to have been a great drawback upon the efficiency of his operations when he first assumed the command, and the abuses which grew out of it caused much murmuring among the people. Troops when not supplied by the proper State authorities will pillage in spite of all their officers can do, and in

this instance they did not refrain from it. Sometimes parties of militia, with arms in their hands, went through the country without authority and took articles by force, indiscriminately from friend and foe. This conduct rendered the service unpopular with many—they deemed it bad enough to be robbed by their enemies, but entirely insupportable when thus treated by those whom they considered friends and had a right to look to for protection. Of course, General Lacey suffered by this conduct, but as soon as it came to his knowledge he took immediate measures to remedy the evil complained of. This he accomplished by organizing as soon as possible a commissary department, by which means supplies were regularly furnished his command, except now and then, in a case of great necessity, he was obliged to levy contributions upon the inhabitants, but which was always done under orders and by direction of an officer, vouchers being given for whatever was taken. Private pillage by the soldiers was entirely broken up, and the murmurings of the people quieted.

The intercourse between the city and country was kept up, in spite of all the exertions made by General Lacey to put a stop to it, and on the 8th of February Washington wrote him to allow every thing captured going into or coming out of the city, to redound to the benefit of the men, in order to incite them to greater activity; but at the same time the commander-in-chief advised him to move his camp nearer the city, and instead of trusting to fixed guards to keep out constant patroles and scouts in every direction. His force by the 15th of February had dwindled down to sixty men

fit for duty, not more than sufficient to guard his own camp and stores, and the surrounding country was left almost wholly unprotected from the incursions of the enemy. On the night of the 13th a large body of the enemy's horse came as far up the York road as Butler's tavern, now the Willow Grove, thirteen miles from the city. They took Mr. Butler prisoner, thence went to Major Wright's tavern, near Whitemarsh, captured the major and some other persons, and returned in safety. The next night a large body of cavalry and infantry surprised the village of Smithfield, and made some prisoners. On the evening of the 17th Newtown was visited by these marauders, where they took prisoner Major Murray and some of his men, and robbed the fulling-mill at that place of all the cloth that was in it. The news of the descent upon Newtown reached General Lacey the next morning, when he immediately marched his whole disposable force in that direction, hoping to be able to intercept the enemy in their retreat, but before he arrived there he learned they had left the place and returned to Philadelphia. About the 23d he made an attempt, by order of General Washington, to destroy a large quantity of hay at Point-no-Point, which it was feared would fall into the hands of the enemy. He made two attempts to destroy it, both of which failed, because his guide deceived him. He again changed his head-quarters, and on the 3d of March we find him encamped at the Crooked Billet. In the meantime he had been very active in the discharge of his arduous duties, but his usefulness was much impaired by the smallness of his numbers.

It seemed almost impossible to induce the militia to turn out, and those who did join him were mostly without arms, and he had no means of supplying them. About the first of March a large drove of cattle was captured by the enemy, because he had no men to protect them, while they were being driven to Washington's camp.

The reader will be able to judge, from the following letters, of the unpleasant situation in which General Lacey was placed. The first is to General Potter, and is as follows:

"CAMP, CROOKED BILLET,
"March 4th, 1778.

"DEAR GENERAL:—You very well know the situation you left me in, and the declining state of the militia, which at last was reduced so low that I could not, on the greatest emergency, parade more than forty men. In this forlorn condition I thought proper to send all the arms and stores belonging to the brigade to Allentown. The time of these forty was to expire in a few days; and no tidings of a fresh supply near, I expected to be left alone. In this melancholy predicament I moved my little camp to the banks of the Neshaminy, where I could not be easily surprised. But to my comfort, a few days before their time expired, near 400 unarmed men arrived from Cumberland and about 80 from York county. I immediately sent off express after express to forward down some arms, which were deposited at Colonel Antes's; but to my sad misfortune, the whole were unsuccessful. Colonel Antes was from home, and no person left in his room

to officiate. I then detached off wagons, I thought sufficient, to bring the arms to complete my numbers; but the road proved so bad, they only brought three hundred. In the meantime, I picked up one hundred old arms, which had not been moved for want of wagons, and gave them to the men; but near fifty of them were without flints, and not one flint in camp to supply them. The evening my arms arrived, my other little party's time expired. Here I was, in the midst of business, and that all in confusion; Major Cummings, whose business this was to see after, was gone to Lancaster. At this critical moment a large party of cattle was on the way to camp, the drover of which applied to me for a guard; but in my tattered condition, I thought myself unable to supply him. I advised him to keep back in the country, where I thought there was no danger; but he, keeping too low, the cattle were taken by the enemy the next night near Bartholomew's tavern. Many censure me for not sending a guard with them, which I think was out of my power in the condition I then was; for the men had double duty to do for their own safety. From this detail you will be able to see how things have passed since you left me. At this time I am cruelly off for provisions. I keep my men all in one camp as yet.

"I am, dear general, etc.,

(Signed,) "J. LACEY."

The second was addressed to General Armstrong, and dated

"CAMP, CROOKED BILLET,
"March 4th, 1778.

"DEAR GENERAL:—Little did I expect to take the field so soon, when I saw you last; neither did I expect so much trouble was allotted to me as I have found since I have had the command. I do not mean hard fatigue of body, for that, where things go on smoothly, I pride in; but it is the incessant fatigue and anxiety of mind of which I complain. I have been turned out into a wide country to protect its inhabitants, and stop an intercourse with the enemy (which it would require two thousand troops to effect) with only fifty men, which was actually my strength for a long time; and when a reinforcement came, they were helpless, and without arms, and none in camp. It was some time before the arms (which were at Colonel Antes's and at Allentown) could be brought to camp for the want of wagons. While in this awkward situation, a drove of cattle, which was passing through the country, was taken by the enemy, on account of my not being able to provide them with a guard.

"We are sadly off for want of provisions. What we do get is almost carrion, and not our allowance of that.

"I am, dear general, with respect,
"Your most obdt. and humble servant,
(Signed,) "J. LACEY.

"General ARMSTRONG."

The state of affairs described in the foregoing letters seems almost sufficient to have shaken the resolution of any man, or at least to have discouraged him. But it was not so with General Lacey; he was made of

sterner stuff; his soul was fired with a lofty patriotism, and he allowed no discouraging circumstances to come between him and the duty he owed to his country. He labored on unceasingly, and, whether in prosperity or adversity, he was ever the same unwavering and devoted friend to the cause of liberty. If tried by the dangers by which he was surrounded, and the difficulties he had to contend against, he stands forth as true a patriot as was found in the land. He filled up the measure of his duty equal to any officer who served in the armies of the struggling colonies; and the people of his native county and State should be proud and jealous of his memory and reputation.

We make the two following extracts from General Lacey's correspondence, in order to show how general was the disaffection of the people in the region of country embraced within his field of operations. The first is dated March the 4th, and addressed to the president of the council, as follows:

"SIR:—It is distressing to learn the number of people who flock to the enemy with marketing; amongst whom are many young fellows who have fled from their homes to save their fines, and are carrying on a peddling-trade between the city and country. I have taken several of them who were going to the enemy with parcels of meal on their backs. Some of them I am acquainted with, and I do believe they were going to join the enemy."

The second is dated March the 11th, and also addressed to the president of the council. In speaking of scouting around the country, he says:

"As soon as I approach within eight or ten miles of the enemy's lines, the inhabitants, having their horses concealed in by-places, mount them, and taking their way through fields and private paths repair directly to the city with the intelligence that the rebels are in the neighborhood. Not one word of intelligence can we procure from them—not even the directions of the roads."

He rendered himself, by his zeal and activity, particularly obnoxious to the Tories and all other disaffected persons, who endeavored to do him all the injury they possibly could. Charges were made against him to his superiors that he showed partiality, and allowed his own friends and relations to pass to and from the city with impunity, hoping thereby to injure his reputation. But in every case he showed that such charges were false and malicious, and propagated by his enemies. So far from showing any partiality to his own friends, he was often obliged to put in execution the most stringent orders against his Tory relations; and some of them were so much embittered against him, for the strictness with which he discharged his duty, that they never forgave him as long as they lived.

From the Crooked Billet General Lacey with his command, moved down to Whitemarsh, where we find him encamped on the 11th of March. From this place he made a return of the strength of his brigade, as follows:

Present at this place, rank and file..... 399
On command with cattle do. 50

Do. do. with Captain Henderson and Captain Humpheys, in Bucks county	50
At Doylestown, guarding stores	35
Sick	64
On furlough	9
Deserted	9
	616

He remained only a few days in camp at Whitemarsh, when he again moved up toward the Neshaminy in order to protect the mills along that stream, many of which were grinding grain for the army. Some of them had a large stock of grain and flour on hand, and it was feared the enemy might make a sudden foray and destroy them. In order to prevent the cattle, horses and wagons, forage and all kinds of stock falling into the hands of the enemy, Washington determined to have them collected and driven to the American army; giving certificates to the owners, so that the deserving might, at some future day, receive pay. The property of the Tories, in particular, was to be taken care of. For the accomplishment of this object, General Wayne issued an order to General Lacey, dated "Bensalem, March 15, 1778," commanding him to order his troops on this service, and to superintend the execution thereof. This was a delicate duty, for he had to deal with friends and foes alike, but he discharged this, as he did every other duty, to the entire satisfaction of the commander-in-chief.

We insert the following order, because it has refer-

ence to the collection of horses mentioned above, and also mentions certain villainies practiced upon the inhabitants. It is interesting to the people of Bucks county, because of the locality where it was written.

"BRIGADE ORDERS.

"DOYLESTOWN, March 19th, 1778.

"*Parol*, Salem; *Countersign*, Wilmington.

"Officer of the day, to-morrow, Major Mitchell.

"Adjt. of York county, detail 3 captains, 3 sergeants, 4 corporals, 48 privates.

"All horses taken from the inhabitants, not received by Colonel Butler, are to be sent to Zenas Fell's, where a guard is appointed to have the care of them until the owners come and take them away.

"A party of men is to be sent through the neighborhood to search for horses, which it is reported some villains, belonging to the militia, have concealed in order to convey away by stealth, when their time expires. Should any be found so concealed, they are to be brought to camp, with the persons in whose custody they are found. The persons are to be confined; who shall suffer the severest punishment.

"No person whatever is to take any horse, on any pretense, from any of the inhabitants, on the penalty of suffering for their conduct.

"The General expects that neither field nor inferior officers will quarter out of camp.

(Signed) "J. LACEY, Brig. Genl."

About this period the duty also devolved upon Gen-

eral Lacey of arresting several prominent citizens of Bucks county, for their adherence to and holding intercourse with the British. In most cases they were liberated on their parol, being bound, with good securities, in several hundred pounds, not to go out of the county, nor hold communication with the enemy. We do not deem it advisable to mention the names of any of these persons, because their descendants are now living in the county, are people of good standing, and are not responsible for the treason of their ancestors.

On the 19th of March he placed Lieutenant Robert Vanhorn, of Southampton township, Bucks county, in command of a troop of horse, with the following instructions for his guidance:

"CAMP, March 19th, 1778.

"Sir:—You are to proceed with your troop toward the enemy's lines—to keep on the roads leading to Bristol, to Smithfield, the York and the Whitemarsh roads. You will keep constant patrols on these roads, by night and day; and if the enemy should come out, you will immediately send me notice. If your parties should meet with any people going to market, or any persons whatever going to the city, and they endeavor to make their escape, you will order your men to fire upon the villains. You will leave such on the roads, their bodies and their marketing lying together. This I wish you to execute on the first offenders you meet, that they may be a warning to others. You are to let no person whatever go to the city. You are to stay on the lines until further orders. You will send me word of your movements, and what information you

can get of the enemy, every day, by one of the troops.

"I am, sir, your most obdt.,

(Signed) "J. LACEY.

"To Mr. VANHORN,

"Commanding the Light-Horse,"

During this season General Lacey and his small party were very active in scouring the country for many miles around Philadelphia. His force at some times was so much reduced that he was obliged to keep them in one body, and headed them himself, in expeditions against the enemy. He was closely watched by the British and Tories, and, as the spring opened, they were more active in their exertions to capture him. In order to avoid surprise, he frequently changed his camp, and would not remain in some localities more than two or three days. By being thus constantly on his guard, he escaped the parties of the enemy who were sent out to surprise him.

By the end of March, the intercourse with the enemy in Philadelphia had reached such a height, and become so injurious to the cause of the colonies, that it was held in serious consideration to depopulate the whole country between the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers, for fifteen miles around the city, by compelling the inhabitants, by force, to remove back beyond that distance. A conference was held on this subject, at the Spring House, on the 23d instant, between Generals McIntosh and Lacey, and several field-officers of the army. They agreed upon the benefit the cause of Independence would derive from the measure, and General McIntosh was authorized to lay the plan before

General Washington, on his return to head-quarters. General Lacey also addressed him on the same subject, on the 29th, in which communication appears the following paragraph, showing the bad condition of things.

"Every kind of villainy is carried on by the people near the enemy's lines; and, from their general conduct, I am induced to believe but few real friends to America are left within ten miles of Philadelphia. Those who have appeared the least active, have either been made prisoners by the enemy, or compelled to fly to some other part of the country for safety. I have a number of notorious offenders now confined, who were taken by my parties, going to market."

When the people in the district to be depopulated heard what was contemplated, they were much alarmed, and sent two deputies to General Lacey, whom he designates as "R. V." and "Mr. P.," to lay their protest before him. They protested strongly against the measure, and said teams enough to remove one-third of their effects could not be procured in all that country; that it was cruel and distressing to send them away from their homes, and, if he would allow them to remain on their farms, they would submit to every insult from the two armies. Washington, in reply, said "the measure is rather desirable than practicable," and, although he was aware of the good effect it would produce, if it could be carried out, he thought the obstacles too many and too serious to give his assent to the measure proposed.

In his various scouts General Lacey had made sev-

eral prisoners, principally persons who were carrying marketing to the enemy, and some who had acted as guides to them in their incursions into the country. By direction of the Commander-in-Chief, many of these were tried by court-martial, some found guilty and sentenced to be executed. One notorious offender, called "J. B——," an inhabitant of Smithfield, Philadelphia county, was sentenced to be hanged, but escaped from the provost guard on the morning of the 20th of April, and went over to the enemy. He mentions two other persons as notorious characters—called "J. M'——" and "J. W——," both of whom were tried. The sentence of many was afterwards remitted, and they were sent to the Lancaster jail, to be placed at hard labor. He convened a court-martial, of which Lieutenant-Colonel Sidman was president, at North Wales, on the 21st of April, to try the officer who suffered the said "J. B——" to escape, and after a full hearing he was found guilty of the charge, and sentenced to be cashiered for such notorious neglect of duty. He was a captain in the Northampton county militia, and was dismissed from the camp, in accordance with the finding of the court. This severity was deemed advisable, because of late several prisoners had been suffered to escape, and it was thought necessary to make an example of some one who neglected his duty. On the 9th of April he writes to General Washington from Doylestown, and reports a severe skirmish between some of his troops stationed at Smithfield, and a large party of the British. The enemy came up on the morning of the 8th, with a large force,

and attacked Captain Humphrey's command, consisting of a small party of continentals, before daylight. They were supposed to be three hundred strong, and took the Americans entirely by surprise. Captain Humphrey narrowly escaped being captured, as he and some of his men ran out the back as the British entered the front door. He collected a small party hastily, and opened a severe fire upon the enemy, who, after skirmishing awhile, retired with considerable loss. The loss of the Americans was one killed, two wounded and one officer taken prisoner. The same morning a party of his scouts fell in with a body of the enemy, on the York road, near Doctor Benneville's, and suffered a loss of five killed and two badly wounded. About the same time, the enemy made an incursion up to Bristol and captured Colonel Penrose and some other officers, and returned again to the city without meeting with any opposition. After General Lacey discharged the Northampton county militia, whose time of service had expired, he moved with his whole force toward Philadelphia, on learning that a body of the enemy had filed off from the Germantown road toward the York road. He marched as far as Edge Hill, when finding the enemy had returned to the city, he moved his little command up the York road to the Billet, where he encamped. He sent an order for the baggage-wagons he had left at North Wales to join him at the Billet the same night; but failing to start until the next morning, they were met on their way down by a party of the enemy's horse by which they sustained a loss of one wagon, and eight

horses, besides having several men severely wounded, and five or six made prisoners.

The time of two-thirds of his men was now about to expire, and from the smallness of the numbers left him, he found it absolutely necessary to draw in his scouts and to keep his force in one body. Two classes of the militia, from the counties of Philadelphia, Bucks, York, and Cumberland, were ordered into the field to supply the place of those whose time of service had expired, but they did not reach camp until the others had left. From this cause his force had dwindled down, on the 27th day of April, to fifty-three men fit for duty; and in reply to General Armstrong, who wrote him on the 21st, making inquiries about his numbers, and other matters of interest connected with the service, he makes the following statement of his forces for some time past. He says:

"My numbers, after General Potter left me, decreased every day, until they were reduced to the amount mentioned in my former letter. On the 24th of February, my returns from York and Cumberland amounted to four hundred and fifty, rank and file, fit for duty; March 4th, I had two hundred and seventy-eight present, fit for duty, one hundred and twenty-four on command; March 21st, three hundred and fifteen present fit for duty, forty-seven on command; March 26th, one hundred and sixty-two present fit for duty, one hundred and forty-eight on command; April 6th, one hundred and fifty-eight present fit for duty, one hundred and ten on command; April 19th, two hundred and fifteen present fit for duty, thirty-six

on command; April 27th, fifty-three present fit for duty, none on command.

"This is the true state of my brigade at these different times, except a party of horse from Bucks and Philadelphia counties, of between fifteen and twenty, whose times have all expired, and who have left me."

The numbers seem very small, indeed, for the amount of duty imposed upon them. They had to watch the five main roads leading into the city, with a detachment for head-quarters, and another to guard the stores at Doylestown; besides frequent scouts had to be sent off in various directions on extra duty.

CHAPTER IV.

AT the conclusion of the last chapter, we left General Lacey, with the main body of his troops, in camp at the Billet, which place he made his headquarters. Here he was attacked, on the morning of the first day of May, at daylight, by a large body of the enemy, suffered a considerable loss in killed, wounded and prisoners, and was obliged to retreat some distance up the country.

The Crooked Billet, as the place was then called, now known by the name of Hatborough, was at that time a small village of about a dozen or fifteen houses, situate on the main road (the York road) leading from Philadelphia to New York, and about sixteen miles from the former city. The American troops were encamped in or near a large wood at the upper end of the village, on the farm of Samuel Irvine, and now owned by the estate of John Beans, deceased. In his front it extended some three or four hundred yards along the York road, and a greater distance to the east, containing about twenty-five acres. In

his rear there was an open cultivated country more than half a mile, to the county line, with a small body of timber about midway to that road. General Lacey was quartered in a stone house, about three hundred yards in the rear of his encampment, on the opposite side of the road. It was then owned by a man named Gilbert, but now belongs to John M. Hogeland. There is some difference of opinion as to the house which Lacey was quartered in; some contending it was that of Asa Comly, some distance higher up the road, and then owned by John Tompkins. But from the most reliable information we have been able to obtain, as well as the situation of the premises, we feel confident he was quartered in the house of Mr. Hogeland. The wood in front of the encampment still shows traces of spoliation by the troops, in order to obtain fuel; the new growth of trees, in the place of those cut down, being much smaller than in other parts of the wood. He was joined the evening before the attack by a body of militia, without arms, who fared badly the next day. The exact number of the Americans has never been rightly known, but is supposed not to have exceeded four hundred in all, who were raw militia. General Lacey took the necessary measures to prevent a surprise, and if his orders had been carried out by those whose duty it was, he would not have been found by the enemy unprepared to meet them. The evening before he gave orders for the patrols, under two commissioned officers, of whom Lieutenant Neilson was one, to leave the camp between two and three o'clock the next morning,

scour the country toward the enemy's lines, and report to him the first intimation of their approach. They did not leave camp, however, until near day light, and when they met the enemy neglected to give the alarm. Under these circumstances the Americans were taken entirely by surprise.

The commander-in-chief of the British army had, for some time, deemed it of importance to attack and disperse the force of General Lacey, which had, during the winter and spring, done them much harm, by stopping the communication between the city and country, and preventing people carrying their produce to market. Major Simcoe, the commander of the "Queen's Rangers," an active refugee corps which had made many incursions into the surrounding country, had it in contemplation to surprise Lacey's camp. He laid his plans before Colonel Balfour, and asked his co-operation. Spies were immediately sent into Lacey's neighborhood, and all his movements closely watched; every information which they obtained being immediately communicated to these British officers. In a few days after their first interview, Balfour informed Simcoe that General Lacey was to be at the Billet, with his corps, on the first day of May, and furnished him such other information as would be of service to him. Simcoe laid this intelligence before General Howe, who approved his plans and gave him permission to attack the Americans; and, from his superior knowledge of the country and the roads, upon him devolved the duty of making the necessary arrangements to insure success. His

plan was, to march with the Queen's Ranger's, and attack General Lacey on the left and rear, and thus cut off his communication with the upper country; while another body of British troops should ambuscade themselves in a wood, on the road from the Billet to the Horsham meeting-house, which runs in the direction of the Valley Forge. It was supposed, if Lacey should be defeated, he would march toward the main army, and that this ambuscade, placed in the wood for that purpose, would effectually cut off his retreat Simcoe was to begin the attack, and, when the firing of the Rangers should be heard in the rear, another body was to move up in front, thus placing the Americans between two fires; and, acting in concert, it was supposed they would be able to accomplish their object without much difficulty. In addition to the Queens' Rangers, under Simcoe, there was selected for this enterprise a large detachment of light infantry and cavalry, the whole under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Abercrombie. Spare horses were led, in order to mount the infantry, if necessary for greater expedition. Having made all the preliminary arrangements, the morning of the first day of May was fixed upon as the time for attack, and the troops ordered to hold themselves in readiness.

The British troops left Philadelphia the afternoon before, under the direction of guides who were well acquainted with the country. They marched out the Second Street road, and up the Middle road to the village of Huntingdon, where the force separated.

The main body, composed of the light infantry and most of the cavalry, commanded by Abercrombie in person, struck across to the York road, and so on up to Horsham, in order to form the proposed ambuscade, and also attack Lacey in front. Simcoe continued his march up the Middle road, occasionally making a detour to avoid such places as Lacey's men might chance to be at, thus prolonging the distance he had to march. He turned to the left into the Byberry road, along which he marched to what is now known as Lloyd's Corner, when he again changed his direction, by turning into the road which runs from the Willow Grove to the county line. At the first cross-roads, where Archibald Banes used to live, he again turned to the left, and came out into the county line a short distance above the eight-square school-house. Just above this point he struck across the fields, on the farm of Isaac Boileau, the nearest way to the Billet. The instructions to Captain Kerr's division, which marched with Major Simcoe, were to seize and barricade Lacey's quarters, and hold them as a rallying point, in case of any discomfiture. They were exceedingly anxious to capture Lacey, and placed spies in the apple-trees around his quarters to watch his movements; but, fortunately, he escaped without being discovered. Simcoe, during the night, fell in with Captain Thomas's company of armed refugees, which he would certainly have mistaken for Americans, and attached them, had he not received information about twilight that they were in the neighborhood. But for this knowledge, a serious

episode to the British might have happened. Both parties marched as rapidly as possible, in order to reach their destination while under cover of darkness, and commence the attack at or near the same time. Simcoe marched with such caution, that he escaped all Lacey's patrols; but daylight appeared when he was yet some distance from the American camp. The officer who commanded the party in ambush met one of the patrols within two miles of Lacey's camp, who, when fired upon, fled in a contrary direction. The patrol which left camp about daylight was divided into three parts; that under Lieutenant Neilson took the right hand road from the Billet, leading to Horsham, and on which the ambush was placed. After proceeding about a mile and a half, they first saw the enemy's light-horse, when they took post in a wood to fire upon them when they should come within reach. Soon they saw a party of foot following, when Lieutenant Neilson ordered a soldier, named John Morrow, to return to camp and give the alarm. He did so, and when he arrived there he found the men already paraded behind the camp, and fell into ranks with them; he was too late to save them from surprise. Another scout, which went in a different direction, was commanded by Ensign Laughlin. They marched about two miles without discovering any thing of the enemy; when they returned and were close to the camp when they first heard the firing. Abercrombie, fearing he should not be in time to support Simcoe, detached the cavalry and mounted infantry to the place of ambuscade, in

advance, and with the main body marched up the York road, to attack the Americans in front. From the manner in which Lacey was surrounded, Abercrombie must have detached a party up the Easton road to turn his right flank and fall upon his rear, in concert with the Queen's Rangers. They propably came into the York road where the county line crosses it, and were the cavalry which attacked him on the left flank, soon after he commenced his retreat. He mentions, in his dispatch to General Armstrong, that one party of the enemy passed the cross-roads in his rear before his scout got there.

The first intimation General Lacey had of the approach of the enemy was about daylight in the morning, when they were within about two hundred yards of his camp. He was in bed at the time, and had barely time to dress, mount his horse and join his men, before they were within musket-shot of his quarters. He discovered the enemy in front and rear, near the same time, who opened a fire upon him, some being sheltered behind fences and in houses, His situation was a critical one, and as there was no time left for speculation as to the course he should pursue, he was obliged to act upon the emergency of the occasion. Seeing himself almost surrounded, and the enemy's force much superior to his own, he deemed it injudicious to make a stand against them, and therefore ordered a retreat. He moved in columns to the left, in the direction of a wood, with his wagons following in his rear, across open fields and in full view of the enemy, who were in pursuit. He

relates that when he emerged into the open fields, and a large body of the enemy's horse appeared in front, his men gave him an anxious look, as much as to ask him what they should do. He told them to "deliver their fire and push on." After marching a short distance, his flanking parties first began to exchange shots with the enemy, which grew warmer and warmer as they advanced, and soon he was hotly engaged. He moved on across the fields, in tolerable order, until he reached the wood, where he was obliged to make a stand, to open his way, for by this time all the parties of the enemy had come up, and now attacked him on all sides. In his report of the action to Washington, he says; "I kept moving on till I made the wood, when a party of both horse and foot came up the Byberry road, and attacked my right flank—the party from the Billet fell upon my rear—the horse from the rear of my camp came upon my left flank, and a body of horse appeared directy in front." The enemy now began to concentrate all their force upon the wood, and being still much exposed, and having suffered considerable loss, General Lacey thought it would be safer to move on, which he did with the loss of all his baggage, which fell into the enemy's hands. It was Simcoe with his rangers and cavalry who appeared on Lacey's right flank and front, about the time he reached the wood. When he had quitted the main road and struck across the fields, to march directly to the Billet, and was informing the officers of the plan of attack, he heard firing in the direction of Abercombie's detach-

ment, and exclaimed, "The dragoons have discovered us," and marched forward at a rapid pace to join in the action. He came upon the right flank of the retreating Americans, as it has been already mentioned, in his march intercepting small parties of the flying militiamen, who were mostly killed. While he pushed on for the main body of the Americans, he dispatched thirty dragoons to intercept the baggage of General Lacey, which they succeeded in doing, as it was crossing the fields. As the Americans were marching through the wood Major Simcoe endeavored, by a *ruse de guerre*, to induce them to lay down their arms. He rode up within hailing distance, and commanded them to surrender. As they did not stop, he next gave the commands, in a loud tone, "make ready"—"present"—"fire"—hoping to deceive them into the belief that he had a large body of troops with him. In this he was disappointed; they moved on as before, and paid no other attention to him than to bow their heads at the word—"fire." They continued to retreat, skirmishing as they marched, for nearly two miles, the British hanging upon their flanks and rear, and now and then a man falling—killed or wounded. They passed across the farm of Thomas Craven, now owned by Mr. Finney, thence through what is now the village of Johnsville, in Warminster township, Bucks county, and so on nearly to Hart's Corner, on the Bristol road, where they suddenly turned to the left into a wood, and thus escaped the pursuit. Thence they struck across the country to the York rord, which they came into just below the Cross Roads,

now Hartsville, and moved down toward the Billet, hoping to find the enemy, in the hour of victory, off their guard, and thus be able to gain some advantage over them. They, however, found upon their arrival at the scene of action that the enemy had retired, carrying with them most of their killed and wounded. The British followed the retreating Americans until they made the sudden turn to the left, when they gave up the pursuit and returned to the field to gather up the spoils and prepare to return to the city.

The enemy behaved in the most cruel and inhuman manner to our wounded men, whom they found lying on the field, many of whom they mangled shockingly and burnt in buckwheat straw. The latter circumstance, for the sake of humanity and the credit of the English name, we would fain disbelieve, but there is such undoubted evidence to sustain it, that we are fully convinced of its truth. On the farm of Thomas Craven, in a field near the county line, was a large heap of buckwheat straw. Garret Kroeson, deceased, who then lived in the neighborhood, says a skirmishing party of Americans, much fatigued, crept into this straw about sunrise in the morning, when a Tory who knew their secret resting place, informed the British. They set fire to the straw while the Americans were asleep, burnt some to death on the spot, and others were so badly burned they died in a short time. They also set fire to the wounded, many of whom had dragged themselves to the straw for shelter, while they were yet alive, and caused them to expire in the most excrutiating agony. We have abundant

proof of this. General Lacey, in his letter to General Armstrong, of the date of the 7th of May, speaks of this circumstance in the following manner: "Many of the unfortunate who fell into the merciless hands of the British, were more cruelly and inhumanly butchered. Some were set on fire with buckwheat straw, and others had their clothes burnt on their backs. Some of the surviving sufferers say they saw the enemy set fire to the wounded while yet alive, who struggled to put it out but were too weak, and expired under this torture. I saw those lying in the buckwheat straw—they made a most melancholy appearance. Others I saw, who, after being wounded with a ball, had received near a dozen wounds with cutlasses and bayonets. I can find as many witnesses to the proof of these cruelties as there were people on the spot, and that was no small number who came as spectators." The loss of the Americans was twenty-six killed, and eight or ten wounded, most of whom fell while marching across the open fields; several prisoners were taken, but it is not known how many. The loss of the British could never be ascertained, as they carried the killed and wounded with them to the city—it must, however have been considerable. One field officer is supposed to have fallen, and another officer was severely wounded in the knee, near the house of Thomas Craven, into which he was carried. Major Simcoe admits that some of his rangers were wounded, as was also the horse of his orderly hussar. He likewise mentions that the shoe-buckles of one Captain McGill probably saved the life of that officer. General

Lacey states that he captured two of their horses, and that five were left dead on the field. Of the Americans, two officers of the patrols were killed and also a Captain Downey, who was horribly mangled, and whose obituary notice we insert. The baggage captured from the Americans, was taken to Philadelphia and sold, and the proceeds divided among the men of the expedition. It yielded one dollar to each man.

The following obituary notice of Captain Downey appeared in the Pennsylvania Packet, in May, 1778:

"PLUMSTEAD, BUCKS COUNTY, MAY 4th, 1778.

"Among the slain near the Crooked Billet, on Friday the first instant, fell the gallant Captain Jno. Downey, late school master in Philadelphia, whose worth entitles him to a place in the annals of America. He took an active and early part in our struggle for liberty. He went as a volunteer to Jersey last winter was a year, where he behaved gallantly in the battles of Trenton and Princeton. He being chosen captain of a company of Philadelphia militia, served his tour of duty, two months, last summer, at Billingsport, when, on account of his superior knowledge of mathematics, the Executive Council employed him to make a military survey of the river Delaware, which he performed with great exactness. Since which time he has performed many very important services to his country, a love to which prompted him to attempt any thing which promised its welfare. He lately acted as an assistant commissary, and in this capacity was with our brave militia when attacked last Friday. From his known readiness to fight and bleed for his country, it is more than probable when the attack began he made the attempt to join his countrymen when he was shot through the shoulder, and that he lay in

his blood until the enemy returned, when they dispatched him in a cruel manner, for his body was found with one of his hands almost cut off, his head slashed in several places, his skull cut through, his brains coming out at his nose and scattered all around. He was an enlightened patriot, an affectionate friend, a gallant soldier, a fond husband and an indulgent parent. He had no inheritance to leave, as his little property was left in Philadelphia; but he has left a sorrowful widow, and five helpless children, in very indigent circumstances. They are worthy the notice of the charitable."

The dead were collected and buried in one grave, near where they fell, in a field along the county line, and a short distance above Craven's Corner. The wounded were carried to the house of Thomas Craven, near by, where they were well taken care of, and remained until they recovered, or were able to be removed to their own homes. After General Lacey had paid the last sad rites of humanity to the dead, and had his wounded made comfortable, he took up the line of march for the Cross-Roads, now Hartsville, where he encamped on the north bank of Neshaminy creek, which he considered a very safe position, and of easy defense.

When the British returned from the pursuit, they rode up to several houses in the village and asked for bread and cheese, but did not tarry a long time, from fear that the Americans might rally and attack them. They plundered some of the houses, and spread great consternation among the inhabitants. A small party of them went to the house of David

Marple, a very aged man, and grandfather of Col. David Marple, of Warminster township, Bucks county, and ordered him and his family to catch the chickens for them and have them cooked. He told them he was unable to do it, when they excused him, and ordered his sons and daughters to catch them, which they were obliged to do. They even compelled them to take the setting hens from their nests.

The last British soldier was killed in a wood a short distance above what was then known as Hart's Corner, on the east side of the Bristol road. He was chasing an American named Vandyke, and had come within a few yards of him, while running through the wood. He snapped one pistol at him, which missed fire. Vandyke, in his alarm, seems not to have recollected that he carried a loaded musket on his shoulder, but was retreating as rapidly as possible, with a fair prospect of having his brains blown out by his pursuer. When the dragoon was about drawing his second pistol, it occurred to the American that his gun was loaded, and might in this critical posture of affairs do him some service, Thereupon, without any delay, he took deliberate aim at the Englishman and shot him dead; then mounted his horse and rode away to join the main body of Americans. This incident used to be related by Captain Baird, now deceased, who was an officer in the action, and we think an eyewitness to the affair.

At this period, there lived in the neighborhood of the Billet two men named Van Buskirk, both of whom bore the title of Captain; one was noted for being a

staunch Whig, and the other was quite as violent a Tory. The British knew only of the Whig, and had long been anxious to capture him, as he had made himself very obnoxious by his activity in the cause of the colonies. While they were burning the buckwheat straw, many of the neighbors collected there, to see what was going on, and among the number was the Tory Captain Van Buskirk. He was known to those present, and some one of them called him by name. A British officer hearing this, immediately asked him if he was Captain Van Buskirk. He replied that he was, no doubt feeling pleassd that he was thus noticed, and looked for some compliment for his services to King George. Alas! the poor man was most sadly mistaken, for he was immediately arrested and placed in irons, being mistaken for the other captain of the same name. He asserted his innocence again and again, and assured them he was the wrong person, and not the Whig Van Buskirk, whom they wanted. But his protestations had no other effect than to raise a laugh at his expense; they could not be caught in any such trap as that, in order to allow an *arch-rebel* to escape, and therefore they held on to him. His neighbors smiled but said nothing in his behalf—thinking the joke was entirely too good an one to be rectified. They hurried him off to Philadelphia with them, where they kept him in jail for some time, and treated him very badly. At last some persons in the city, who knew him, interested themselves in his behalf, and convinced his captors he was the wrong person, and not the one they wanted. Upon this they set him at liberty, and made many

apologies for the injury they had done him. But it did not cure the wound. He returned home, and ever after was as stanch a Whig as his namesake. The medicine had worked a radical cure.

Soon after the British had turned into the cross-road at Lloyd's Corner, they stopped at a farm house—lately owned by Captain Kelley of the navy—and roused up the inmates, to procure a guide to show them the nearest way to the Billet; they were behind their time, and were in great haste. A young man, living with the family, put his head out the window and demanded their business. They told him he must show them the road to the Billet, and ordered him to dress and come down immediately. He refused to go, until they threatened to shoot him if he did not comply with their demand. He told them if he should go, and the Americans caught him, they would certainly kill him, and that he could only show them the way on condition that they would furnish him with a fast horse, to enable him to escape if his countrymen should attempt to capture him. This they agreed to, and mounted him on a fleet animal and placed him at the head of the column. He soon found the horse he rode was a very fast one, and watching his opportunity, when he was a short distance in advance, put whip to him and made his escape. They fired their pistols at him, which only increased his speed, but they did not dare pursue him, for fear of falling into an ambush of the Americans; he therefore got off without any difficulty. This was related to the writer by the late Judge Watts of Bucks county, who saw the man, about daylight,

riding along the road which runs from the county line to the Bristol road at the top of his speed. He was without hat or coat; and my informant did not know what was the matter then, but learned the cause of it in a few days. When Judge Watts saw him he was passing through what is now the village of Davisville. An officer of Simcoe's column left his horse at the house of Isaac Boileau, a short distance above the eight-square schoolhouse, on the county line, in charge of a negro slave named Moore, and threatened terrible things against him if he should let any of the "*Rebels*" take him before his return. In a short time a retreating American, hard pressed, came that way, and demanded the horse; the negro refused to give him up until the soldier made some demonstration of enforcing his modest request, when he surrendered him. The American mounted him and rode away across the fields. Not long afterward the English returned, and the officer came to inquire for his horse, which he saw was gone. The poor black was much alarmed, and as well as he could told him the American had forced him to give the horse to him. The Englishman was in a terrible rage when he learned what had taken place, and immediately put the negro under arrest, and carried him along with the troops; but he was released after traveling a few miles, and returned home in safety. This was related to the writer by an eyewitness to the transaction.

The last American killed was at Hart's Corner. In company with another man, named Cooper, he had retreated along the road which runs from Johnsville to

the Bristol road. The main body was in advance of them, and they were sitting side by side on the fence at the end of the road, resting themselves before going into the wood, when two British dragoons, unobserved by them, raised the hill at the house in which General White used to live, and approached within range of their carbines. One of them fired his piece at them, the ball from which struck Cooper's companion, who fell off the fence, dead. Cooper jumped over into the wood, and escaped. The blood remained on the fence for many years.

Isaac Tompkins relates that he was a small boy at the time of the battle, but remembers the day very distinctly. He then lived with his father, in the building in which Mr. Fretz now keeps store in Hatborough. He had just got up, about sunrise in the morning, when his sister, who had been sent into the garden to plant cucumbers, came running into the house shouting "the British are coming," when they looked out and saw a large body of red-coated dragoons marching up the road. These were part of Abercrombie's command, who made the attack in front.

The late Jonathan Delany used to mention a circumstance he witnessed. He was living at the time in Frankford, through which one detachment of the British troops passed on their return to the city. Among the prisoners was an old man, who wore on his shoes a pair of large silver buckles. They attracted the attention of a soldier, who, as they were marching through the street, left the ranks, and stooped down to tear them off. The old man, who was not disposed to be

robbed of his property, struck the thief on the head with his fist, and knocked him over on to the ground. The other soldiers who witnessed the act gave a loud shout in approval of the prisoner's courage.

Nathan Marple, father of Col. Marple, was then a lad of about sixteen years of age, and lived with his father in the Billet. He heard the firing early in the morning, and supposing Lacey's men were getting ready to drill, started across the field to go to them. He had not got far, however, when he saw the British dragoons riding across the fields toward the camp; they had cloaks on, and he could not see their red-coats. He took warning at what he saw, and returned home. He further relates, that he saw an officer ride some distance in front of his men, halt, rise up in his stirrups, and look all around as if he were reconnoitering. He immediately heard the report of a gun, and saw the officer fall to the ground. The horse, instead of running away as might be supposed at the loss of his rider, wheeled around and cantered back to his company.

Mr. Safety Maghee, of Northampton township, Bucks county, a gentleman who died a few years ago nearly ninety-six years of age, gave us the following as his recollection of the action at the Crooked Billet. He says:—

"In 1778 I was living with my uncle, Thomas Folwell, in Southampton township, in the house where Horatio G. Yerkes now lives. On the morning of the battle of the Billet, now Hatborough, I heard the firing very distinctly, and a black man named Harry

and myself concluded we would go and see what was going on. I was then about thirteen years old. We started from the house and went directly toward where the firing was. When we came near where Johnsville now stands, we heard a heavy volley there, which brought us to a halt. The firing was in the woods. The British were in pursuit of our militia and chased them along the road that leads from Johnsville to the Bristol road, and also through the fields from the Street road to the Bristol road. They overtook the militia in the woods at the corner of the Street road and the one that leads across to the Bristol road. When the firing had ceased, we continued on and found three wounded militia-men near the wood; they appeared to have been wounded by the sword, and were much cut and hacked. When we got to them they were groaning heavily. They died in a little while, and I understood they were buried on the spot. They appeared to be Germans. We then passed on, and in a field near by we saw two horses lying dead—they were British. One of them was shot in the head, and the gun had been put so near that the hair was scorched. While we were on the field, Harry picked up a cartouch box that had been dropped or torn off the wearer. Shortly after, we met some of the militia returning, and when they saw the black fellow with the cartouch box, they became very much enraged, and accused him of robbing the dead and took it away from him. These dead horses were on the farm of Col. Joseph Hart. Soon after this we returned home. The last man was killed on the

Bristol road, at the end of the road that comes across from Johnsville. A British officer who was wounded in the battle was taken to the house of Samuel Irvin who lived near by. His wounds were dressed there, and he afterward returned with the troops to Philadelphia. This affair created a good deal of excitement in the neighborhood."

The news of the battle spread far and near over the country in a few hours, and many of the inhabitants were so much alarmed they hardly dared venture from home that day, until they were assured the British had returned to Philadelphia. A day or two before, a child of Samuel Flack, who lived in Doylestown, and kept tavern where Corson's hotel now stands, had died, and was to be buried that day at Neshaminy. The people in the neighborhood were so much afraid that only four persons would venture with the corps to the place of burial—two young men and two young women, one of whom was a Miss Mary Doyle, afterward a Mrs. Mitchell, and mother of Mrs. Nathaniel Cornell, of Doylestown. They were all mounted on horseback, the men being armed, and carrying the coffin; and they obtained the fastest horses they could, so they might escape from the enemy if they should be pursued. When they reached the burying ground, the two young men dismounted and buried the body, while the young women remained on horseback, to be ready to fly at the first alarm; after this duty was performed they remounted and hurried home as rapidly as possible. They could see the smoke from the burning buckwheat-straw as they rode along.

Many have blamed General Lacey for the affair at the Billet; and those who were hostile to the cause of the colonies endeavored to injure his reputation, by making him responsible for the loss he sustained. This attempt, however, failed, and his conduct received the approbation of his superiors. His situation was truly a critical one, and nothing but the coolest judgment, and most determined bravery of himself and men, saved them from an entire defeat, and the capture of his whole force. Throughout the whole affair he shows himself to have been a man of more than ordinary capacity for command, and justly covered himself with fresh laurels. In no wise is he answerable for the sudden surprise. The place he selected for his camp was an eligible one, and of some natural defense; and he took every precaution the evening before to obtain the earliest information of the approach of the enemy. The officers to whom he had intrusted the duty of patroling the roads leading to his camp disobeyed his orders, and instead of being out upon duty were in camp; and afterward, when they did discover the enemy in time to alarm the camp, they neglected to do so, and hence the surprise was complete. The most vigilant officers are liable thus to be deceived by their subalterns, and it would be unjust indeed to blame the commander for such inattention to duty on the part of his subordinates. From this cause General Wayne was surprised at the Paoli, the night after the battle of Brandywine; and many other distinguished commanders have suffered severe losses in the same manner. The only good

rule by which to judge military officers is by what they accomplish; and applying this standard to General Lacey his actions will bear the closest scrutiny. His camp of four hundred men was surprised and surrounded, at daylight, by a force of more than three times as many British troops—he had raw militia—the enemy were veterans, inured to war. In spite of this disparity of force and circumstances, he formed his little Spartan band into columns, and cut his way through the enemy, with the small loss of only about thirty-five men killed and wounded. He had to march a considerable distance across on open country, and fought every foot of the way, being pressed at the same time in front and rear, and on both flanks. We are astonished he was able to extricate himself at all from his perilous situation; and it seems quite like a miracle he did not fall into the enemy's hands with his whole force. So highly was his conduct appreciated by the Executive Council, that Timothy Matlack, Esq., the Secretary, wrote him on the 16th of May to the following effect: "Your conduct is highly approved; and your men have justly acquired great reputation by their bravery." This commendation had some meaning; and, in addition, all the well wishers of the cause of liberty applauded the conduct of himself and men. The enemy also tacitly acknowledged his superior skill and courage, for Lieut. Col. Simcoe, in his account of the expedition, says they failed in the object they had in view, which was to capture General Lacey and his whole force. Hence, the British, in reality, suffered a defeat, although they

remained masters of the field. With this evidence before them, who will deny to General Lacey great honor as a brave and skillful officer?

As soon as General Lacey was fixed in his new camp at the Neshaminy, he ordered a general court-martial to try the officers of his scouts for disobedience of orders and neglect of duty on the morning of the surprise and attack at the Billet. It convened at camp, May the 4th, 1778, and was composed of twelve officers; Colonel Smith was president, and William Findley, afterward a distinguished politician and governor of the State, was the judge-advocate. The two officers tried, were Lieutenant Neilson and Ensign Laughlin: the former was found guilty of the charge laid against him, and sentenced to be cashered, which was carried into effect; the latter was acquitted and ordered to his regiment for duty. Besides these two officers several persons were tried before the same court-martial, for various offenses—some being soldiers, and others citizens who were charged with holding intercourse with the enemy. Several were found guilty, some of whom were sentenced to be whipped, and others to be confined in the jail at Lancaster.

General Lacey continued his camp at the Neshaminy, near the Cross-Roads, until he was relieved from the command. General Washington writes him from the Valley Forge, on the 11th day of May, announcing to him the return of General Potter from the westward, who was appointed to supercede him in the command of the Pennsylvania militia, and requests that he will remain with him a few days, to give him some knowl-

edge of the roads and make him acquainted with those on whom he could rely as guides, for intelligence, etc. Lacey, as he was desired by the commander-in-chief, remained a few days in camp, with General Potter, to give him the necessary information to enable him to operate with effect in the surrounding country. Gen. Potter shortly afterward marched with the militia nearer to Philadelphia, and left Col. Watts, from Cumberland, in command of the troops in Bucks county. Lacey left camp the 5th of June, after returning thanks to the troops that had been under his command for their good conduct, and retired to his home in Buckingham. Although he had now no command according to his rank, he was as active as ever in the cause of his country. He continued to discharge the important duties of sub-lieutenant of the county of Bucks, and exerted himself to keep up an efficient organization of the militia, and also to rouse up his fellow-citizens to sustain the cause of their country against the common enemy.

In the spring of 1778, the British government began to fear for the safety of the royal army quartered in Philadelphia, and therefore ordered the English commander to evacuate that city and retire to New York. They crossed the Delaware into New Jersey, the 18th day of June, and took up the line of march for Amboy. Washington, from his winter-quarters at the Valley Forge, closely watched the movements of the enemy, and, as soon as they made preparations to pass the Delaware, put his army in march to intercept them as they crossed the Jerseys. The more effectually to

harass the retreating British, Washington called out a large body of the militia of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, to hang upon their rear; and requested Colonel Kirkbride, the lieutenant of Bucks, to have those from that county ready for this duty. For this purpose General Lacey addressed a circular to each one of the colonels of his brigade, urging them to assemble their regiments as soon as possible, and march in pursuit of the enemy. He met them at Doylestown, the place of rendezvous, and did all in his power to hasten their departure for the scene of action; but we have not been able to obtain any information as to the service he or his brigade performed at this trying period in our revolutionary struggle. In the summer of '78, while he was engaged in the arduous military duties that devolved upon him, he received a civil appointment of responsibility from the Executive Council. It was that of one of the commissioners for the county of Bucks, on confiscated estates; who were required by law to seize and dispose of the "personal estate and effects of those who had abandoned their familes or habitations and joined the army of the king of Great Britain." He continued to discharge the duties of this appointment until the fall, when he was elected a member of the Assembly. He took his seat in November, and made an active and useful member of the Legislature. During this time he applied himself closely to his studies, thus endeavoring to make up the deficiency of his youth; but he allowed nothing to interfere with his official duties, and it was only during his leisure moments that he pursued his studies.

About this period a fierce party warfare arose in the State in regard to a change in the Constitution of 1776, which had many bitter opponents at the time of its adoption. The parties at this day were divided on this question; and so bitter were many of the opponents of the Constitution, that they even refused to accept office under it. This was the case with General Cadwallader, who refused the commission of brigadier-general in the Pennsylvania militia. He thought the Constitution was not liberal enough in its provisions, and hence opposed its adoption; which opposition was continued until they succeeded in having a new one formed, in 1790. The people of Bucks county were opposed to any change, and appear to have had a good deal of feeling on the subject. Soon after General Lacey took his seat as a member of the Assembly, he was written to by one George Wall, of Solebury, who says, among other things, that he is well informed, "if any member (meaning those from Bucks) attempts such a measure, he will incur the displeasures of all true Independenters, to such a degree that he will be in danger of being tarred and feathered, or plunged into the Delaware." A remonstrance, numerously signed, was forwarded to General Lacey, against any change in the Constitution; but what course he took, we do not know positively, though it may be presumed he opposed the measure, as such was the sense of the people whom he represented.

He appears to have returned home to Buckingham the latter part of December, and remained there until

the beginning of February, when he again went to Philadelphia, to attend to his official duties. While at home he had an opportunity to do further service to his country, in counteracting the efforts of several Tories to defraud the government. The year before ('78) Washington found it necessary, in order to mount his cavalry for the coming campaign, and also to supply the artillery and baggage-wagons, to order the inhabitants to bring in their horses on certain days, and at places named, to have them appraised and turned over to the quarter-master, who was to give a receipt and certificate for them, and which were to be paid for at some future time. At the close of the year Captain M'Calla was ordered to pay for the horses taken in this manner for the use of the Continental army. Many persons, whose horses had been taken from them going to or returning from Philadelphia, while the British were there, and which were confiscated by the express order of General Washington, took advantage of the ignorance of those who were to pay of the circumstances under which they were taken, and presented their claims. Their animals were appraised by some of their Tory neighbors, and papers made out to suit the case, and in most instances they were valued at two or three times their worth. This system of contemplated fraud upon the government came to the knowledge of General Lacey, who exposed the matter, and prevented it being carried out. Most, if not all, the horses which had been confiscated were captured by the order of Lacey, and therefore he knew to whom they had

belonged, and how far the owners were guilty of holding intercourse with the enemy. As soon as he learned what was on foot, he wrote a full account of the matter to the proper officers, and thus put them on their guard. His timely warning saved the country several thousand dollars, which would have gone into the pockets of some of the rankest Tories in the county, as a premium for their treason.

During the year 1779, General Lacey was chosen a member of the Executive Council of the State, then the highest executive authority, and continued as such for that and the two following years. He immediately took his seat in that body, and there, as well as in every other public station that he filled, was active and useful. He was almost constantly in Philadelphia, attending the sessions of the council, until August of the following year, when he was again called to discharge more active duties in the field. The spring and summer of '80 were a dark and trying period for America. The enemy had almost overrun the South, and brought nearly the whole country under subjection. Charleston fell on the 12th of May; and the defeat of General Gates, at Camden, on the 15th of August following, completed the triumph of the British. In the North things also wore a discouraging appearance, and Washington was beset with pressing difficulties on every side. The army was much reduced in strength by the expiration of the time of a large number of the men, who had only been enlisted for a short period. When their time was up they invariably went home, and no inducement could prevail upon them to remain;

and the evils of short enlistments were now more fully experience than ever. In addition to this, the military chest was empty, and the army in want of provisions, which could not beprocured without being taken from the inhabitants by force. The depreciation of the paper money of Congress had so much reduced the credit of the government, that persons were not willing even to make contracts for the supply of the army; and, at this time, the troops were in actual want. At length the discontent broke out into open mutiny, and several regiments paraded with their arms, with the intention of marching home, but were finally prevailed upon to remain. The English commander made every effort to induce the discontented to join his standard, but without effect; although their sufferings were great, they had not become so lost to every sense of duty as to be guilty of rank treason. During this period of great trial the State authorities of Pennsylvania made unusual efforts to relieve the sufferings of the army. The Legislature voted liberal appropriations of money to sustain the credit of Congress, and purchased provisions and took all other necessary steps to heal up the difficulties. They adjourned from the first of June to the first of September, but before doing so invested the Executive Council with discretionary powers during the recess, even to the extent of declaring martial law throughout the State, if thought necessary. From this it seems extraordinary exertions were required to sustain the cause of the colonies. General Lacey was, during this trying period, an active member of the Council, and in his

correspondence speaks of the many and serious difficulties they had to contend with, and of the great exertions they made to meet them. All his letters, both private and public, breathe the loftiest spirit of patriotism, and exhibit a love of country that no adversity could shake.

During these serious difficulties in the army, Washington believing the enemy intended to strike another blow at Pennsylvania, immediately ordered out the militia of the State for its defense. When the order came from General Washington to call out the militia, General Lacey was in Philadelphia attending the Council. He was immediately dispatched into the counties of Bucks and Berks to assemble the troops, being clothed with full powers for this purpose by the following letter from President Reed:

"PHILADELPHIA, August 1st, 1780.

"DEAR SIR:—You will please to proceed with all despatch to Bucks county, to forward the troops demanded by General Washington from that county. In the equipments you will issue such orders of impress for wagons, horses, blankets, arms and accoutrements, as you shall judge necessary at this important crisis, and to which all officers, civil and military, will yield due obedience, as they will answer the contrary at their peril. You will then proceed to Berks county for the same purpose, and with the like powers. After seeing the men in proper forwardness, you will then return to this city for further consultation on the measures necessary for the troops, and in the meantime you will give such directions to Colonel *Farmer*, the commissary of

the State, and to the deputy quartermaster, with respect to your stores and the transportation of your baggage, as you judge necessary and suitable to your rank.

"I am, sir, your obedient,

"and very humble servant,

(Signed) "JOS. REED, President.

"The HON. GENERAL LACEY."

Pursuant to the above order from President Reed, General Lacey proceeded into Bucks and Berks to assemble the militia, and used every necessary exertion to have them in the field early. The Council also clothed him with authority to impress horses for the main army, of which Washington stood in great need. After making all suitable arrangements for the calling out and marching of the militia to the place of rendezvous, he proceeded to Trenton, New Jersey, in order to assume the command. He arrived there about the 13th of the month, and selected a healthy spot for the encampment, where they were to be drilled and disciplined before joining the continental army under Washington. The troops came in slowly, and by the 16th not more than three hundred had assembled, many of whom were without arms and blankets. No provision had been made for their support, and, in consequence thereof, there was much dissatisfaction among them; and it was with much difficulty enough provisions could be procured at first to last them from day to day. In a few days a commissariat was established, when they were regularly furnished with good rations. President Reed, the commander-in-chief of

the militia of Pennsylvania, arrived in camp on the evening of the 16th, and assumed the command the next day. The troops continued to arrive from time to time, by squads and companies, and by the 19th, as is shown by the field-return of that day, they numbered 1045, rank and file, divided into four regiments. A severe course of discipline and drilling was introduced, and they made great improvement in the necessary duties of a soldier. By the 29th two more regiments had come into camp, and the whole number, rank and file, was 1416; a very respectable force. The men were beginning to get a little uneasy, remaining so long at the same place, as is generally the case with raw troops, and it was contemplated to change the location of the camp to a point farther down the river, near Bordentown; but before this change could be effected, General Reed received orders from General Washington to dismiss the brigade for the present, and allow the officers and men to return home. This sudden alteration in the views of the commander-in-chief was caused by the reception of the news that the second division of the French army, which was about to sail to our assistance, and in concert with whom the main army and militia were to act against the enemy in the contemplated attack upon New York, was blockaded in the harbor of Brest, and would not be able to reach America during the present campaign. Under the circumstances, Washington thought it most compatible with the public service to countermand his former order, and dismiss the militia, because their services were not required for any other purpose.

When the militia returned home from Trenton General Lacey went to Philadelphia and again took his seat at the Council board. He was much disappointed to be obliged to return from the field so soon, where he was anxious to distinguish himself, and where he believed he could be of more service to his country than in any other situation. He expressed his regrets in strong language, in a manly and patriotic letter to Colonel Wall, dated September 8th, and in which he speaks in the highest terms of the discipline and good conduct of his troops. He remained in Philadelphia most of the fall and ensuing winter, in attendance upon the Council, during which time he was assiduous in the discharge of his duties. He kept up a brisk correspondence with the prominent men in the State, both giving and receiving much valuable information in regard to the condition of the affairs of the colonies.

During the winter General Lacey was married to Miss Anastasia Reynolds, the youngest daughter of Colonel Thomas Reynolds, of New Mills, now Pemberton, Burlington county, New Jersey. The marriage took place on the 18th day of January, 1781. Colonel Reynolds was also a patriot and hero of the Revolution, and rendered important service to his country during the struggle for liberty. He was captured by the enemy at an early period during the war, and suffered imprisonment for a long time at New York, and was at length exchanged for Lieut. Col. Simcoe, a British partisan officer—the same who commanded part of the British troops at the battle of the Billet. He passed some time at New Mills, after his marriage,

and early in the spring returned to Philadelphia. In the latter part of September (1781) the British army, in garrison at New York, made some demonstrations against Pennsylvania, and in consequence thereof, the militia of the State were called out and encamped at Newtown, Bucks county, under the command of General Lacey. They remained here until about the middle of October, when it appearing the enemy did not intend to make any attack upon this State, they were discharged and returned to their homes, with the thanks of the Executive Council for the spirit with which they turned out. While the militia lay at Newtown, the officers from Philadelphia county addressed a petition to General Lacey, requesting permission to go home and vote at the coming election. He granted their request, and allowed the men to march, without arms, under the command of two of their own officers, to their respective places of voting. Some dissatisfied and disaffected person sent the order he issued upon that occasion to the "Pennsylvania Packet," in which paper it was published, with some severe comments, and casting much censure upon him. The object was to endeavor to make it appear that he had used military force to influence the election, thus seeking to injure his standing and reputation. A representation to the same effect was also made to the General Assembly, whereupon General Lacey addressed a communication to the Legislature, giving a full history of the circumstances, and asking for an investigation. Whether the General Assembly investigated the matter we are not able to say, but from the facts stated in his

communication, he was not liable to the least blame, but acted with his usual consistency and honor. The surrender of the British army, at Yorktown, which took place the 19th day of October, 1781, virtually put an end to the war, and after this event General Lacey's services were no longer required in the field.

In the fall of '81, or the beginning of the year '82, General Lacey removed from Pennsylvania to the village of New Mills, New Jersey, where he entered largely into the iron business. Here he passed the remainder of his life. It is not to be supposed that a man who had taken such a prominent part in the struggle for liberty, would be overlooked by the people of his adopted State. He soon assumed a leading position in that section of the country, and was called to fill several important and responsible public stations. He was elected to the Legislature, and was also a judge and justice of the county in which he lived. He lived in peace and contentment, an active and useful member of society, and died, much lamented, the 17th day of February, 1814, aged fifty-nine years, leaving a widow and four children.

Thus we have narrated the leading facts in the life of General John Lacey, most of which have never before been given to the public. He lived and acted in the most trying period of our country's history, and, by his devotion to the great principles of liberty, well merits the appellation of a faithful patriot. Many became more distinguished by the force of circumstances, but none were more devoted to the cause, periled their life with more cheerfulness, or were gov-

erned by a higher sense of duty. He was a patriot from principle, and espoused the cause of the colonies because it accorded with his conviction of right. He forsook family, friends, and personal interest, for what he believed to be his duty; and, although his path was constantly beset with difficulties, he never once faltered. He was a man of far more than ordinary capacity, and the defects of early education overcome, by close application to study during the hours of relaxation from labor and the leisure of the camp and council. He presented an admirable combination of character—warm-hearted and amiable, but firm and unyielding in the discharge of duty. In all the relations of life he might have borne the motto of Chevalier Bayard upon his helmet, without blushing—*Sans peur, sans reproche.* He was admirably adapted for a soldier, and possessed qualities that would have procured him a marshal's baton, if he had served under the great Napoleon. He was remarkably fine-looking, and is said to have made a very handsome appearance in uniform. He was courageous and determined in a high degree, and was noted as one of the severest disciplinarians in the service; he was very active, and could endure more hardships than most men; he was just in all things; and, next to patriotism and honesty, justice seemed to be the star by which he was guided.

Such, briefly, were the characteristics of General Lacey, the subject of this memoir. It requires neither brass nor marble to perpetuate his memory, for his good deeds will be remembered by his countrymen—a far more enduring monument. Peace to his ashes!

APPENDIX.

THE LACEY MONUMENT.

A few years ago a project was put on foot by the inhabitants of Hatborough and vicinity to erect a monument to the memory of General Lacey. The ladies, old and young, were very active in the enterprise. By means of subscriptions, and a fair held by the ladies in a grove near the battle-field of the Crooked Billet, sufficient money was raised to cover the expense. It was erected in the summer of 1861, on a lot purchased for the purpose, fronting the turnpike, at the upper end of the village. Arrangements were made to inaugurate the monument the 5th of December of that year. The ceremonies passed off with great eclat, in presence of an immense concourse of people which had assembled to witness them. An eloquent address, appropriate to the occasion, was delivered by the Reverend Jacob Belville, in the Loller Academy, after the inaugural ceremonies had taken place at the foot of the monument. The following account of the affair is copied from the published proceedings, viz:—

Thursday, the 5th of December, 1861, was the day fixed upon for inaugurating the "Crooked Billet" Monument, at Hatborough, Montgomery county, in commemoration of those who fell at the battle of the Crooked Billet, May 1st, 1778, and who were cruelly massacred by the British troops and Tories, led on by the Tories of the Revolution, residing in the vicinity. The day was most auspicious, calm and beautiful, the sun rendering it mild by his warm rays. The inaugural ceremonies were conducted at the base of the monument, in the forenoon, and as soon as the column was capped, and the urn being raised to its position, Rev. Dr. Steele was called upon and addressed the Throne of Grace in a solemn

prayer. Several patriotic and eloquent addresses were made by gentlemen, who were present by invitation of the managers. The venerable and highly esteemed Dr. William Darlington, celebrated for his scientific, historical, and literary attainments, and who is now in his eightieth year, but whose intellect is as vigorous, active, and bright as in his younger days, was present, and his lively conversation lent a charm and gave additional interest to the occasion. He was accompanied by two young ladies, direct descendants of General Lacey. The monument is beautiful, large and imposing, and stands upon a high bank overlooking the road. It consists of a plinth, five feet square and one foot thick, and a double base, all of Montgomery county marble; upon this rests a die, enriched with a projecting moulding, on which is the Latin motto, "*Defensores Libertatis per Insidias Abrupti;*" on the square below is engraved the inscription; above this is another die, bearing the coat of arms of the "Old Keystone State," in alto relievo; this is exquisitely beautiful and an admirably executed piece of workmanship —the horses are well proportioned and seem instinct with life, the head ot the eagle has a beautiful curve, and all the parts are well worked out; rising from this second die is a well proportioned shaft or obelisk, nine feet high, on which is sculptured full sized cross-swords and a shield, in bold relief; upon the obelisk is a neat capitol, and the whole is surmounted with an urn, from which issues a flame. It stands some twenty-four feet high, and is of the finest Italian marble from the base up. The monument will be surrounded by a wall and an iron railing.

Dr. William Darlington, of West Chester, a son-in-law of General Lacey, being present and called upon, addressed the audience briefly, thanking the people of the neighborhood for the patriotism they had shown by the erection of a beautiful monument, and said it was chiefly owing to the energy of the gallant Colonel of the 104th Ringgold Regiment,* Pennsylvania Volunteers, and his friends, that this enterprise, which we had been called upon to-day to consummate, had been commenced.

General John Davis replied that he could not permit it to go forth, that his family were the only ones prominent in this movement, that where all had acted so nobly all should share the praise—that

* Colonel W. W. H. Davis, who was the prime mover in the enterprise to raise this monument.

to the ladies of Hatborough and vicinity they were principally indebted; it was to them, who had labored so assiduously and earnestly in this good work, that the managers were enabled to complete the enterprise.

The Rev. Mr. Toland, of Chestnut Hill, was present and added his testimony in favor of what had been done by the patriotic sons of patriotic sires, to perpetuate the memory of the gallant brave who had given up their lives on that sacred spot. He was glad to see before him the veterans of the war of 1812; Dr. Darlington, a major, and General John Davis, a captain of that war; they were connecting links that bind the past with the present, that unite the patriotism of 1812 and 1861, the defenders of liberty against foreign aggression, and the protectors of that liberty against a wicked and causeless rebellion. The olden scenes of 1776 were being enacted over again by those brave spirits who have obeyed their country's call and are now at the seat of war. Those who had professed to be our brethren were now in open rebellion against us, and attempting to overthrow the Constitution and the Government.

Rev. Mr. Hand was also glad to add his testimony to what had already been said. He congratulated the community upon what had been accomplished. This was a fitting and beautiful testimonial to the brave men, who in the dark days of the Revolution had risked their all, and some had even given up their lives upon that field to secure our liberties. The events of this day were encouraging to those who were now in the service of their country. They had gone forth upon a sense of duty to crush this spirit of rebellion, and a grateful people would reward them. Those who fell upon this spot little thought they would have their names handed down to posterity, and their deeds live in imperishable marble; over eighty years have passed away and they are not forgotten.

INSCRIPTION ON THE MONUMENT.

Defensores Libertatis per Insidias Abrupti.
[The Defenders of Liberty slain by surprise.]

[ON THE WEST FRONT.]
CROOKED BILLET BATTLE, MAY 1, 1778.
GENERAL JOHN LACEY,
commanding the American patriots who were here engaged in conflict
FOR INDEPENDENCE.

[SOUTH SIDE.]
The Patriots of 1776
ACHIEVED OUR INDEPENDENCE.
Their Successors
ESTABLISHED IT IN 1812.
We are now struggling
FOR ITS PERPETUATION IN 1861.
"*The Union must and shall be Preserved.*"

[EAST SIDE.]
A GRATEFUL TRIBUTE
by the
HATBOROUGH MONUMENT ASSOCIATION,
chartered and erected
A. D. 1861.

[NORTH SIDE.]
IN MEMORY OF PATRIOTIC
JOHN DOWNEY,
And others who were cruelly slain on this ground, in the struggle for
AMERICAN LIBERTY.