

FAMOUS  
FRONTIERSMEN, PIONEERS AND SCOUTS;  
THE VANGUARDS OF  
AMERICAN CIVILIZATION.

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TWO CENTURIES OF THE ROMANCE OF AMERICAN HISTORY,

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A THRILLING NARRATIVE OF THE LIVES AND MARVELOUS EXPLOITS OF  
THE MOST RENOWNED

HEROES, TRAPPERS EXPLORERS, ADVENTURERS

SCOUTS, AND INDIAN FIGHTERS.

INCLUDING

BOONE, CRAWFORD, GIRTY, MOLLY FINNEY, THE McCULLOUGHES, WETZEL,

KENTON, CLARK, BRADY, CROCKETT, HOUSTON, CARSON, CALIFORNIA

JOE, WILD BILL, TEXAS JACK, CAPTAIN JACK, BUFFALO BILL,

GENERAL CUSTER WITH HIS LAST CAMPAIGN AGAINST SITTING BULL

AND GENERAL CROOK WITH HIS RECENT CAMPAIGN

AGAINST THE APACHES.

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BY E. G. CATTERMOLE, A. B.

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Elegantly Illustrated

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## PREFACE

Deeds of the truly great should be brought conspicuously before the people. Whether in literature, in science, in art, or in defense of home and country wherever are found noble characters, for memory's sake, no less than to inspire others with a spirit of emulation, we ought to rehearse their achievements, and tell the story of their struggles and triumphs. There are so many temptations to follow pernicious lives; so few incentives, comparatively, toward pure heroism and genuine nobility of character. Our part of the world, particularly, is in danger of reclining upon the couch of luxury, and cultivating that spirit of effeminacy so suicidal to the possessor. The sacrifices of ancestral heroes find little appreciation by the modern youth, largely from the fact that the perils of early settlement are so little known.

To supply some stimulating food of this character, is the object of the present volume. Such lives as those of Houston, Boone, Crockett, Custer, Crook, and others to be found in the work, should be recounted at every fireside between the great seas.

It has been the object of the author to condense into as small space as possible, the chief events of each life, not forgetting to draw such lessons as may prove finger-posts to those who need a guide.

To indulge in eloquent flights of fancy, profound soundings in historical philosophy, or even to paint beautiful word-pictures, would have been destructive of the more practical effect for which this work has been written. Hence, the only merit claimed lies in accurateness of detail and perspicuity of style a true sketch, in pure Anglo Saxon, of worthy men.

The author desires to acknowledge the kindly suggestions and assistance of Mr. C. B. Holding in the preparation of the work.

Asking for the present volume no more commendation than its contents justify, after an honest perusal, it is respectfully submitted by the author.

# COL. CRAWFORD

## LIFE OF COL WILLIAM CRAWFORD, SOLDIER, PATRIOT, AND MARTYR.

### CHAPTER I.

FRIENDSHIP WITH WASHINGTON -- YOUTHFUL PASTIMES -- COMMISSIONED  
LIEUTENANT FOR BRAVERY -- PROMOTED TO CAPTAIN --  
SEEKS A HOME -- ENTERS THE COLONIAL ARMY -- CAMPAIGNS AGAINST THE  
INDIANS -- THE BATTLE -- RETREAT -- CRAWFORD MISSING.

George Washington was scrupulously careful in selecting his associates, and especially so in forming intimate friendships. Ever courteous, kind, and even sympathetic, he nevertheless believed in social caste, and lived in accordance with his belief. He thought too much of his moral character to be defiled by "evil communications;" understood too well the intellectual advantages of intelligent company to permit himself, long at a time, to be found in any other; and possessed such social qualities as endeared him to the finest natures.

We then can form some conception of the true character of Col. William Crawford, the subject of this sketch, when we learn that he and Washington were bosom friends and lifelong companions. They both studied the same branch of learning, viz., surveying. They both loved the excitement of the chase in times of peace, and a position in the front rank of battle in times of war. Although not reared together, they first met when scarcely of age, and as often thereafter as the peculiar times in which they lived would permit. The two young men contested in athletic sports, wrestled, jumped, rode, shot, and ran races together. Their homes were not far distant from each other, hence many, indeed, were the adventures and escapades indulged in by the promising youths. Washington, by superior abilities, perhaps, and the opportunities that fate threw in his way, outstripped' his companion in after years so far as military and political achievements were concerned, but never in courage, in manliness, or in patriotism.

Col. Crawford first came into notice as a soldier in the year 1755, at the famous battle of Braddock's Fields. Although a private in this fight, his gallantry won for him the rank of lieutenant. Soon after this, when Forbes made his attack upon Fort Duquesne, Washington, who had charge of a division, selected Crawford as one of his captains. His conduct upon this occasion was highly praised by his superior officer. In 1767 he concluded to take some steps toward founding for himself a home, and acquiring some of the vast territory stretching beyond the Alleghenies into the limitless West. He therefore saddled his horse and started across the mountains in quest of an abiding place. He reached the Youghioghny River, and upon its banks resolved to drive his stake. It was a desolate place, as far as social life was concerned, but full of beauty and magnetism to the lover of nature and adventure. The exact locality where this intrepid pioneer soldier cleared a spot and built his cabin, is where, at present, stands the town of Connellsville, Fayette Co., Penn.

At the breaking out of the Revolution, Col. Crawford, of course, offered his services to his old friend, who had been put in charge of the American army. They were gladly accepted, and he

was given command of forces on the Western frontier. He was kept here during most of the war, fighting valiantly against both the British and their allied Indians. No other man did more for the cause of liberty in keeping back the murderous bands of savages. His boldness was remarkable, his perfect knowledge of woodcraft unquestionable, and his generalship of the highest type.

Finally, the news came of the surrender of Cornwallis. The army was disbanded, and Col. Crawford returned to the bosom of his family, hoping never again to be called into active military life. But, since the world always seeks great men, it never being necessary for them to seek it, he was not destined to have his hopes of settled peace fully realized.

After the Moravian massacre, which occurred in 1782, the various Indian tribes seemed to have vowed eternal vengeance, and swept down upon Virginia like whirlwinds. Some families were murdered, entire settlements driven like chaff before a gale, and too frequently over taken by the relentless tomahawk. Something radical must be done. It seemed that savage hate stretched far beyond the Muskingum, even into the northern boundary of Ohio and Indiana. Sandusky was the chief center of hostility, and it was resolved to send an expedition against this place, if sufficient force could possibly be secured to make it practicable. Appeals were made to the general government. The answer came back: "The settlers must defend themselves. The government will give its assent, and furnish ammunition; but men it has none."

A meeting was therefore called of all pioneers who would volunteer to go against the vast hordes of savages in their own country. Accordingly, about the 20th of May, a secret conclave of rugged border men from Washington and Westmoreland counties, was held near the present site of Steubenville, on the Ohio.

A novel assemblage, indeed, when they were all together. Vigorous, muscular men every one, with an independent air and open, manly countenance. Each man was "monarch of all he surveyed" when at home. No neighbors were near enough to challenge his right to the title.

The loved ones at home had bidden him farewell, scarcely expecting to see the familiar form again in this world. Wife and baby had stood upon the lonely cabin doorstep, while the brave father and husband had discharged his rifle into the air, waved an adieu with his coonskin cap, and finally disappeared in the distance.

One person among all the assemblage which amounted to four hundred and eighty horsemen requires our special notice. He is a man about fifty years of age; of large form, fine appearance, and military bearing. When he approaches, the rough border men gave way, and seem to manifest a respect akin to reverence. The man is Col. William Crawford. Washington has insisted upon his taking the command; General Irvine has urged him again to shoulder the rifle, and three of his relatives have agreed to march against Sandusky, provided he will lead.

Many of the settlers had taken little thought as to who should command, but in a short time after reaching their rendezvous, it was decided that there were only two men in all the company capable of engineering so remarkable and hazardous an under taking. Col. David Williamson and Col. William Crawford were these two. Good naturedly the men began their balloting, which soon resulted in the election of Crawford by a majority of five votes. Three rousing cheers were

given by all parties for the successful candidate, the crowd broke, and the men immediately made preparations for their tedious march through the wilderness.

It was a bright, sunshiny morning in May, when the cavalcade of horsemen filed out of Mingo Bottom for the Northwest. Every ranger was anxious for the fray anxious to speedily annihilate the murderous Delawares, Shawnees, and kindred tribes. Very few of the company had ever before seen five hundred horsemen together, and to their inexperienced eyes it seemed an overwhelming number. If one white man could more than match half a dozen Indians (and that was generally held to be true), where could the latter ever recruit sufficient force to withstand this formidable array? Their confidence was supreme much more than can be said of their force after reaching the scene of conflict.

As has been said, the border men supposed this expedition to be a profound secret, except to the whites. Every precaution had been taken to prevent its being known among the enemy. But the English had suggested to the Indian tribes that had participated in the recent massacres along the Virginia border, that they keep a sharp lookout for avengers. This the savages did, and just as soon as squads of horsemen began to pour into the Mingo Bottom, the alarm was given. Scouts were kept as near the rendezvous of the whites as possible. Every movement was noted, and reported by messenger to the Indian headquarters. The British at Detroit were immediately made acquainted with the scheme for vanquishing their allies, and resolved to add their power to that of the wily savages. Simon Girty and Capt. Elliott two renegade Americans, who figured extensively in the worst Indian battles and massacres ever indulged in by their bloodthirsty companions were at once notified, and placed in charge of the defense. These men were both well skilled in the arts of border warfare. Their superiors could scarcely be found. In addition to this, they hated their own countrymen with an undying hate, and were always rejoiced to have an opportunity to defeat and destroy them.

As the news was carried to the chiefs and white leaders, of the numbers marching against them, every Indian camp and village along the border was broken up, and the inhabitants ordered to Sandusky. Women and children were sent to places of safety, while the braves painted and plumed for a bloody conflict. It was, therefore, not strange that Crawford and his force marched on for about ten days without seeing a solitary warrior. They had reached the banks of the Sandusky, and near the spot where, a year previous, one of the principal Indian villages had stood, but not a red man could now be seen. The guides were perplexed, the Commander scarcely knew what it portended, and the men were becoming impatient for the fight. They determined to move on a short distance further, and then, if no "signs" were visible, to turn their steps in another direction. It was rightly conjectured by Crawford and Major Rose, his first assistant, that the savages were concentrating their forces. It was therefore deemed inexpedient by many to push too far into the enemy's stronghold, lest they fall into an ambush, and all be ruthlessly murdered when least expecting it.

A few hours' march after the consultation at the deserted village brought them to the scene of action.

"The company of light horse rushed rapidly forward, and soon reached a beautiful piece of woodland in the midst of the prairie, which seemed to invite them out of the fierce heat of the

June sun. They pause and rest, but finally strike out again into the open country. All at once they suddenly come in view of the enemy running directly toward them. Aha! Shaken up at last! Listen to those yells and whoops! The skulking copperheads! A fleet horseman flies to the rear to apprise Crawford, and all at once is bustle and confusion."

The two Delaware chiefs, The Pipe and Wingenund, had assembled all their warriors, amounting to something over two hundred. *Shaus-sho-toh*, the celebrated chief of the Wyandottes, was only a short distance in the rear with four hundred painted braves, while others were pouring in from all quarters. It was, indeed, a formidable army for four hundred and eighty whites to encounter. However, the rangers, upon receiving the news of "Indians!" jumped to their saddles with a smile of satisfaction not seen in the last ten days.

Crawford and Rose marshaled their forces in excellent order, a few hearty words of encouragement were spoken, and the company advanced to the onslaught.

The savages had taken up their abode in a thick copse, from which the eager border men drove them in hot haste. They retreated to another neck of woods, and as the impetuous Americans hurried on to the rout, the renegade, Elliott, suddenly appeared upon the right flank with a considerable force of savages. The stratagem of attacking the whites in the rear was well executed, causing some fierce fighting, and a sudden stop of the advance. Crawford succeeded, however, in regaining the woods after losing a number of men.

It is said that Major Rose, during this conflict, as also every other one, manifested a genius for commanding, of the highest type. His coolness was like balm to the excited brain; his excellent judgment turned many a doubtful contest; while his manly courage was the remark of all. In fact, with a less gifted aid, Col. Crawford and his expedition would have probably fallen far short of the results attained, and perhaps brought destruction to everyone engaged in it. But Rose, with his gentlemanly manners, rich voice, keen black eye, and fine presence, inspired the men to faithful execution.

All the day long, until darkness obscured the vision and made the firing uncertain, did the whites and reds engage at "Battle Island."

Right skillfully were the brave border men handled by their commanders to the disadvantage of their foes. Although their numbers were far less than the enemy, yet their killed and wounded at the close of day was not one-half that of the opposite side. Had not the Indians had Girty and Elliott to cheer, to command, to maneuver, their forces would have been completely routed. As it was, Crawford remained in possession of the field, while the Indians withdrew to safer quarters.

After a restless night the weary and thirsty soldiers awoke to the troubled realities of another fierce and disastrous battle. They were in no wise daunted by superior numbers, as long as those numbers were made up entirely of red men. But with the morning of this second day came a large body of horsemen from Detroit. Their sabers and armor glittered in the sunlight; their military aspect, and apparently large numbers, caused the raw militia from Virginia to feel some apprehension for their safety. Then ever and anon a squad of painted reds would be seen

advancing from an unexpected quarter, until the whites realized that their position was indeed becoming a perilous one.

It was resolved by Crawford and his staff to retreat. Accordingly, in the best of order, the famous homeward march began which at times it seemed utterly impossible ever to complete. Of course the British cavalry crowded closely upon their rear, while bands of savages skulked among the trees, endeavoring to pick off, one by one, those covering the retreat.

At a juncture where it seemed indispensable to have a commanding officer in whom the panic-stricken border men had confidence, the news was heralded that Col. Crawford was missing. A number had straggled off in the darkness, but when it was announced that the intrepid commander was gone probably captured all hearts sank in despair. Col. Williamson, however, immediately took command, and, ably assisted by Major Rose, succeeded in keeping the men together until they had reached the present site of Crestline, Ohio. Here the British and savages gave up the chase, much to the gratification of the worn out Americans. From this time the company took matters more coolly, regaining their expended energies, and also rejoicing in the return of various individuals who were supposed dead. It was the 13th day of June, when the crestfallen rangers filed into the Mingo Bottom. Only about three hundred returned with the main body, but for a week stragglers were coming in, until it was discovered that their actual loss was not over seventy persons.

## CHAPTER II

CAJPTURED BY INDIANS -- COMPANIONS MASSACRED -- INTERVIEW  
WITH GIRTY -- AID REFUSED -- TIRESOME MARCHES -- INDIGNITIES --  
DOOMED TO DEATH -- BEATEN AND FIENDISHLY  
TORTURED -- BURNED AT THE STAKE.

After the brave Virginia rangers had been on the retreat for two days and nights, Col. Crawford discovered his horse weakening, and concluded it would be impossible for him to travel much further. Knowing that each man needed his own steed, he determined to get away from the main body, as far as his horse could carry him, and then trust to his own legs for further safety. Accordingly, when nearing a marshy bog, he called his relatives, consisting of nephew, son, and son-in-law, together with Dr. Knight, the surgeon of the expedition, and asked them to accompany him in retreat. This they consented to do, supposing the entire body of horsemen would be scattered sooner or later, and having promised the Colonel to stand by him to the end. The four horsemen, therefore, under cover of night, set out, taking a direction at right angles to the one pursued by the company. All night did they cautiously wend their way through woods, over streams, and across marshes. When daylight came, Crawford's horse had completely given out, so he was forced to proceed on foot, as did also the others. They traveled on all day. In the afternoon they met with Lieut. Ashley and Capt. Biggs, who had also abandoned the main body.

Rather a pleasant night was spent together, each party having escapades and adventures to relate, thrilling in the extreme. On the next day the six border men, thinking they were now out of reach of the hostile foes, continued the march homeward, when most unexpectedly they found themselves in the midst of an ambushade. It was useless to fire, and impossible to escape. Biggs and Ashley had proceeded but a short distance, when they were over taken, tomahawked, and their scalps brought back as victorious trophies of war. Crawford and Knight were deceived by an apparent friendliness on the part of the savages, into delivering themselves up as prisoners of war. Just how far the other two members of the party succeeded in getting away before overtaken, is not known, but their mutilated bodies were found some days afterward.

The prisoners, Crawford and the physician, were conducted to the village, and there watched with an unsleeping vigilance. Right well did they now know that their fate would be the most horrible one possible to devise.

Crawford heard that the notorious Simon Girty was not far away, and begged to see him. Girty and he had been well acquainted before the renegade left his American home, their acquaintance even reaching that of an intimate friendship. It has been stated that Girty once had sought the hand of Col. Crawford's beautiful daughter, which had been refused him by both father and child. The remembrance of this little episode in his career was not calculated to inspire him with love for the veteran, who was now, to a certain extent, in his power. But Crawford hoped that still a faint spark of humanity might be found in the treacherous heart, and that for old friendship's sake, if nothing else, he would use his influence for deliverance. The savages granted Crawford's request, and the meeting took place.



It has been said that Girty was offered one thousand dollars, if he would secure the Colonel's release. This he indignantly refused, taunting his victim with the prospect of death. Crawford returned to his Indian captors, feeling that every ray of hope had departed.

The prisoners were driven on, the party in charge wisely avoiding the lodge of the Half King Pomoacon, as it was very certain that this kind-hearted Indian ruler would bitterly oppose such tortures as had been determined upon.

It is said that on their journey to the place of execution, the party came upon five other prisoners. These were all placed together in charge of a great number of squaws and children, while the warriors went out to hunt. Some of the prisoners attempted to escape, but they were set upon by the women and children with tomahawks, knives, and clubs, with such fury and violence that every one save Knight and Crawford were murdered outright. The fiendish wretches, whose appetite for blood had been aroused, scalped the victims, severed their heads from their bodies, and perpetrated other diabolical barbarisms too disgusting to mention. With yells of triumph did the small boys dance around, swinging the fresh and bleeding scalps aloft, and frequently dashing them into the unprotected faces of the surviving prisoners.

The next day at sunrise, the captors and captives again set out upon their wearisome journey. Reaching the town where dwelt The Pipe and Wingenund, the two noted Delaware chieftains, they halted.

The Pipe manifested great friendliness, as indeed he had frequently met both Knight and Crawford in times of peace. This seemed to offer a gleam of hope, but when he began to apply the black paint of death, the doomed whites bowed their heads in submission to the inevitable.

The party again started for their final destination. Along the route it became more and more apparent that a fearful death awaited the victims. Insults and indignities were heaped upon them by all classes. Warriors, squaws, and children, would slap them in the face, pull their hair, prick them with arrows, etc., etc. Girty was seen following in the rear, apparently in the highest humor over the prospect of revenge. He finally approached Knight, and said:

"Are you the doctor!"

"Yes sir," said Knight. "I have met you before, haven't I?" and he reached out his hand, hoping that Girty had come to deliver them. The inhuman renegade cried:

"Be gone! you ----- rascal! I'll never shake hands with a cowardly Virginian."

It was the afternoon of Tuesday, June 11, 1782 only two days before the three hundred frontiersmen reached the Mingo Bottom that the Indians with their victims reached the vicinity of Pipe's Town, where the tortures of death were to be inflicted on all but Dr. Knight. The prisoners understood that their doom was sealed, and that the death would be fearful enough, but none imagined beings capable of such diabolical acts as were really practiced.

Col. Crawford, or the "Big Captain," as his tormentors called him, was reserved for the last. Many of those who were witnesses of his death had met him in times of peace, and still retained a warm regard for the brave-hearted white. Especially did Wingenund, the Delaware chief. It is said by Dr. Knight in his thrilling narrative of this scene, that quite a conversation took place between Crawford and his old Indian friend, regarding the cause of the apparent hostility on the part of the infuriated savages. Wingenund informed the Colonel that the latter was supposed to have been connected with the massacre of the Moravian Indians a short time previous, and that the worst possible fate was reserved for everyone having a hand in that. In vain did Crawford \_\_\_\_\_ Wingenund of his hearty disapproval of that barbarous outrage, that Col. Williamson and his select company were alone responsible for that, while the government and all law-abiding citizens condemned it. Wingenund said it would be utterly impossible to convince the yelling mob about him that such a statement was true; they had heard of Crawford's complicity, and nothing now could check them. A last sad farewell was taken of each other, while the tears trickled down the cheeks of the brave Delaware, as he saw his beloved friend tied to the stake.

The details of this awful tragedy are almost too fearful for belief; and were it not for the excellent authority from whom we glean what is here appended, the account of it might be taken with a degree of incredulity. But Dr. Knight, who was obliged to be an eye-witness of the horrible drama, afterward escaping, gives us the full particulars in all their hideousness.

Knight and Crawford were stripped naked, painted black from head to foot, and then beaten severely with clubs. This was but the premonition of coming cruelties. Crawford was then taken to a stake prepared for the occasion, bound round with thongs, sufficient "slack" being allowed to permit him to move about the stake, or sit upon the ground. Then began the hellish work of torture. One Indian loaded his gun with powder, and shot it into the victim. This was received with loud yells of applause by the others, who immediately followed his example. Seventy or eighty large charges were thus sent into the naked body, until, had not the paint preceded, the powder alone would have turned the tender flesh to an ebony hue. Stoically did the grey-haired veteran stand this terrible infliction, scarcely flinching under the most excruciating pain. As yet the tragedy had but just begun. A number of yelling demons now rushed upon him, and severed his ears from his head. The blood streamed down until he presented a frightful appearance. Then followed cruelties and indignities beyond description. Dr. Knight closed his eyes to the awful sight several times, thereby not witnessing all that transpired, but by the noise, the clamor, and renewed yelling, could always tell when some successful device had been resorted to for increasing pain. The women and children vied with each other in attempting to wreak misery on the unresisting victim. For an hour or more this preliminary torture was indulged in, until, bruised, and bleeding, and raw, the sufferer was prepared for the fagots. Slow burning hickory poles were placed around him, that the fire might not cause death too soon. It seems that the hardened multitude of the old Coliseum, where Christian martyr or condemned criminal gave their life's blood in conflict with ferocious beasts, never could have dreamed of such barbarities as these fiends now enacted.

As the flames began to roll up around the stake, each forked tongue licking the quivering flesh, as if conscious, and in high glee over the prospect of dissolving soul and body, the distinguished victim could remain silent no longer. He called to Girty, who sat on a horse nearby, to shoot him and end his misery. Girty shook his head, and answered that he had no gun. Then Capt. Elliott,

who, clad in British military array, stood near, was appealed to for some merciful termination of his horrible fate, but in vain. These renegades had become as callous as their yelling and whooping companions. Even during the most excruciating agonies of Crawford, Girty approached Knight, and endeavored to enter into conversation regarding old times. He inquired as to the opinion men in Virginia held toward him; whether his punishment would be very severe, were he captured by the Americans, and many other questions, which Knight had no heart to answer then.

Col. Crawford, in the meantime, ceased appealing for more immediate death, and sought only to derive assistance from a merciful God. Low, solemn prayers were sent up to Him, whose eye never sleepeth, for succor in this awful closing of an earthly existence. Gradually did the flesh, the nerves, and muscles, become oblivious to pain. The mediums of communication to the brain at length lost their function and the nearly exhausted victim sank upon a bed of coals.

It seems that the bloodthirsty tormentors must surely now be satisfied that their demoniac natures can desire no further suffering. But look! A stalwart brave thinks of the much-coveted scalp, and plunges into the burning mass to secure it. The keen blade carves the circle, and in a moment more the reeking, gory covering is lifted from the scorched and bleeding head. The victim, however, moves not a muscle the power of sensation is well nigh, if not quite, extinct. But stop! A hideous old hag, with projecting teeth and wrinkled visage, hopes once more to fan the dying spark of life into existence. She rushes to the pile of coals, gathers a piece of bark, and loading it with live, glowing embers, pours them upon the unprotected head. It seems improbable that the skull has been opened sufficiently to let in the fire, but the intense heat penetrates to the sensitive seat of life, and stirs the wretched sufferer again to action. He rises, blind and staggering, involuntarily renews his weary walk around the stake, hoping to rid himself of the unspeakable torments that will, in a few moments more, end his suffering.

At length, quivering and writhing from head to feet, Col. William Crawford, soldier, patriot, Washington's friend, gave up the ghost, and his body was burned to ashes.

# LIFE OF SIMON GIRTY.

## CHAPTER I

EARLY INFLUENCES -- DEMORALIZING SURROUNDINGS -- FAMILY --  
LIFE IN CAPTIVITY DURING BOYHOOD -- EFFECTS OF SAVAGE  
TRAINING -- RETURN HOME -- GIRTY AND KENTON AS SPIES --  
FAITHFUL SERVICE -- ESPOUSES THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM --  
DISSATISFACTION -- BECOMES A TRAITOR -- ALLIES HIMSELF  
WITH BRITISH AND SAVAGES.

The name of Simon Girty was a synonym for terror one hundred years ago. Then there was a ring in the tones which carried it, that caused the housewife to involuntarily blanch with fear, and the American scout to seize his gun with a firmer grip. Children shuddered when they heard it spoken; officers of the army appeared anxious to catch the least information regarding it, while savage cruelty gloated over its prominence.

"Some men are born to lead." Yes, and frequently they seem to care not under what circumstances, or championing what cause. If the defense of virtue, of freedom, of innocent humanity offers not an opportunity for the gratification of such an ambition, then repute must be gained by ignoring virtue, placing the shackles upon liberty, and crushing the helpless.

Simon Girty was by nature a leader; by acquirements an inhuman monster; by birth an Irish-American; by habit a savage. Naturally endowed with an impetuous, fiery disposition, his life in the wilderness, for the most part estranged from all that was good and noble, made him a very demon.

Some have endeavored to palliate his wrong doings; others have said that liquor drinking developed his savage propensities, while freedom from that habit would have made an entirely different character. No doubt the addition of this fiery stimulant augmented that bloodthirsty nature, which he possessed; but within the bosom was ever lurking, whether intoxicated or sober, an insatiate love of cruelty and vengeance, which were ready at any moment to burst forth in unquenchable fury.

He was born somewhere in the neighborhood of Fort Pitt, (Pittsburgh) in the State of Pennsylvania, about the year 1750. His father was a disreputable trader among the Indians, dealing out to them more liquor, perhaps, than any other article, in exchange for furs and skins. Inheriting that love for stimulants, which too frequently characterizes the natives of the Emerald Isle, old Simon Girty gratified his appetite to an unlimited degree, finally bringing premature death to himself, and great suffering upon his entire family. Thomas, his oldest son, was the most respectable of all the boys, having lived on the Allegheny, at Girty's Run, the greater part of his life, in comparative quiet. Simon, James, and George, however, naturally followed in the wake of their father, only becoming much more notorious, because of superior courage and opportunities. The two latter possessed natures equally fiendish with that of Simon, though they did not become so notorious.

When quite young, these three boys were earned into captivity by the Indians. Thomas, it seems, escaped from their savage clutches; just how, we are not informed.

For several years Simon lived in the wilderness with his red brothers, to whom he soon became attached. As he was but five or six years of age, when captured, the instructions given by the Indians, as well as the experiences connected with their rude life, made an indelible impression upon his tender mind. Although rescued by Col. Bouquet, the lad could not be kept with the whites, except by force.

After being compelled to remain among his own kindred for a year or more, Simon became contented with his lot, and grew to manhood under the influences of border civilization.

At the age of twenty-four we find him acting as spy with Kenton, in Dunmore's war. During this exciting period his courage and skill in woodcraft made him a valuable addition to the list of scouts. A peculiarity, also, of his otherwise unenviable make up was a strict regard for his word no man ever knew of Girty breaking his promise. Hence, while fighting against the Indians, he was as true a friend to the cause he espoused, as when, after ward, he cast his lot with the treacherous savages and fought so relentlessly against the whites.

Simon Kenton ever spoke of this comrade spy as fearless, skillful, and heroic. Nor did he ever fail to think or speak of the renegade, except in the most affectionate manner. That magnetism which gave him the power to command thousands of Indians, attracted Kenton with an irresistible power. It seems also, as has been referred to elsewhere in this work, that the attachment between these sturdy pioneer Indian-hunters was mutual. For when Kenton was about to be sacrificed at the stake, Girty succeeded in securing his liberty at the risk of his own safety and reputation.

After Dunmore's war Simon Girty joined the American cause in the struggle for freedom. His countrymen immediately made him commander of a company of militia, and in this capacity he did active service until the year 1778.

At this time he was stationed at Pittsburgh. His ambition called for promotion. This it seemed impossible to receive, as others were constantly preferred before him. Becoming at length exceedingly jealous, and claiming ill-treatment at the hands of his superiors, he determined to play traitor, flee to the British ranks, and gain that prominence so much desired.

Accordingly, in company with Elliott, Alexander, McKee, and twelve others, he first circulated false and malicious stories among the savages, inciting them to take up arms against the Americans, and then deserted Fort Pitt and his countrymen.

The injury done by the renegade body, just at this critical moment March, 1778 was incalculable. Neutral tribes were told that Washington was dead; that Congress was broken up; that defeat after defeat had followed the efforts of the American army, and that in a short time the English would sweep down upon all opposing Indians with destructive violence.

Had it not been for Heckewelder, the Moravian missionary, much more damage to the American cause would have resulted from Girty's falsehoods. This noble Christian man and patriot refuted the stories, and quieted the fears of several tribes, particularly the Delawares.

Girty and his infamous colleagues, having abandoned Fort Pitt, struck across the country toward the British headquarters at Detroit,

They came very near paying the penalty of their treachery, however, ere the goal of their ambition was reached. For hardly had they gotten fairly into the forests of Ohio, before an ambushade of Indians compelled them to surrender. This they gladly did in preference to being shot down on the road. Girty remonstrated with the savages, maintaining that his intention was to join their allies, the English, and to fight battles for the red man. But in vain did he plead for liberty on these grounds. The captives were taken from place to place until brought before the grand council of the tribe, where the guilty and terrified deserters succeeded in convincing the chiefs of their loyalty to the British cause.

Being finally released, Girty proceeded on his way to Detroit, which point he reached in due time, much to the joy of that notorious official, Gov. Hamilton. Disclosures of the Americans' plans were made at once, and "The Hair Buyer," as Hamilton was termed, lost no time in taking advantage of the valuable information. The traitor was immediately put in charge of a large force to act in concert with the Indians. This just suited the renegade, as it afforded abundant opportunity for gratifying what had now developed into an intense hatred for his own countrymen.

It would be difficult to determine how many horrible massacres, scalping crusades, and savage battles, this white man of the woods engaged in during the remainder of the war. But certain it is that no champion of savage cruelty ever held such indomitable sway over his barbarous associates, nor ever wreaked such terrible vengeance as he. Space would not permit even a cursory glance at his numerous conflicts. The whites along the border feared him as they feared no chief that wielded the tomahawk. He united the craftiness and courage of the savage, with that superior mental force and knowledge gained in civilization.

## CHAPTER II.

ATTACK ON BRYANT'S STATION -- POWER AS A LEADER -- GETS  
COMMAND OF A LARGE FORCE -- SEEKS VENGEANCE -- MARRIES --  
SINKS INTO DISSIPATION -- INSTANCES OF EXTREME  
CRUELTY -- BECOMES BLIND SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE DEATH.

One of his best arranged attacks was that upon Bryant Station, Kentucky. Girty, with six hundred painted fiends of the forest, silently surrounded the station where were collected the old men, women, and children of the heroic settlers. With silent and noiseless steps the renegade and his subjects performed their journey of many miles after nightfall so that, when the morning light began to scatter the darkness, the six hundred dusky forms were within a stone's throw of the block house, and not a hint of their approach had the garrison received.

Fortunately a detachment of American soldiers had arrived at the fort but a short time before the savages. Consequently, when the attack was made in the morning, the too confident leader met with a sudden repulse, and was eventually completely routed. The failure of the scheme, though, was not occasioned through any lack of military skill on the part of Girty his arrangements and onslaughts were conducted with much ability.

There is a bit of romance connected with this desperado's career which both interests us and gives an insight into his better nature. Although hardened, cruel, and relentless when in his worst moods, and, in fact, for the most part, during all his intercourse with men, yet there lay hidden somewhere beneath the rough exterior, a tender spot which Cupid only could discover.

'Tis not music alone that "hath power to soothe the savage breast." A beautiful face, a soul lit eye, a bewitching smile, a fair maiden with the form and features of a Venus, can frequently exercise as softening an influence.

At least, it was such a delicate, fascinating creature that caused Simon Girty to humble his proud heart. Death had stared him in the face many times, yet he rushed to its embrace. Sword and musket and tomahawk and scalping knife had threatened destruction, did he not surrender, yet he scorned to bow before them. But when the beautiful captive maiden, Catharine Malott, came under his observation, the old lion crouched, and would now come forth.

This young lady was about eighteen years or age when first beheld by Simon Girty. She had been captured by the Indians three years previous, near Wheeling, Virginia. Her graceful figure had developed in the warm sunlight and fresh air of a nomadic life, while to the fair cheek was added the rich color of a vigorous circulation, and to the eye a softened fire that glowed and burned into the souls of men. Even her captors had learned to love the young girl. The old warriors were never better pleased than when she would bring them a gourd of water, or attend upon them in times of sickness. She made the very best of her unfortunate captivity, learning readily their barbarous customs, and trying to keep herself cheerful by scattering sunshine among her rude associates.

Girty, learning that the damsel's mother was in Detroit, endeavoring in every possible way to hear something of her daughter, determined to affect her release. Accordingly, acting in the role of a hero, he communicated this intelligence to Miss Malott. Tears of gratitude and unbounded joy at once filled the maiden's eyes, while the tender heart clung to the strong deliverer in fullest confidence. Nor did the latter prove false in his promises. Although having the young lady completely in his power, away from home, friends, and civilization, he nevertheless sought to win her affection and hand in the most honorable manner.

She was conducted to the city of Detroit by himself. There, the house in which lived for the time Mrs. Malott, was hunted up, and amid tears of joy, mingled with expressions of tenderest regard for the one who had united the long separated parent and child, Simon Girty asked no other reward than the fair maiden herself.

The young lady fully reciprocated the affection of Girty. Mrs. Malott, however, desired to give a different kind of compensation for the services rendered by the renegade. She wanted her daughter to remain at home. Besides, the more experienced woman discerned characteristics about the suitor, which, she feared (and rightly) would one day bring untold sorrow upon his wife. This she communicated to Catharine, but the die was cast the maiden's heart was no longer her own, so the nuptials were celebrated immediately, after the custom of the day.

For several years Catharine Girty had little reason to regret her union with the "white savage." His love for drink would occasionally cause a jar in the marital relations, but the flame of love burned away the dross, and purified their affection anew. However, after a number of years, Girty grew cross and petulant, especially when under the influence of stimulants, which grew more and more into a settled condition. His savage nature was given full sway; the old demoniacal spirit took complete possession of him, until a separation from wife and children became a necessity. Mrs. Girty accordingly moved back to Detroit, from whence they had gone into the interior of Ohio, while her husband continued his barbarous and heartless career among the Indians.

It is said by one or two writers on this subject, that he and his wife afterward came together, living peaceably until her death.

D. M. Wortman, Esq., of Ohio, gives the following interesting note regarding Girty about the close of his life. Says he:

"In 1813 I went to Maiden, Canada (about fifteen miles below Detroit), and put up at a hotel kept by a Frenchman. I noticed in the bar-room a grey headed and blind old man. The landlady, who was his daughter, a woman of about thirty years of age, inquired of me, 'Do you know who that is?' pointing to the old man. On my replying 'No,' she said, 'It is Simon Girty.' He had then been blind about four years. In 1815 I returned to Maiden, and ascertained that Girty had died some time previous. Girty was a man of extraordinary strength, power of endurance, courage and sagacity. He was in height about five feet, ten inches, and strongly made."

To show the firmness of this man's nature when opposed, we give the following, related by Heckewelder, the Moravian missionary. This missionary, with several hundred innocent



Moravians, whose towns upon the Muskingum River had been ruthlessly destroyed and themselves taken captive by Girty, were ordered to Sandusky for execution. The renegade himself could not accompany the party, having too many scalping expeditions on foot. He gave the strictest orders, however, to those who had charge of the captives.

"Drive them the same as though they were cattle!" thundered he to the Frenchman in command. "Never let them halt, even for the purpose of the women giving suckle to their children."

The Frenchman, however, was more humane than his master. He declined to persecute the unoffending whites after Girty's departure. Having arrived at Lower Sandusky, instead of pushing on afoot as commanded, he ordered a halt, until some boats should be brought from Detroit. While thus waiting for the conveyances to arrive, the pilgrims were startled by the announcement that Girty had returned, and was completely beside himself with rage. Directly he came to the guardhouse where were the French commander and his captives, "He flew at the Frenchman," says Heckewelder, "most furiously, striking at him, and threatening to split open his head. He swore the most horrid oaths respecting us, and continued in that way till midnight. His oaths were all to the purport that he would never leave the house until he had split our heads with his tomahawk, and made our brains stick to the walls of the room. He had somewhere procured liquor, and would at every drink renew his oaths until he fell asleep. Never before did any of us hear such oaths, nor know anybody to rave like him. He appeared like a host of evil spirits. He would sometimes come up to the bolted door between us and him, threatening to chop it to pieces to get at us. No Indian we had ever seen drunk, would have been a match for him."

With such an inhuman monster we care to have little to do. Let this cursory glance at his life suffice; let his name go down to posterity, as it has come to us disgraced by the life of him who bore it, and a warning to all, that an evil heart, bad associates, love of whisky, and an utter disregard of Him who is the author of purity and true nobility of character, will bring a stigma no less than that which attaches itself to the name of Simon Girty, the Renegade.