

FRONTISPIECE.



**BENJAMIN GILBERT'S FAMILY
CARRIED OFF BY INDIANS !**

A
NARRATIVE
OF THE
CAPTIVITY AND SUFFERINGS
OF
BENJAMIN GILBERT AND FAMILY;
WHO WERE SURPRISED BY THE INDIANS, AND TAKEN
FROM THEIR FARMS, ON THE FRONTIERS
OF PENNSYLVANIA.

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PREFACE.

AS the captivity of Benjamin Gilbert's family has been a subject of much inquiry, and many of their friends were anxious to have a particular account of their sufferings; the following Narrative is presented to them and the public, reciting the transactions as circumstantially as could be furnished from memory, after comparing accounts with each other on their return from Canada.

That their lives were preserved through the many threatening scenes they passed, whilst in the hands of the Indians, is to be ascribed, with gratitude and thankfulness, to the great Ruler of the universe, who can say unto the sea, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." And though Benjamin Gilbert, the elder, was permitted to

sink under the weight of his fatigue and afflictions, he lived to be restored to liberty, and breathed his last in the arms of his affectionate wife.

To be cast into the power of savages, who, from infancy, are taught a hardness of heart, which deprives them of the common feelings of humanity, is enough to intimidate the firmest mind: but when we hear of helpless women and children torn from their homes, and dragged into the wilderness, we shudder at the thought, and are bound to acknowledge our infinite obligations to the Almighty, that *we* are so much more enlightened than these unhappy wretches of the desert, to most of whom the glad tidings of the Gospel remains yet to be proclaimed: “Glory to God in the highest: on earth peace, and good will
“to men.

GILBERT'S CAPTIVITY.

BENJAMIN GILBERT, son of Joseph Gilbert, was born at Byberry, about fifteen miles from the city of Philadelphia, in the year 1711, and received his education among the people called Quakers.

He resided at or the place of his nativity for several years; during which time of residence he married, and after the decease of his first wife, he accomplished a second marriage with Elizabeth Peart, widow of Bryan Peart, and continued in this neighbourhood until the year 1775, when he removed with his family to a farm situated on Mahoning Creek, in Penn Township, Northampton County, being the frontiers of Pennsylvania, not far from where Fort Allen was erected. The improvements he carried on here were according to the usual manner of new settlements, convenience being principally attended to; his house and barn being of logs. To this he had added a saw-mill, and a commodious stone grist-mill, which, as it commanded the country for a considerable distance, conduced in some measure to render his situation comfortable.

This short account may not be improper, in order to interest our feelings in the relation of the many

scenes of affliction the family were reduced to, when snatched from the pleasing enjoyment of the necessities and conveniences of life. The most flattering of our prospects are often marked with disappointment, expressively instructing us that we are all strangers and sojourners here, as were our forefathers.

This family was alarmed on the 25th day of the 4th month, 1780, about sunrise, by a party of eleven Indians, whose appearance struck them with terror. To attempt an escape was death, and a portion of distress not easy to be supported; the certain attendant on the most patient and submissive conduct. The Indians who made this incursion, were of different tribes or nations, who had abandoned their country on the approach of General Sullivan's army, and fled within command of the British forts in Canada, promiscuously settling within their neighbourhood, and, according to the Indian custom of carrying on war, frequently invading the frontier settlements, taking captive the weak and defenceless.

The names of these Indians, with their respective tribes, are as follow :—

1. Rowland Monteur, 1st Captain.
2. John Monteur, second in command, who was also styled Captain. These two were Mohawks, descended of a French woman.
3. Samuel Harris, a Cayuga Indian.
4. John Huston, and his son, } Cayugas.
5. John Huston, jun. }
6. John Fox, of the Delaware Nation. The other five were Senecas.

At this place they made captives of the following persons :—

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|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Benjamin Gilbert, aged about | 69 years. |
| 2. Elizabeth, his wife, | 55 |
| 3. Joseph Gilbert, his son, | 41 |
| 4. Jesse Gilbert, another son, | 19 |
| 5. Sarah Gilbert, wife to Jesse, | 19 |
| 6. Rebecca Gilbert, a daughter, | 16 |
| 7. Abner Gilbert, a son, | 14 |

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|---|-----------|
| 8. Elizabeth Gilbert, a daughter, | 12 years. |
| 9. Thomas Peart, Son to Benjamin
Gilbert's wife. | } 23 |
| 10. Benjamin Gilbert, a son of John
Gilbert, of Philadelphia, | |
| 11. Andrew Harrigar, of German
descent, hired by B. Gilbert, | } 26 |
| 12. Abigail Dodson, (daughter of
Samuel Dodson, who lived
on a farm, near 1 mile distant
from the mill) who came that
morning with grist, | |
| } 14 | |
| They then proceeded to Benjamin Peart's dwelling,
about half a mile further, and brought himself and family,
viz. | |
| 13. Benjamin Peart, son to Benjamin
Gilbert's wife, | } 27 |
| 14. Elizabeth Peart, his wife, | |
| 15. Their child, about nine months old. | 20 |

The prisoners were bound with cords which the Indians brought with them, and in this melancholy condition left under a guard for the space of half an hour, during which time the rest of the captors employed themselves in plundering the house, and packing up such goods as they chose to carry off, until they had got together a sufficient loading for three horses which they took, besides compelling the distressed prisoners to carry part of their plunder. When they had finished plundering, they began their retreat, two of their number being detached to fire the buildings, which they did without any exception of those belonging to the unhappy sufferers; thereby aggravating their distresses, as they could observe the flames, and the falling in of the roofs, from an adjoining eminence called Summer Hill. They cast a mournful look towards their dwellings, but were not permitted to stop until they had reached the further side of the hill, where the party sat down to make a short repast, but grief prevented the prisoners from sharing with them.

The Indians speedily put forwards from this place, as they apprehended they were not so far removed

from the settlements as to be secure from pursuit. Not much further was a large hill, called Mochunk, which they fixed upon for a place of rendezvous. Here they halted near an hour, and prepared shoes or sandals, which they call mockasons, for some of the children. Considering themselves in some degree relieved from danger, their fears abated so that they could enjoy their meal at leisure, which they ate very heartily. At their removal from this hill, they told the prisoners that Colonel Butler was at no great distance from them, in the woods, and that they were going to him.

Near the foot of the hill flows a stream of water, called Mochunk Creek, which was crossed, and the second mountain passed; the steep and difficult ascent of which appeared very great to the much enfeebled and affrighted captives: they were permitted to rest themselves for some minutes, and then pressed onwards to the Broad Mountain, at the foot of which runs Nescaconnah Creek.

Doubly distressed by a recollection of past happiness, and a dread of the miseries they had now to undergo, they began the ascent of this mountain with great anguish both of mind and body. Benjamin Gilbert's wife, dispirited with the increasing difficulties, did not expect she was able to pass this mountain on foot; but being threatened with death by the Indians, if she did not perform it, with many a heavy step she at length succeeded. The Broad Mountain is said to be seven miles over in this place, and about ten miles distant from Benjamin Gilbert's settlement. Here they halted an hour, and then struck into the Neskapeck Path, the unevenness and ruggedness of which rendered it exceedingly toilsome, and obliged them to move forwards slowly. Quackac Creek runs across the Neskapeck Path, which leads over Pismire Hill. At this last place they stopped to refresh themselves, and then pursued their march along the same Path, through Moravian pine swamp, to Mahoniah mountain, where they lodged, being the first night of their captivity.

It may furnish information to some, to mention the method the Indians generally use to secure their prisoners: They cut down a sapling as large as a man's thigh, and therein cut notches, in which they fix their legs, and over this they place a pole, crossing the pole on each side with stakes drove in the ground, and in the crotches of the stakes, they place other poles or riders, effectually confining the prisoners on their backs; besides which, they put a strap round their necks, which they fasten to a tree: In this manner the night passed. Their beds were hemlock branches strewed on the ground, and blankets for a covering, which was an indulgence scarcely to have been expected from savages: It may reasonably be expected, that in this melancholy situation, sleep was a stranger to their eyelids.

Benjamin Peart having fainted in the evening, occasioned by the sufferings he endured, was threatened to be tomahawked by Rowland Monteur.

26th. Early this morning they continued their route, near the waters of Teropin Ponds. The Indians thought it most eligible to separate the prisoners in companies of two by two, each company under the command of a particular Indian, spreading them to a considerable distance, in order to render a pursuit as impracticable as possible. The old people, overcome with fatigue, could not make as much expedition as their severe task-masters thought proper, but failed in their journey, and were therefore threatened with death, by the Indian under whose direction they were placed: Thus circumstanced, they resigned themselves to their unhappy lot, with as much fortitude as possible. Towards evening the parties again met and encamped, having killed a deer, they kindled a fire, each one roasting pieces of the flesh upon sharpened switches. The confinement of the captives was the same with the first night, but, as they were by this time more resigned to the event, they were not altogether deprived of sleep.

27th. After breakfast a council was held concerning the division of the prisoners, which being settled, they delivered each other those prisoners who fell within

their several allotments, giving them directions to attend to the particular Indians whose property they became. In this day's journey they passed near Fort Wyoming, on the eastern branch of Susquehanna, about forty miles from their late habitation. The Indians, naturally timid, were alarmed as they approached this garrison, and observed great caution, not suffering any noise, but stepped on the stones that lay in the path, lest any footsteps should lead to a discovery. Not far from thence is a considerable stream of water, emptying itself into Susquehanna, which they crossed with great difficulty, it being deep and rapid, and continued here this night. Benjamin Gilbert being bound fast with cords, underwent great sufferings.

28th. This morning the prisoners were all painted, according to the custom among the Indians, some of them with red and black, some all red, and some with black only: those whom they smut with black, without any other colour, are not considered of any value, and are by this mark generally devoted to death: although this cruel purpose may not be executed immediately, they are seldom preserved to reach the Indian hamlets alive. In the evening they came to Susquehanna, having had a painful and wearisome journey through a very stony and hilly path. Here the Indians sought diligently for a private lodging-place, that they might be as secure as possible from any scouting-parties of the white people. It is unnecessary to make further mention of their manner of lodging as it still remained the same.

29th. They went in search of the horses which had strayed from them in the night, and after some time found them. They then kept the course of the river, walking along its side with difficulty. In the afternoon they came to a place where the Indians had directed four negroes to wait their return, having left them some corn for a subsistence: these negroes had escaped from confinement, and were on their way to Niagara, when first discovered by the Indians; being challenged by them, answered "they were for the king,"

upon which they immediately received them into protection.

30th. The negroes who were added to the company the day before, began cruelly to domineer and tyrannize over the prisoners, frequently whipping them for their sport, and treating them with more severity than even the Indians themselves; having had their hearts hardened by the meanness of their condition, and long subjection to slavery. In this day's journey they passed the remains of the Indian town Wyaloosing. The lands round these ruins have a remarkable appearance of fertility. In the evening they made a lodgment by the side of a large creek.

5th Month 1st. After crossing a considerable hill in the morning, they came to a place where two Indians lay dead. A party of Indians had taken some white people whom they were carrying off prisoners, they rose upon the Indians in the night, killed four of them, and then effected their escape. The women were sent forwards, and the men prisoners commanded to draw near and view the two dead bodies which remained; (the other two being removed) they staid to observe them a considerable time, and were then ordered to a place where a tree was blown down. Death appeared to be their doom; but after remaining in a state of sad suspense for some time, they were ordered to dig a grave; to effect which, they cut a sapling with their tomahawks, and sharpened one end, with which wooden instrument one of them broke the ground, and the others cast the earth out with their hands, the negroes being permitted to beat them severely whilst they were thus employed. After interring the bodies, they went forwards to the rest, and overtook them as they were preparing for their lodging. They were not yet released from their sapling confinement.

2d. Having some of their provisions with them, they made an early meal, and travelled the whole day. They crossed the East Branch of Susquehanna towards evening in canoes, at the place where general Sullivan's army had passed it in their expedition. Their encampment was on the western side of this branch of

the river; but two Indians who did not cross it, sent for Benjamin Gilbert, jun. and Jesse Gilbert's wife, and as no probable cause could be assigned why it was so, the design was considered as a very dark one, and was a grievous affliction to the others.

3d. The morning however dispelled their fears, when they had the satisfaction of seeing them again, and understood they had not received any treatment harder than their usual fare. The horses swam the Susquehanna, by the side of the canoe. This day the Indians in their march found a scalp, and took it along with them, as also some old corn, of which they made a supper. They frequently killed deer, and by that means supplied the company with meat, being almost the only provision they ate, as the flour they took with them was expended.

4th. The path they travelled this morning was but little trodden, which made it difficult for those who were not acquainted with the woods to keep in it. They crossed a creek, made up a large fire to warm themselves by, and then separated into two companies; the one taking the westward path, with whom were Thomas Peart, Joseph Gilbert, Benjamin Gilbert, jun. and Jesse Gilbert's wife Sarah; the others went more to the North over rich level land. When evening came, enquiry was made concerning the four captives who were taken in the western path, and they were told, that "these were killed and scalped, and you may expect the same fate to-night." * Andrew Harrigar was so terrified at the threat, that he resolved upon leaving them, and as soon as it was dark, took a kettle with pretence of bringing some water, and made his escape under favour of the night. He was sought after by the Indians as soon as they observed him to be missing.

5th. In the morning the Indians returned; their search for Andrew Harrigar being happily for him un-

* Andrew Harrigar endured many hardships in the woods, and at length returned to the settlements, and gave the first authentic intelligence of Benjamin Gilbert and his family to their friends.

successful. The prisoners who remained, were therefore treated with great severity on account of his escape, and were often accused of being privy to his design. Capt. Rowland Monteur, carried his resentment so far, that he threw Jesse Gilbert down, and lifted his tomahawk to strike him, which the mother prevented, by putting her head on his forehead, beseeching him to spare her son. This so enraged him, that he turned round, kicked her over, and tied them both by their necks to a tree, where they remained until his fury was a little abated; he then loosed them, and not long after bid them pack up and go forwards. They passed through a large pine swamp, and about noon reached one of the Kittareen towns, which was desolated. Not far from this town, on the summit of a mountain, there issues a large spring, forming a very considerable fall, and runs very rapidly in an irregular winding stream down the mountain's sides. They left this place, and took up their lodging in a deserted wigwam covered with bark, which had formerly been part of a town of the Shipquagas.

6th, 7th, 8th. They continued these three days in the neighbourhood of these villages, which had been deserted upon General Sullivan's approach. Here they lived well, having in addition to their usual bill of fare, plenty of turnips and potatoes, which had remained in the ground unnoticed by the army. This place was the hunting-ground of the Shipquagas, and whenever their industry prompted them to go out hunting, they had no difficulty to procure as many deer as they desired.

Roast and boiled meat, with vegetables, afforded them plentiful meals; they also caught a wild turkey, and some fish called suckers. Their manner of catching fish was, to sharpen a stick, and watch along the rivers until a fish came near them, when they suddenly pierced him with the stick, and brought him out of the water.

Here were a number of colts, some of them were taken and the prisoners ordered to manage them, which was not easily done.

9th. When they renewed their march they placed the mother upon a horse that seemed dangerous to ride, but she was preserved from any injury. In this day's journey they came to meadow ground, where they staid the night, the men being confined as before related, and the negroes lay near them for a guard.

10th. A wet swamp, that was very troublesome lay in their road; after which they had to pass a rugged mountain where there was no path. The underbrush made it hard labour for the women to travel; but no excuse would avail with their severe masters, and they were compelled to keep up with the Indians, however great the fatigue. When they had passed it, they tarried awhile for the negroes who had lagged behind, having sufficient employ to attend to the colts that carried the plunder. When all the company met together, they agreed to rendezvous in an adjoining swamp.

11th. A long reach of savannas and low ground, rendered this day's route very fatiguing and painful, especially to the women. Elizabeth Peart's husband not being allowed to relieve her by carrying the child, her spirits and strength were so exhausted that she was ready to faint; the Indian under whose care she was observing her distress, gave her a violent blow. When we compare the temper and customs of these people with those of our own colour, how much cause have we to be thankful for the superiority we derive from the blessings of civilization!

It might truly be said, days of bitter sorrow and wearisome nights were appointed the unhappy captives.

12th. Their provisions began to grow scant, having past the hunting grounds. The want of proper food to support them, which might render them more capable of enduring their daily fatigue, was a heavy trial, and was much increased by their confinement at night. Elizabeth Gilbert was reduced so low, that she travelled in great pain all this day, riding on horse-back in the morning, but towards evening she was ordered to alight, and walk up a hill they had to ascend; the

pain she suffered, together with the want of food, so overcame her, that she was seized with a chill. The Indians administered some flour and water boiled, which afforded her some relief.

13th. Last night's medicine being repeated, they continued their march, and after a long walk, were so effectually worn down, that they halted. The pilot, John Huston, the elder, took Abner Gilbert with him, (as they could make more expedition than the rest) to procure a supply of provisions to relieve their necessity.

14th. The mother had suffered so much, that two of her children were obliged to lead her. Before noon they came to Canadosago, where they met with Benjamin Gilbert, jun. and Jesse Gilbert's wife Sarah, two of the four who had been separated from them ten days past, and taken along the western path: this meeting afforded them great satisfaction; the doubt and uncertainty of their lives being spared, often distressing their affectionate relations.

John Huston, jun. the Indian under whose care Benjamin Gilbert was placed, designing to dispatch him, painted him black; this exceedingly terrified the family, but no intreaties of theirs being likely to prevail, they resigned their cause to Him whose power can control all events. Wearied with their weakness and travelling, they made a stop to recover themselves, when the pilot returning, assured them they should soon receive some provisions.

The negroes were reduced so low with hunger, that their behaviour was different from what it had been, conducting with more moderation. At their quarters in the evening, two white men came to them, one of which was a volunteer amongst the British, the other had been taken prisoner some time before; these two men brought some hommony, and sugar made from the sweet maple, the sap being boiled to a consistency, and is but a little inferior to the sugar imported from the Islands: of this provision, and an hedge-hog which they found, they made a more comfortable supper than they had enjoyed for many days.

15th. In the morning the volunteer having received information of the rough treatment the prisoners met with from the negroes, relieved them, by taking the four blacks under his care. It was not without much difficulty they crossed a large creek which was in their way, being obliged to swim the horses over it. Benjamin Gilbert began to fail; the Indian, whose property he was, highly irritated at his want of strength, put a rope about his neck, leading him along with it; fatigue at last so overcame him, that he fell on the ground, when the Indian pulled the rope so hard, that he almost choked him: his wife seeing this, resolutely interceded for him, although the Indians bid her go forwards, as the others had gone on before them; this she refused to comply with, unless her husband might be permitted to accompany her; they replied "that they were determined to kill the old man," having before this set him apart as a victim: but at length her entreaties prevailed, and their hearts were turned from their cruel purpose. Had not an overruling providence preserved him from their fury, he would inevitably have perished, as the Indians seldom shew mercy to those whom they devote to death, which, as has been before observed, was the case with Benjamin Gilbert, whom they had smeared with black paint from this motive. When their anger was a little moderated, they set forwards to overtake the rest of the company: their relations, who had been eye-witnesses of the former part of this scene of cruelty, and expected they would both have been murdered, rejoiced greatly at their return, considering their safety as a providential deliverance.

16th. Necessity induced two of the Indians to set off on horse-back, into the Seneca country, in search of provisions. The prisoners, in the mean time, were ordered to dig up a root, something resembling potatoes, which the Indians call Whoppanies. They tarried at this place, until towards the evening of the succeeding day, and made a soup of wild onions and turnip tops; this they eat without bread or salt, it could not therefore afford sufficient sustenance, either for young

or old ; their food being so very light, their strength daily wasted.

17th. They left this place, and crossed the Genesee river, (which empties its waters into lake Ontario,) on a raft of logs, bound together by hickory withes ; this appeared to be a dangerous method of ferrying them over such a river, to those who had been unaccustomed to such conveyances. They fixed their station near the Genesee banks, and procured more of the wild potatoe roots before mentioned, for their supper.

18th. One of the Indians left the company, taking with him the finest horse they had, and in some hours after, returned with a large piece of meat, ordering the captives to boil it ; this command they cheerfully performed, anxiously watching the kettle, fresh meat being a rarity which they had not eat for a long time : the Indians, when it was sufficiently boiled, distributed to each one a piece, eating sparingly themselves. The prisoners made their repast without bread or salt, and eat with a good relish, what they supposed to be fresh beef, but afterwards understood it was horse-flesh.

A shrill halloo which they heard, gave the prisoners some uneasiness ; one of the Indians immediately rode to examine the cause, and found it was Capt. Rowland Monteur, and his brother John's wife, with some other Indians, who were seeking them with provision. The remainder of the company soon reached them, and they divided some bread, which they had brought, into small pieces, according to the number of the company.

Here is a large extent of rich farming land, remarkable for its levelness and beautiful meadows. The country is so flat, that there are no falls in the rivers, and the waters run slow and deep ; and whenever showers descend, they continue a long time muddied.

The captain and his company had brought with them cakes of hommony and Indian corn ; of this they made a good meal. He appeared pleased to see the prisoners, having been absent from them several days, and ordered them all round to shake hands with him. From him they received information respecting Joseph Gilbert

and Thomas Peart, who were separated from the others on the 4th instant, that they had arrived at the Indian settlements, some time, in safety.

The company staid the night at this place. One of the Indians refused to suffer any of them to come near his fire, or converse with the prisoner, who in the distribution had fallen to him.

19th. Pounding hommony was this day's employment, the weather being warm, made it a hard task; they boiled and prepared it for supper, the Indians setting down to eat first; and when they had concluded their meal, they wiped the spoon on the soal of their mockasons, and then gave it to the captives: hunger alone could prevail on any one to eat after such filth and nastiness.

20th. Elizabeth Gilbert, the mother, being obliged to ride alone, missed the path, for which the Indians repeatedly struck her. Their route still continued through rich meadow. After wandering for a time out of the direct path, they came to an Indian town, and obtained the necessary information to pursue their journey: the Indians ran out of their huts to see the prisoners, and to partake of the plunder, but no part of it suited them. Being directed to travel the path back again, for a short distance, they did so, and then struck into another, and went on until night, by which time they were very hungry, not having eat since morning; the kettle was again set on the fire, for hommony, this being their only food.

21st. The report of a morning-gun from Niagara, which they heard, contributed to raise their hopes, they rejoiced at being so near. An Indian was dispatched on horse-back, to procure provisions from the fort.

Elizabeth Gilbert could not walk as fast as the rest, she was therefore sent forwards on foot, but was soon overtaken, and left behind, the rest being obliged by the Indians to go on without regarding her. She would have been greatly perplexed, when she came to a division-path, had not her husband lain a branch across the path which would have led her wrong: an affecting instance of both ingenuity and tenderness.

She met several Indians, who passed by without speaking to her.

An Indian belonging to the company, who was on the horse Elizabeth Gilbert had rode, overtook her, and, as he went on slowly, conversing with her, endeavoured to alarm her, by saying that she would be left behind, and perish in the woods; yet, notwithstanding this, his heart was so softened before he had gone any great distance from her, that he alighted from the horse and left him, that she might be able to reach the rest of the company. The more seriously she considered this, the more it appeared to her to be a convincing instance of the overruling protection of Him, who can "turn the heart of man, as the husbandman turneth the water-course in his field."

22d. As the Indians approached nearer their habitations, they frequently repeated their halloos, and after some time, they received an answer in the same manner, which alarmed the company much; but they soon discovered it to proceed from a party of whites and Indians, who were on some expedition, though their pretence was, that they were for New-York. Not long after parting with these, the captain's wife came to them; she was daughter to Siangorochti, king of the Senecas, but her mother being a Cayuga, she was ranked among that nation, the children generally reckoning their descent from the mother's side. This princess was attended by the captain's brother John, one other Indian, and a white prisoner who had been taken at Wyoming, by Rowland Monteur; she was dressed altogether in the Indian manner, shining with gold lace and silver baubles: they brought with them from the fort a supply of provision. The captain being at a distance behind, when his wife came, the company waited for him. After the customary salutations he addressed himself to his wife, telling her that Rebacca was her daughter, and that she must not be induced, by any consideration, to part with her; whereupon she took a silver ring off her finger, and put it upon Rebecca, by which she was adopted as her daughter.

They feasted upon the provisions that were brought, for they had been for several days before pinched with hunger, what sustenance they could procure not being sufficient to support nature.

23d. Their spirits were in some degree revived by the enjoyment of plenty, added to the pleasing hope of some favourable event procuring their releasement, as they were not far distant from Niagara.

The Indians proceeded on their journey, and continued whooping in the most frightful manner. In this day's route, they met another company of Indians, who compelled Benjamin Gilbert, the elder, to sit on the ground, and put several questions to him, to which he gave them the best answers he could; they then took his hat from him and went off.

Going through a small town near Niagara, an Indian woman came out of one of the huts, and struck each of the captives a blow. Not long after their departure from this place, Jesse, Rebecca, and their mother, were detained until the others had got out of their sight, when the mother was ordered to push on; and as she had to go by herself, she was much perplexed what course to take, as there was no path by which she could be directed: in this dilemma, she concluded to keep as strait forward as possible, and after some space of time, she had the satisfaction of overtaking the others. The pilot then made a short stay, that those who were behind might come up, and the captain handed some rum round, giving each a dram, except the two old folks, whom they did not consider worthy of this notice. Here the captain, who had the chief direction, painted Abner, Jesse, Rebecca, and Elizabeth Gilbert, jun. and presented each with a belt of wampum, as a token of their being received into favour, although they took from them all their hats and bonnets, except Rebecca's.

The prisoners were released from the heavy loads they had heretofore been compelled to carry, and were it not for the treatment they expected on their approaching the Indian towns, and the hardship of a separation, their situation would have been tolerable; but the hor-

ror of their minds, arising from the dreadful yells of the Indians, as they approached the hamlets, is easier conceived than described ; for they were no strangers to the customary cruelty exercised upon captives on entering their towns : the Indians, men, women, and children collect together, bringing clubs and stones, in order to beat them, which they usually do with great severity, by way of revenge for their relations who have been slain ; this is performed immediately upon their entering the village where the warriors reside : this treatment cannot be avoided, and the blows, however cruel, must be borne without complaint, and the prisoners are sorely beaten, until their enemies are wearied with the cruel sport. Their sufferings were in this case very great ; they received several wounds, and two of the women who were on horse-back, were much bruised by falling from their horses, which were frightened by the Indians. Elizabeth, the mother, took shelter by the side of one of them, but upon his observing that she met with some favour upon his account, he sent her away ; she then received several violent blows, so that she was almost disabled. The blood trickled from their heads, in a stream, their hair being cropt close, and the clothes they had on, in rags, made their situation truly piteous : while they were inflicting this revenge upon the captives, the king came, and put a stop to any further cruelty, by telling them " it was sufficient," which they immediately attended to.

Benjamin Gilbert, and Elizabeth his wife, Jesse Gilbert, and his wife, were ordered to captain Rowland Monteur's house ; the women belonging to it, were kind to them, and gave them something to eat : Sarah Gilbert, Jesse's wife, was taken from them by three women, in order to be placed in the family she was to be adopted by.

Two officers from Niagara Fort, Captains Dace and Powel, came to see the prisoners, and prevent (as they were informed) any abuse that might be given them : Benjamin Gilbert informed these officers, that he was apprehensive they were in great danger of being hur-

dered, upon which they promised him they would send a boat, the next day, to bring them to Niagara.

24th. Notwithstanding the kind intention of the officers, they did not derive the expected advantage from it, for the Indians insisted on their going to the fort on foot, although the bruises they had received the day before, from the many severe blows given them, rendered their journey on foot very distressing; but Capt. Monteur obstinately persisting, they dared not long remonstrate, or refuse.

When they left the Indian town, several issued from their huts after them, with sticks in their hands, yelling and screeching in a most dismal manner; but through the interposition of four Indian women, who had come with the captives, to prevent any further abuse they might receive, they were preserved: one of them walking between Benjamin Gilbert and his wife, led them, and desired Jesse to keep as near them as he could, the other three walked behind, and prevailed with the young Indians to desist. They had not pursued their route long, before they saw Capt. John Powel, who came from his boat, and persuaded (though with some difficulty) the Indians to get into it, with the captives, which relieved them from the apprehensions of further danger. After reaching the fort, Capt. Powel introduced them to Col. Guy Johnson, and Col. Butler, who asked the prisoners many questions, in the presence of the Indians. They presented the captain with a belt of wampum, which is a constant practice amongst them, when they intend a ratification of the peace. Before their connexion with Europeans, these belts were made of shells, found on the coasts of New-England and Virginia, which were sawed out into beads of an oblong shape, about a quarter of an inch long, which when strung together on leathern strings, and these strings fastened with fine threads made of sinews, compose what is called, a belt of wampum: but since the whites have gained footing among them, they make use of the common glass beads for this purpose.

The Indians, according to their usual custom and ceremony, at three separate times, ordered the prisoners to shake hands with Col. Johnson.

25th. Benjamin Gilbert, Elizabeth his wife, and Jesse Gilbert, were surrendered to Col. Johnson: this deliverance from such scenes of distress, as they had become acquainted with, gave them a more free opportunity of close reflection than heretofore.

The many sorrowful days and nights they had passed, the anxiety attendant on their frequent separation from each other, and the uncertainty of the fate of the rest of their family, overwhelmed them with grief.

26th. Expression is too weak to describe their distress, on leaving their children with these hard masters; they were not unacquainted with many of the difficulties, to which they would necessarily be exposed in a residence amongst Indians, and the loss which the young people would sustain, for want of a civilized and christian education.

27th. In this desponding situation, the kindness of sympathy was awakened in one of the Indian women, who even forgot her prejudices, and wiped away the tears which trickled down Elizabeth Gilbert's cheeks.

The particular attention of Col. Johnson's house-keeper to them, from a commiseration of their distress, claims their remembrance: Benjamin, his wife, and Jesse Gilbert, were invited to her house, where she not only gave the old folks the best room, but administered to their necessities, and endeavoured to sooth their sorrows.

Jesse Gilbert was favoured to get employ, which, as it was some alleviation of his misfortunes, may be considered as a providential kindness.

28th. A few days after they came to the Fort, they had information that Benjamin Peart was by the river side, with the Indians; upon hearing this report, his mother went to see him, but every attempt for his release was in vain; the Indians would by no means give him up. From this place they intended to march with their prisoner, to the Genesee River, about an hundred miles distance. As the affectionate mother's solicitations proved fruitless, her son not only felt the afflicting loss of his wife and child, from whom he had been torn some time before, but a renewal of his grief, on

this short sight of his parent : she procured him a hat, and also some salt, which was an acceptable burden for the journey.

Benjamin Gilbert, conversing with the Indian captain who made them captives, observed that he might say what none of the other Indians could, "That he had brought in the oldest man and the youngest child;" his reply to this was expressive; "It was not I, but the great God who brought you through, for we were determined to kill you, but were prevented."

The British officers being acquainted that Jesse Gilbert's wife was among the Indians, with great tenderness agreed to seek her out, and after a diligent enquiry, found she was among the Delawares : they went to them, and endeavoured to agree upon terms for her releasement : the Indians brought her to the fort the next day, but would not give her up to her relations.

29th. As the cabins of the Indians were but two miles from the fort, they went thither, and Jesse and the officers used every argument in their power to prevail upon them, representing how hard it was to part these two young people ; at length they consented to bring her in next day, with their whole tribe, for a final release.

30th. They accordingly came, but started so many objections that she was obliged to return with them.

31st. Early next morning, Capt. Robeson generously undertook to procure her liberty, which, after much attention and solicitude, he, together with lieutenant Hillyard, happily accomplished. They made the Indians several small presents, and gave them thirty pounds as a ransom.

When Sarah Gilbert had obtained her liberty, she altered her dress more in character for her sex, than she had been able to do whilst amongst the Indians, and went to her husband and parents at Col. Johnson's, where she was joyfully received.

Col. Johnson's housekeeper continued her kind attentions to them, during their stay here, and procured clothing for them from the king's stores.

6th Month 1st. About this time, the Senecas, among

whom Elizabeth Peart was captive, brought her with them to the fort; as soon as the mother heard of it, she went to her, and had some conversation with her but could not learn where she was to be sent to; she then enquired of the interpreter, and pressed on his friendship, to learn what was to become of her daughter; this request he complied with, and informed her that she was to be given away to another family of the Senecas, and adopted among them, in the place of a deceased relation. Capt. Powel interested himself in her case likewise, and offered to purchase her of them, but the Indians refused to give her up; and as the mother and daughter expected they should see each other no more, their parting was very affecting.

The Indian woman who had adopted Rebecca as her daughter, came also to the fort, and Elizabeth Gilbert made use of this opportunity to enquire concerning her daughter: the interpreter informed her, there was no probability of obtaining the enlargement of her child, as the Indians would not part with her: all she could do, was, to recommend her to their notice, as very weakly and of consequence not able to endure much fatigue.

2d and 3d. Not many days after their arrival at Niagara, a vessel came up to Lake Ontario to the fort, with orders for the prisoners to go to Montreal. In this vessel came one Capt. Brant, an Indian Chief, high in rank amongst them. Elizabeth Gilbert immediately applied herself to solicit and interest him on behalf of her children who yet remained in captivity; he readily promised her to use his endeavours to procure their liberty. A short time before they sailed for Montreal they received accounts of Abner and Elizabeth Gilbert the younger, but it was also understood that their possessors were not disposed to give them up. As the prospect of obtaining the release of their children was so very discouraging, it was no alleviation to their distress, to be removed to Montreal, where in all probability, they would seldom be able to gain any information respecting them; on which account they were very solicitous to stay at Niagara, but the Col. said they could

not remain there, unless the son would enter into the king's service; this could not be consented to, therefore they chose to submit to every calamity which might be permitted to befall them, and confide in the great Controller of events.

Here they became acquainted with one Jesse Pawling, from Pennsylvania, who was an officer among the British, and behaved with kindness and respect to the prisoners, which induced them to request his attention also to that part of the family remaining in captivity: it appeared to them of some consequence to gain an additional friend. The Col. also gave his promise to exert himself on their behalf.

After continuing ten days at Col. Johnson's, they took boat in the forenoon of the 2d, being the sixth day of the week, and crossed the river Niagara, in order to go on board the vessel, which lay in Lake Ontario, for Montreal. The officers procured necessaries for their voyage in great plenty, and they were also furnished with orders to draw more at certain places, as they might have occasion. These civilities may appear to many to be too trivial to be mentioned in this narrative, but those who have been in equal distress, will not be insensible of their value.

4th. The vessel sailed down the lake on the sixth day of the week, and on the first-day following, being the fourth day of the sixth month, 1780, came to Carlton Island, where there were such a number of small boats which brought provisions, that it had the appearance of a fleet. Benjamin Gilbert and Jesse went on shore to obtain leave from the commanding officer to go to Montreal in the small boats, as the vessel they came in could proceed no further. They met with a kind reception and their request was granted.

5th. On Second-day following, they left Carlton Island, which lies at the mouth of Lake Ontario, and took their passage in open boats down the river St. Laurence, and passed a number of small islands. There is a rapid descent in the waters of this river, which appears dangerous to those unacquainted with these kind of falls. The Frenchmen who rowed the boats

kept them near the shore, and passed without much difficulty between the rocks.

6th, 7th, and 8th. Benjamin Gilbert had been much indisposed before they left the fort, and his disorder was increased by a rain which fell on their passage, as they were without any covering. They passed Oswagatchy, an English garrison, by the side of the river; but they were not permitted to stop here; they proceeded down the St. Laurence, and the rain continuing, went on shore on an island in order to secure themselves from the weather. Here they made a shelter for Benjamin Gilbert, and when the rain ceased, a place was prepared for him in the boat, that he might lie down with more ease. His bodily weakness made such rapid progress, that it rendered all the care and attention of his wife necessary, and likewise called forth all her fortitude: she supported him in her arms, affording every possible relief to mitigate his extreme pains. And although in this distressed condition, he, notwithstanding, gave a satisfactory evidence of the virtue and power of a patient and holy resignation, which can disarm the King of Terrors, and receive him as a welcome messenger. Thus prepared, he passed from this state of probation the eighth day of the sixth month, 1780, in the evening, leaving his wife and two children who were with him, in all the anxiety of deep distress, although they had no doubt but that their loss was his everlasting gain. Being without a light in the boat, the darkness of the night added not a little to their melancholy situation. As there were not any others with Elizabeth Gilbert, but her children and the four Frenchmen who managed the boat, and her apprehensions alarmed her, lest they should throw the corpse overboard, as they appeared to be an unfeeling company, she therefore applied to some British officers who were in a boat behind them, who dispelled her fears, and received her under their protection.

9th. In the morning they passed the garrison of Coeur de Lac, and waited for some considerable time a small distance below it. Squire Campbell who had the charge of the prisoners, when he heard of Benjamin

Gilbert's decease, sent Jesse to the commandant of this garrison to get a coffin, in which they put the corpse, and very hastily interred him under an oak not far from the fort. The boat-men would not allow his widow to pay the last tribute to his memory, but regardless of her affliction, refused to wait. Her distress on this occasion was great indeed; but being sensible that it was her duty to submit to the dispensations of an over-ruling Providence, which are all ordered in wisdom, she endeavoured to support herself under her afflictions, and proceeded with the boat-men.

Near this place they passed by a grist-mill, which is maintained by a stone wing extended into the river St. Laurence: the stream being very rapid, acquires a force sufficient to turn the wheel without the further expence of a dam.

The current carried their boats forwards with amazing rapidity, and the falls became so dangerous that the boats could proceed no further; they therefore landed in the evening, and went to the commanding officer of Fort Lasheen to request a lodging; but the houses in the garrison were so crowded, that it was with difficulty they obtained a small room belonging to the boat-builders to retire to, and here they stowed themselves with ten others.

10th. The garrison of Lasheen is on the Isle of Jesu, on which the town of Montreal stands, about the distance of nine miles: hither our travellers had to go by land, and as they were entirely unacquainted with the road, they took the advantage of an empty cart, which was going to the town, for the women to ride in.

The land in this neighbourhood is very stony, and the soil thin; the cattle small, and ill favoured.

When they arrived at Montreal, they were introduced to Brigadier General M'Clean, who, after examining them, sent them to one Duquesne, an officer amongst the loyalists, who being from home, they were desired to wait in the yard until he came; this want of politeness gave them no favourable impressions of

the master of the house : when he returned he read their pass, and gave Jesse an order for three days' provisions.

Daniel M'Ulphin received them into his house ; by him they were treated with great kindness, and the women continued at his house and worked five weeks for him.

Jesse Gilbert met with employ at Thomas Busby's, where he lived very agreeably for the space of nine months.

Elizabeth Gilbert had the satisfaction of an easy employ at Adam Scott's, merchant, having the superintendence of his kitchen ; but about six weeks after she engaged in his service, Jesse's wife, Sarah, was taken sick at Thomas Busby's, which made it necessary for her mother to disengage herself from the place where she was so agreeably situated, in order to nurse her. These three were favoured to be considered as the king's prisoners, having rations allowed them : this assistance was very comfortable, but Elizabeth's name being erased out of the list at a time when they needed an additional supply, they were much straightened. Upon an application to one Col. Campbell, he, together with Esquire Campbell, took down a short account of her sufferings and situation, and after preparing a concise narrative, they applied to the Brigadier General to forward it to General Haldimand at Quebec, desiring his attention to the sufferers, who speedily issued his orders, that the releasement of the family should be procured, with particular injunctions for every garrison to furnish them with necessaries as they came down.

As soon as Sarah Gilbert recovered from her indisposition, her mother returned to Adam Scott's family.

Thomas Gomerson, hearing of their situation, came to see them ; he was educated a Quaker, and had been a merchant of New-York, and travelled with Robert Walker in his religious visits ; but upon the commencement of the war, had deviated from his former principles, and had lost all the appearance of a Friend, wearing a sword : he behaved with respect to the prisoners, and made Elizabeth a present.

GILBERT'S CAPTIVITY.

The particular attention of Col. Closs, and the care he shewed by writing to Niagara, on behalf of the captives, as he was entirely a stranger to her, is remembered with gratitude.

As there was an opportunity of hearing from Niagara, it gave them great pleasure to be informed that Elizabeth Gilbert was amongst the white people, she having obtained her release from the Indians, prior to the others.

Sarah Gilbert, wife of Jesse, becoming a mother, Elizabeth left the service she was engaged in, Jesse, having taken a house, that she might give her daughter every necessary attendance; and in order to make their situation as comfortable as possible, they took a child to nurse, which added a little to their income. After this, Elizabeth Gilbert hired herself to iron a day for Adam Scott; whilst she was at her work, a little girl belonging to the house, acquainted her that there were some who wanted to see her, and upon entering into the room, she found six of her children! the joy and surprise she felt on this occasion, were beyond what we shall attempt to describe. A messenger was sent to inform Jesse and his wife, that Joseph Gilbert, Benjamin Peart, Elizabeth his wife, and young child, Abner and Elizabeth Gilbert, the younger, were with their mother. It must afford very pleasing reflections to any affectionate disposition, to dwell awhile on this scene, that after a captivity of upwards of fourteen months, so happy a meeting should take place.

Thomas Peart, who had obtained his liberty, and tarried at Niagara, that he might be of service to the two yet remaining in captivity, viz. Benjamin Gilbert, jun. and Rebecca Gilbert.

Abigail Dodson, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, who was taken with them, having inadvertently informed the Indians she was not of the Gilbert family all attempts for her liberty were fruitless.

We shall now proceed to relate how Joseph Gilbert the eldest son of the deceased, fared amongst the Indians: he, with Thomas Peart, Benjamin Gilbert, jun

and Jesse Gilbert's wife Sarah, were taken along the Westward Path, as before related : after some short continuance in this path, Thomas Peart and Joseph Gilbert were taken from the other two, and by a different rout through many difficulties, they were brought to Caracadera, where they received the insults of the women and children, whose husbands or parents had fallen in their hostile excursions.

Joseph Gilbert was separated from his companion, and removed to an Indian villa, called Nundow, about seven miles from Caracadera ; his residence was, for several weeks, in the king's family, whose hamlet was superior to the other small huts. The king himself brought him some hommony, and treated him with great civility, intending his adoption into the family, in the place of one of his sons, who was slain when general Sullivan drove them from their habitations. As Nundow was not to be the place of his abode, his quarters were soon changed, and he was taken back to Caracadera ; but his weakness of body was so great, that he was two days accomplishing this journey, which was only seven miles, and not able to procure any other food than roots and herbs, the Indian economy leaving them without any provisions to subsist on. Here they adopted him into the family of one of the king's sons, informing him, that if he would marry amongst them, he should enjoy the privileges which they enjoyed ; but this proposal he was not disposed to comply with, and as he was not over-anxious to conceal his dislike to them, the sufferings he underwent were not alleviated.

The manner of his life differing so much from what he had before been accustomed to, having to eat the wild roots and herbs before mentioned, and as he had been lame from a child, and subject to frequent indispositions, it was requisite for him to pay more attention to his weak habit of body, than his captors were willing he should. When the master of the family was at home, the respect he shewed to Joseph, and his kindness to him, rendered his situation more tolerable than in his absence. Frequently suffering with hunger, the privilege of a plenteous table, appeared to him

as an inestimable blessing, which claimed the warmest devotion of gratitude: in such a distressed situation, the hours rolled over with a tediousness almost insupportable, as he had no agreeable employ to relieve his mind from the reflections of his sorrowful captivity: this manner of life continued about three months, and when they could no longer procure a supply by their hunting, necessity compelled them to Niagara fort for provision. The greater number of the Indians belonging to Caracadara attended on this journey, in order to obtain a supply of provisions; their want of economy being so great as to have consumed so early as the eighth month, all they had raised the last year, and the present crops unfit to gather: their profuse manner of using their scanty pittance of provision, generally introducing a famine, after a short time of feasting. They compute the distance from Caracadara, to Niagara fort, to be of 130 miles: on this journey they were upwards of five days, taking some venison in their route, and feasting with great greediness, as they had been a long time without meat.

When they reached the fort, they procured clothing from the king's stores for Joseph, Gilbert, such as the Indians usually wear themselves; a match-coat, leggings, &c. His indisposition confined him at Col. Johnson's for several days, during which time, the British officers endeavoured to agree with the Indians for his release-ment, but they would not consent. The afflicting account of the death of his father, which was here communicated to him, spread an additional gloom on his mind. After continuing at the fort about four weeks, the Indians ordered him back with them; this was a sore stroke, to leave a degree of ease and plenty, and resume the hardships of an Indian life: with this uncomfortable prospect before him, added to his lameness, the journey was toilsome and painful. They were five days in their return, and when they arrived, their corn was ripe for use; this, with the advantage of hunting, as the game was in its greatest perfection, furnished a present comfortable subsistence.

Joseph had permission to visit his fellow-captive,

Thomas Peart, who was at a small town of the Indians, about seven miles distance, called Nundow, to whom he communicated the sorrowful intelligence of their mother's widowed situation.

At the first approach of spring, Joseph Gilbert and his adopted brother employed themselves in procuring rails, and repairing the fence about the lot of ground they intended to plant with corn; as this part of preserving the grain was allotted to them, the planting and culture was assigned to the women, their husbandry being altogether performed by the hoe.

The Indian manner of life was by no means agreeable to Joseph Gilbert; their irregularity in their meals was hard for him to bear; when they had provisions in plenty, they observed no plan of domestic economy, but indulged their voracious appetites which soon consumed their stock, and a famine succeeded.

In the early part of the sixth month, 1781, their corn was spent, and they were obliged to have recourse again to the wild herbage and roots, and were so reduced for want of provision, that the Indians having found the carcase of a dead horse, they took the meat and roasted it.

An officer from the fort came down to enquire into the situation of the Indians, upon observing the low condition Joseph was in, not being likely to continue long without some relief, which the officer privately afforded, he being permitted to frequent his house, he advised him by flight to endeavour an escape from the Indians, informing him that he had no other expedient for his release; this confirmed him in a resolution he had for some time been contemplating, but his lameness and weak habit for want of proper sustenance, rendered it impracticable to make such an attempt at that time, and it would require much care and attention to his own health and strength to gather sufficient for such an undertaking; he therefore made use of the liberty allowed him to visit the officer, and partake of his kindness and assistance, that he might be prepared for the journey.

Embracing a favourable opportunity when the men

were generally from home, some in their war expeditions, and some out hunting, he left them one night whilst the family slept, and made the best of his way towards Niagara Fort, following the path, as he had once before gone along it. Having a small piece of bread which he took from the hut, he made a hasty repast, travelling day and night in order to escape from the further distresses of captivity. As he neither took any sleep, or other food by the way than the piece of bread mentioned for the two days and nights he pursued his journey, he was much fatigued when he reached the fort, and he experienced the effects for several days. Upon his applying to Col. Johnson, he was hospitably entertained, and the next day saw three of the Indians whom he had left at the town when he set off.

After a few days stay here, as most of the family was discharged from captivity, and waiting for a passage to Montreal, a vessel was fitted to take them on board, in order to proceed down the lake.

We come next to Benjamin Peart, who remained the first night after his arriving at the Indian huts, with his wife and child, but was separated from them the next day, and taken about a mile and an half, and presented to one of the families of the Seneca nation, and afterwards introduced to one of their chiefs, who made a long harangue which Benjamin did not understand. The Indians then gave him to a squaw in order to be received as her adopted child, who ordered him to a private hut, where the women wept over him in remembrance of the relation in whose stead he was received. After this he went with his mother (by adoption) to Niagara River, about two miles below the great falls, and staid here several days, then went to the fort on their way to the Genesee River, where he had the pleasure of conversing with his mother, and receiving information concerning his wife and child; but even this information was short-lived, for he neither could obtain permission to visit his wife, nor was he allowed to converse freely with his mother, as the Indians hurried him on board their bark canoes, where

having placed their provisions, they proceeded with expedition down the lake to the mouth of the Genesee River; the computed distance from the small village to the mouth of the river, being one hundred miles, and from thence up the Genesee to the place of their destination, thirty miles; in their passage up the river they were about five days, and as the falls in this river near its entrance into Lake Ontario, has made a carrying place of about two miles, they dragged their canoe this distance to the place of boating above the falls. There were nine Indians of the party with them. They frequently caught fish by the way.

It no doubt was a sore affliction to Benjamin to be so far removed from his wife and child whilst amongst the Indians. Patience and resignation alone could endure it.

When the party arrived at the place of their designed settlement, they soon erected a small hut or wigwam, and the ground being rich and level, they began with their plantation of Indian corn. Two white men who had been taken prisoners, the one from Susquehanna, the other from Minisinks, both in Pennsylvania, lived near this new settlement, and were allowed by the Indians to use the horses and plant for themselves. These men lightened the toil of Benjamin Peart's servitude, as he was frequently in their company, and he had the liberty of doing something for himself, though without much success.

His new habitation, as it was not very healthy, introduced fresh difficulties, for he had not continued here long before he was afflicted with sickness, which preyed upon him near three months, the Indians repeatedly endeavouring to relieve him by their knowledge in simples, but their endeavours proved ineffectual; the approach of the winter season afforded the relief sought for. Their provision was not very tempting to a weakly constitution, having nothing else than homony, and but short allowance even of that, insomuch that when his appetite increased, he could not procure food sufficient to recruit his strength. The company of his brother Thomas Peart who visited him, was a

great comfort, and as the town he lived at was but the distance of eighteen miles, they had frequent opportunities of condoling with each other in their distress.

The Indian men being absent on one of their war excursions, and the women employed in gathering the corn, left Benjamin Peart much leisure to reflect in solitude.

Towards the beginning of the winter season the men returned, and built themselves a log house for a granary, and then removed about twenty miles from their settlement into the hunting country, and procured a great variety of game, which they usually eat without bread or salt. As he had been with the Indians for several months, their language became more familiar to him.

Hunting and feasting after their manner being their only employ, they soon cleared the place where they settled of the game, which made a second removal necessary, and they are so accustomed to this wandering life, that it becomes their choice.

They fixed up a log hut in this second hunting-place, and continued until the second month, when they returned to their first settlement, though their stay was but a few days, and then back again to their log hut.

A heavy rain falling melted some of the snow which had covered the ground about two feet deep.

The whole family concluded upon a journey to Niagara Fort by land, which was completed in seven days. At the fort he had the satisfaction of conversing with his brother Thomas Peart, and the same day his wife also came from Buffaloe Creek, with the Senecas to the fort; this happy meeting, after an absence of ten months, drew tears of joy from them. He made an inquiry after his child, as he had neither heard from it or the mother since their separation. The Indians not approving of their conversing much together, as they imagined they would remember their former situation, and become less contented with their present manner of life, they separated them again the same day, and took Benjamin's wife about four miles distance; but the party with whom he came permitted him to stay

here several nights, and when the Indians had completed their purpose of traffic they returned, taking him some miles back with them to one of their towns; but upon his telling them he was desirous of returning to the fort to procure something he had before forgot, in order for his journey, he was permitted. As he staid the night, his adopted brother the Indian came for him, but upon his complaining that he was so lame as to prevent his travelling with them, they suffered him to remain behind.

He continued at the fort about two months before the Indians came back again, and as he laboured for the white people, he had an opportunity of procuring salt provision from the king's stores, which had been for a long time a dainty to him.

When one of the Indians (a second adopted brother) came for him, Benjamin went with him to Capt. Powel, who with earnest solicitations and some presents, prevailed upon the Indian to suffer him to stay until he returned from his war expedition; but this was the last he ever made, as he lost his life on the frontiers of New York.

After this another captain (a third adopted brother) came to the fort, and when Benjamin Peart saw him, he applied to Adjutant-General Wilkinson to intercede for his release, who accordingly waited upon Col. Johnson and other officers, to prevail with them to exert themselves on his behalf; they concluded to hold a council with the Indians for this purpose, who after some deliberation surrendered him up to Col. Johnson, for which he gave them a valuable compensation.

Benjamin Peart, after his release, was employed in Col. Johnson's service, and continued with him for several months. His child had been released for some time, and his wife by earnest entreaty and plea of sickness, had prevailed with the Indians to permit her stay at the fort, which proved a great consolation and comfort after so long a separation.

About the middle of the eighth month, there was preparation made for their proceeding to Montreal, as by this time there were six of the prisoners ready to

go in a ship which lay in lake Ontario, whose names were Joseph Gilbert, Benjamin Peart, his wife and child, Abner Gilbert, and Elizabeth Gilbert the younger: these went on board the vessel to Charlton island, which is as far as the large vessels they use in the lake can proceed; the remainder of the way (on account of the frequent shoals) they are obliged to go in smaller boats.

The commanding officer at Niagara procured a suitable supply of provision, and furnished them with orders to draw more at the several garrisons, as occasion required.

In two days they arrived at the upper end of Charlton island, and went to the commander in chief to shew their pass, and obtain what they were in need of. Afterwards they continued on to the garrison of Oswagotchy by the side of the river St. Laurence, in an open boat rowed by four Frenchmen, this class of people being chiefly employed in laborious services.

The stream was so rapid and full of rocks, that the prisoners were too much alarmed to remain in the boat, and concluded to go on shore until they passed the danger; but the Frenchmen, who had been accustomed to these wild and violent rapids, (the longest of which is known by the name of the Long Sou,) kept on board: this surprising scene continued for the distance of six miles, and they viewed it with a degree of horror, their heads becoming almost giddy with the prospect. When the boats had shot the falls, they again went on board and continued down the river to Cour de Lac. No great distance below this they anchored, and landed at the place where their father was interred, shedding many tears of filial affection to his memory. They afterwards applied to the commanding officer of the garrison for provisions and other necessities; they then bid adieu to this solemn spot of sorrow, and proceeded to Lasheen, which they reached the twenty-fourth day of the eighth month, having been eight days on their voyage.

After refreshing themselves at this garrison, they set forward on foot for Montreal, which they reached the

same day. They went to the brigadier general and shewed him their passport, and as soon as at liberty waited on their mother at Adam Scott's, as has been already related.

The situation of Elizabeth Peart, wife of Benjamin, and her child is next to be related.

After she and the child were parted from her husband, Abigail Dodson and the child were taken several miles in the night to a little hut, where they staid till morning, and the day following were taken within eight miles of Niagara, where she was adopted into one of the families of Senecas; the ceremony of adoption to her was tedious and distressing; they obliged her to sit down with a young man, an Indian, and the eldest chieftain of the family repeating a jargon of words to her unintelligible, but which she considered as some form amongst them of marriage, and this apprehension introduced the most violent agitations, as she was determined, at all events, to oppose any step of this nature; but after the old Indian concluded his speech she was relieved from the dreadful embarrassment she had been under, as she was led away by another Indian.

Abigail Dodson was given the same day to one of the families of the Cayuga nation, so that Elizabeth Peart saw her no more.

The man who led Elizabeth from the company took her into the family for whom they adopted her, and introduced her to her parents, brothers, and sisters, in the Indian style, who received her very kindly, and made a grievous lamentation over her according to custom. After she had been with them two days, the whole family left their habitation and went about two miles to fort Slusher, where they staid several days: this fort is about one mile above Niagara Falls.

As she was much indisposed, the Indians were detained several days for her; but as they cared little for her, she was obliged to lie on the damp ground, which prevented her speedy recovery. As soon as her disorder abated of its violence, they set off in a bark canoe which they had provided, intending for Buffaloe Creek; and

as they went slowly, they had an opportunity of taking some fish.

When they arrived at the place of their intended settlement, they went on shore and built an house.

A few days after they came to this new settlement, they returned with Elizabeth to fort Slusher, when she was told her child must be taken away from her ; this was truly afflicting, but all remonstrances were in vain.

From fort Slusher she travelled on foot, carrying her child to Niagara, it being eighteen miles, and in sultry weather, rendered it a painful addition to the thoughts of parting with her tender offspring. The intent of their journey was to obtain provisions, and their stay at the fort was of several days continuance. Capt. Powel afforded her an asylum in his house.

The Indians took the child from her, and went with it across the river to adopt it into the family they had assigned for it, notwithstanding Capt. Powel, at his wife's request, interceded that it might not be removed from its mother ; but as it was so young, they returned it to the mother after its adoption, until it should be convenient to send it to the family under whose protection it was to be placed.

Obtaining the provision and other necessities they came to Niagara to trade for, they returned to fort Slusher on foot, from whence they embarked in their canoes. It being near the time of planting, they used much expedition in this journey.

The labour and drudgery in a family falling to the share of the women, Elizabeth had to assist the squaw in preparing the ground and planting corn.

Their provision being scant they suffered much, and as their dependence for a sufficient supply until the gathering their crop, was on what they should receive from the fort, they were under the necessity of making a second journey thither.

They were two days on the road at this time. A small distance before they came to the fort, they took her child from her, and sent it to its destined family, and it was several months before she had an opportunity of seeing it again. After being taken from her hus-

band, to lose her darling infant, was a severe stroke : she lamented her condition and wept sorely, for which one of the Indians inhumanly struck her. Her Indian father seemed a little moved to behold her so distressed ; and in order to console her, assured her they would bring it back again, but she saw it not until the spring following.

After they had disposed of their peltries, they returned to their habitation by the same route which they had come.

With a heart oppressed with sorrow, Elizabeth trod back her steps, mourning for her lost infant, for this idea presented itself continually to her mind ; but as she experienced how fruitless, nay, how dangerous, solicitations in behalf of her child were, she dried up her tears and pined in secret.

Soon after they reached their own habitation, Elizabeth Peart was again afflicted with sickness. At the first they shewed some attention to her complaints ; but as she did not speedily recover so as to be able to work, they discontinued every attention, and built a small hut by the side of the corn-field, placing her in it to mind the corn. In this lonely condition she saw a white man, who had been made prisoner among the Indians : he informed her that her child was released, and with the white people : this information revived her drooping spirits, and a short time after she recovered of her indisposition, but her employment still continued of attending the corn until it was ripe for gathering, which she assisted in. When the harvest was over, they permitted her to return and live with them.

A time of plenty commenced, and they lived as if they had sufficient to last the year through, faring plentifully every day.

A drunken Indian came to the cabin one day, and the old Indian woman complaining to him of Elizabeth, his behaviour exceedingly terrified her : he stormed like a fury, and at length struck her a violent blow which laid her on the ground ; he then began to pull her about and abuse her much, when another of the women interposed, and rescued her from further suf-

fering. Such is the shocking effect of spirituous liquor on these people, it totally deprives them both of sense and humanity.

A tedious winter prevented them from leaving their habitation, and deprived her of the pleasure of hearing often from her friends, who were very much scattered; but a prisoner, who had lately seen her husband, informed her of his being much indisposed at the Genesee River, which was upwards of one hundred miles distance. On receiving this intelligence, she stood in need of much consolation, but had no source of comfort, except in her own bosom.

Near the return of spring, their provision failing, they were compelled to go off to the fort for a fresh supply, having but a small portion of corn, which they allowed out once each day.

Through snow and severe frost they went for Niagara, suffering much from the excessive cold. And when they came within a few miles of the fort, which they were four days accomplishing, they struck up a small wigwam for some of the family, with the prisoners, to live in, until the return of the warriors from the fort.

As soon as Capt. Powel's wife heard that the young child's mother had come with the Indians, she desired to see her, claiming some relationship in the Indian way, as she also had been a prisoner amongst them. They granted her request, and Elizabeth was accordingly introduced, and informed that her husband was returned to the fort, and there was some expectations of his release. The same day Benjamin Peart came to see his wife, but could not be permitted to continue with her, as the Indians insisted on her going back with them to their cabin, which, as has been related, was some miles distant.

Elizabeth Peart was not allowed for some days to go from the cabin, but a white family who had bought her child from the Indians to whom it had been presented, offered the party with whom Elizabeth was confined a bottle of rum if they would bring her across the river to her child, which they did and delighted

the fond mother with this happy meeting, as she had not seen it for the space of eight months.

She was permitted to stay with the family where her child was, for two days, when she returned with the Indians to their cabin. After some time she obtained a further permission to go to the fort, where she had some needle-work from the white people, which afforded her a plea for often visiting it. At length Capt. Powel's wife prevailed with them to suffer her to continue a few days at her house, and work for her family, which was granted. At the expiration of the time, upon the coming of the Indians for her to return with them, she pleaded indisposition, and by this means they were repeatedly dissuaded from taking her with them.

As the time of planting drew nigh, she made use of a little address to retard her departure. Having a small swelling on her neck, she applied a poultice, which led the Indians into a belief it was improper to remove her, and they consented to come again for her in two weeks.

Her child was given up to her soon after her arrival at the fort, where she lodged at Capt. Powel's, and her husband came frequently to visit her, which was a great happiness, as her trials in their separation had been many.

At the time appointed some of the Indians came again, but she still pleaded indisposition, and had confined herself to her bed. One of the women interrogated her very closely, but did not insist upon her going back. Thus several months elapsed, she contriving delays as often as they came.

When the vessel which was to take the other five, among whom were her husband and child, was ready to sail, the officers at Niagara concluded she might also go with them, as they saw no reasonable objection, and they doubted not but it was in their power to satisfy these Indians who considered her as their property.

Abner Gilbert, another of the captives, when the company had reached the Indian town, within three

miles of Niagara Fort, was, with Elizabeth Gilbert, the younger, separated from the rest, about the latter part of the fifth month, 1780, and were both adopted into John Huston's family, who was of the Cayuga Nation. After a stay of three days at or near the settlement of these Indians, they removed to a place near the Great Falls, which is about eighteen miles distant from the Fort, and loitered here three days more. They then crossed the river, and settled near its banks, clearing a piece of land, and prepared it by the hoe for planting. Until they could gather their corn, their dependence was entirely upon the fort.

After the space of three weeks they packed up their moveables, which they generally carry with them in their rambles, and went down the river to get provisions at Butlersbury, a small village built by Col. Butler and is on the opposite side of the river to Niagara fort. They staid one night at the village, observing great caution that none of the white people should converse with the prisoners. Next day, after transacting their business, they returned to their settlement, and continued there but about one week, when it was concluded they must go again for Butlersbury; after they had left their habitation a small distance the head of the family met with his brother, and as they are very ceremonious in such interviews, the place of meeting was their rendezvous for the day and night. In the morning the family, with the brother before mentioned, proceeded for Butlersbury, and reached it before night. They went to the house of an Englishman, one John Seecord, who was styled brother to the chief of the family, having lived with him some time before.

After some deliberation it was agreed that Elizabeth Gilbert should continue in this family till sent for; this was an agreeable change to her.

Abner returned with them to the settlement; his employ being to fence and secure the corn patch; sometimes he had plenty of provisions but was often in want.

The mistress of the family one day intending for Butlersbury, ordered Abner to prepare to go with her; but she had not gone far before she sent him back.

Notwithstanding he had long been inured to frequent disappointments, he was much mortified at returning, as he expected to have seen his sister. When the woman came home she gave him no information about her, and all inquiries on his part would have been fruitless.

The place they had settled at served for a dwelling until fall, and as it was not very far distant from the fort, by often applying for provision, they were not so much distressed between the failing of their old crop and the gathering of the new one, as those who lived at a greater distance.

In the fall John Huston, the head of the family, went out hunting, and in his return caught cold from his careless manner of lying in the wet, and thereby lost the use of his limbs for a long time. On being informed of his situation, the family moved to the place where he was: they fixed a shelter over him (as he was unable to move himself) and continued here about a month; but as it was remote from any settlement, and they had to go often to the fort, for the necessaries of life, they concluded to return to their own habitation. Abner, one Indian man, and some of the women carried the cripple in a blanket about two miles: this was so hard a task, they agreed to put up a small house and wait for his recovery; but not long after, they had an opportunity of conveying him on horse-back to the landing, about nine miles above the fort. As this was their plantation, and the time of gathering their crops, they took in their corn, which, as has been before observed, is the business of the women. Then they changed their quarters, carrying the lame Indian as before, in a blanket, down to the river side, when they went on board canoes, and crossed the river in order to get to their hunting-ground, where they usually spend the winter.

Abner Gilbert lived a dronish, Indian life, idle and poor, having no other employ than the gathering of hickory-nuts; and although young, his situation was very irksome.

As soon as the family came to the hunting-ground, they patched up a slight hut for their residence, and employed themselves in hunting. They took Abner along

with them in one of their tours, but they were then unsuccessful, taking nothing but racoons and porcupines.

The crop of Indian corn proving too scanty a pittance for the winter, Abner on this account, had some agreeable employ, which was to visit the fort, and procure a supply of provisions, which continued to be his employment the remainder of the season.

In the spring, John Huston, the Indian who had been lame the whole winter, recovered, and unhappily had it in his power to obtain a supply of rum, which he frequently drank to excess; and always when thus debauched was extravagantly morose, quarrelling with the women who were in the family, and at length left them. Soon after his departure the family moved about forty miles, near Buffalo Creek, which empties its waters into Lake Erie. At this place Abner heard of his sister, Rebecca Gilbert, who still remained in captivity not far from his new habitation. This was their summer residence, they therefore undertook to clear a piece of land, in which they put corn, pumpkins and squashes.

Abner having no useful employ, amused himself with catching fish in the lake, and furnished the family with frequent messes of various kinds, which they eat without bread or salt; for the distance of this settlement from the fort prevented them from obtaining provisions so frequently as necessary. Capt. John Powel and Thomas Peart (the latter had by this time obtained his release from the Indians,) and several others came among the Indian settlements with provision and hoes for them. The account of their coming soon spread amongst the Indians. The chiefs of every tribe came, bringing with them as many little sticks as there were persons in their tribe, to express the number, in order to obtain a just proportion of the provision to be distributed. They are said to be unacquainted with any other power of explaining numbers than by this simple hieroglyphic mode.

It was upwards of a year since Abner had been parted from his relations, and as he had not seen his brother, Thomas Peart, in that space of time, this unexpected

meeting gave him great joy, but it was of short duration, as they were forced to leave him behind. During the corn season he was employed in tending it, and not being of an impatient disposition, he bore his captivity without repining.

In the seventh month, 1781, the family went to Butlersbury, when Col. Butler treated with the woman who was the head of this family, for the release of Abner, which she at length consented to, on receiving some presents, but said he must first return with her, and she would deliver him up in twenty days. Upon their return, she gave Abner the agreeable information that he was to be given up. This added a spur to his industry, and made his labour light.

Some days before the time agreed on, they proceeded for Butlersbury, and went to John Secord's, where his sister, Elizabeth Gilbert, had been from the time mentioned in the former part of this narrative.

Abner was discharged by the Indians soon after his arrival at the English village, and John Secord permitted him to live in his family with his sister. With this family they continued two weeks, and as they were under the care of the English officers, they were permitted to draw clothing and provisions from the king's stores.

Afterwards Benjamin Peart and his brother, Thomas, who were both released, came over for their brother and sister at John Secord's, and went with them to Capt. Powel's in order to be nearer to the vessel they were to go in to Montreal.

The next of the family who comes within notice is Elizabeth Gilbert, the sister. From the time of her being first introduced by the Indian into the family of John Secord, who was one in whom he placed great confidence, she was under the necessity of having new clothes, as those she had brought from home were much worn. Her situation in the family where she was placed was comfortable. After a few days' residence with them she discovered where the young child was, that had some time before been taken from its mother, Elizabeth Peart, as before mentioned ; and her-

self, together with John Secord's wife, with whom she lived, and capt. Fry's wife, went to see it, in order to purchase it from the Indian woman who had it under her care; but they could not then prevail with her, though some time after capt. Fry's wife purchased it for thirteen dollars. Whilst among the Indians it had been for a long time indisposed, and in a lingering, distressing situation; but under its present kind protectress, who treated the child as her own, it soon recruited.

Elizabeth Gilbert, jun. lived very agreeably in John Secord's family rather more than a year, and became so fondly attached to her benefactors, that she usually styled the mistress of the house her mamma. During her residence here, her brother Abner and Thomas Peart came several times to visit her.

The afflicting loss of her father, to whom she was affectionately endeared, and the separation from her mother, whom she had no expectation of seeing again, was a severe trial, although moderated by the kind attentions shewn her by the family in which she lived.

John Secord, having some business at Niagara, took Betsy with him, where she had the satisfaction of seeing six of her relations who had been captives, but were most of them released: this happy meeting made the trip to the fort a very agreeable one. She stayed with them all night, and then returned.

Not long after this visit, Col. Butler and John Secord sent for the Indian who claimed Elizabeth as his property, and when he arrived they made overtures to purchase her, but he declared he would not sell his own flesh and blood; for thus they style those whom they have adopted. They then had recourse to presents, which, overcoming his scruples, they obtained her discharge; after which she remained two weeks at Butlersbury, and then went to her mother at Montreal.

Having given a brief relation of the happy release and meeting of such of the captives as had returned from among the Indians, excepting Thomas Peart.

whose narrative is deferred, as he was exerting his endeavours for the benefit of his sister and cousin who still remained behind.

It may not be improper to return to the mother, who with several of her children were at Montreal. The nurse-child which they had taken, as related in the former part of this account, dying, was a considerable loss to them, as they could not, even by their utmost industry, gain as much any other way.

In the fall of the year 1781, Col. Johnson, Capt. Powel, and some other officers, came to Montreal upon business, and were so kind in their remembrance of the family, as to inquire after them, and to make them some presents, congratulating the mother on the happy releasement of so many of her children. They encouraged her with the information of their agreement with the Indians, for the releasement of her daughter, Rebecca, expecting that she was by that time at Niagara; but in this opinion they were mistaken, as the Indian family who adopted her, valued her too high to be easily prevailed with, and it was a long time after this before she was given up.

Elizabeth Gilbert and her daughters took in clothes to wash for their support, and being industrious and careful, it afforded them a tolerable subsistence.

Jesse Gilbert obtained employ in his trade as a cooper, which yielded a welcome addition to their stock.

Elizabeth Gilbert suffered no opportunity to pass her, of inquiring about her friends and relations in Pennsylvania, and had the satisfaction of being informed by one who came from the southward, that Friends of Philadelphia had been very assiduous in their endeavours to gain information where their family was, and had sent to the different meetings, desiring them to inform themselves of the situation of the captivated family, and, if in their power, afford them such relief as they might need.

It gave her great pleasure to hear of this kind sympathizing remembrance of their friends, and it would have been essentially serviceable to them, could they have reduced it to a certainty.

Deborah Jones, a daughter of Abraham Wing, a Friend, sent for Elizabeth Gilbert in order to attend her as a nurse; but her death, which was soon after, frustrated the prospect she had of an agreeable place, as this woman was better grounded in Friends' principles than most she had met with; which circumstance united them in the ties of a close friendship; and as Elizabeth Gilbert had received many civilities and favours from her, her death was doubly afflicting to their family.

A person who came from Crown-Point, informed her that Benjamin Gilbert, a son of the deceased by his first wife, had come thither in order to be of what service he could to the family, and had desired him to make inquiry where they were, and in what situation, and send him the earliest information possible.

A second agreeable intelligence she received from Niagara, by a young woman who came from thence, who informed her that her daughter, Rebecca, was given up to the English, by the Indians. This information must have been very pleasing, as their expectations of her release were but faint; the Indian, with whom she lived, considering her as her own child.

It was not long after this, that Thomas Peart, Rebecca Gilbert, and their cousin, Benjamin Gilbert, came to Montreal to the rest of the family. This meeting, after such scenes of sorrow as they had experienced, was more completely happy than can be expressed.

Reflection, if indulged, will steadily point out a protecting Arm of power to have ruled the varied storms which often threatened the family with destruction on their passage through the wilderness, under the controul of the fiercest enemies, and preserved and restored them to each other, although separated among different tribes and nations: this, so great a favour, cannot of gratitude be considered by them but with the warmest emotions to the great Author.

Rebecca Gilbert and Benjamin Gilbert, jun. were separated from their friends and connexions at a place called the Five Mile Meadows, which was said to be that distance from Niagara. The Seneca king's daughter, to whom they were allotted in the distribution of

the captives, took them to a small hut where her father Siangorochti, his queen, and the rest of the family were, eleven in number. Upon the reception of the prisoners into the family, there was much sorrow and weeping, as is customary upon such occasions, and the higher in favour the adopted prisoners are to be placed, the greater lamentation is made over them.

After three days the family removed to a place called the Landing, on the banks of Niagara River : here they continued two days more, and then two of the women went with the captives to Niagara, to procure clothing from the king's stores for them, and permitted them to ride on horse-back to fort Slusher, which is about eighteen miles distant from Niagara fort. On this journey they had a sight of the great falls of Niagara.

During a stay of six days at fort Slusher, the British officers and others used their utmost endeavours to purchase them of the Indians ; but the Indian king said he would not part with them for one thousand dollars.

The Indians who claimed Elizabeth Peart, came to the fort with her at this time, and although she was very weakly and indisposed, it was an agreeable opportunity to them both of conversing with each other, but they were not allowed to be frequently together, lest they should increase each other's discontent.

Rebecca being drest in the Indian manner, appeared very different from what she had been accustomed to ; short clothes, leggings, and a gold-laced hat.

From Niagara fort they went about eighteen miles above the falls, to fort Erie, a garrison of the English, and then continued their journey about four miles further, up Buffalo Creek, and pitched their tent. At this place they met with Rebecca's father and mother by adoption, who had gone before on horse-back. They caught some fish and made soup of them, but Rebecca could eat none of it, as it was dressed without salt, and with all the carelessness of Indians.

This spot was intended for their plantation ; they therefore began to clear the land for the crop of Indian corn. While the women were thus employed, the men

built a log house for their residence, and then went out hunting.

Notwithstanding the family they lived with, was of the first rank among the Indians, and the head of it styled king, they were under the necessity of labouring as well as those of lower rank, although they often had advantages of procuring more provisions than the rest. This family raised this summer about one hundred skipple of Indian corn (a skipple is about three pecks,) equal to seventy-five bushels.

As Rebecca was not able to pursue a course of equal labour with the other women, she was favoured by them by often being sent into their hut to prepare something to eat; and as she drest their provisions after the English method, and had erected an oven by the assistance of the other women, in which they baked their bread, their family fared more agreeably than the others.

Benjamin Gilbert, jun. was considered as the king's successor, and entirely freed from restraint, so that he even began to be delighted with his manner of life; and had it not been for the frequent counsel of his fellow-captive, he would not have been anxious for a change.

In the waters of the lakes there are various kinds of fish, which the Indians take sometimes with spears; but whenever they can obtain hooks and lines, they prefer them.

A fish called ozoondah, resembling a shad in shape, but rather thicker and less bony, with which lake Erie abounded, were often dressed for their table, and were of an agreeable taste, weighing from three to four pounds.

They drew provisions this summer from the forts, which frequently induced the Indians to repair thither. The king, his daughter, grand-daughter, and Rebecca went together upon one of these visits to fort Erie, where the British officers entertained them with a rich feast, and so great a profusion of wine, that the Indian king was very drunk; and as he had to manage the

canoe in their return, they were repeatedly in danger of being overset amongst the rocks in the lake.

Rebecca and Benjamin met with much better fare than the other captives, as the family they lived with were but seldom in great want of necessaries, which was the only advantage they enjoyed beyond the rest of their tribe.

Benjamin Gilbert, as a badge of his dignity, wore a silver medal pendant from his neck.

The king, queen, and another of the family, together with Rebecca and her cousin Benjamin, set off for Niagara, going as far as fort Slusher by water, from whence they proceeded on foot, carrying their loads on their backs. Their business at the fort was to obtain provisions, which occasioned them frequently to visit it, as before related.

Rebecca indulged herself with the pleasing expectation of obtaining her release, or at least permission to remain behind among the whites ; but in both these expectations she was disagreeably disappointed, having to return again with her captors ; all efforts for her release being in vain. Col. Johnson's housekeeper, whose repeated acts of kindness to this captived family have been noticed made her some acceptable presents.

As they had procured some rum to carry home with them, the chief was frequently intoxicated, and always in such unhappy fits, behaved remarkably foolish.

On their return, Thomas Peart, who was at fort Niagara, procured for Rebecca a horse to carry her as far as fort Slusher, where they took boat and got home, after a stay of nine days.

Soon after their return, Rebecca and her cousin were seized with the chill and fever, which held them for near three months. During their indisposition the Indians were very kind to them ; and as their strength of constitution alone could not check the progress of the disorder, the Indians procured some herbs, with which the patients were unacquainted, and made a plentiful decoction ; with these they washed them, and it seemed to afford them some relief : the Indians accounted it a sovereign remedy.

The decease of her father, of which Rebecca received an account, continued her in a drooping way a considerable time longer than she would otherwise have been.

As soon as she recovered her health, some of the family again went to Niagara, and Rebecca was permitted to be of the company. They stayed at the fort about two weeks, and Col. Johnson exerted himself in order to obtain her release, holding a treaty with the Indians for this purpose; but his mediation proved fruitless: she had therefore to return with many a heavy step. When they came to Lake Erie, where their canoe was, they proceeded by water. While in their boat, a number of Indians in another canoe came towards them, and informed them of the death of her Indian Father, who had made an expedition to the frontiers of Pennsylvania, and was there wounded by the militia, and afterwards died of his wounds; on which occasion she was under the necessity of making a feint of sorrow, and weeping aloud with the rest.

When they arrived at their settlement, it was the time of gathering their crop of corn, potatoes, pumpkins, and preserving their store of hickory-nuts.

About the beginning of the winter, some British officers came amongst them, and stayed with them until spring, using every endeavour for the discharge of the two captives, but still unattended with success.

Some time after this, another British officer, attended by Thomas Peart, came with provision and hoes for the Indians. It afforded them great happiness to enjoy the satisfaction of each other's conversation, after so long an absence.

Rebecca and her cousin had the additional pleasure of seeing her brother Abner, who came with the family amongst whom he lived, to settle near this place; and as they had not seen each other for almost twelve months, it proved very agreeable.

Thomas Peart endeavoured to animate his sister, by encouraging her with the hope of speedily obtaining her liberty: but her hopes were often disappointed.

An officer amongst the British, one Capt. Lateridge,

came and stayed some time with them, and interested himself on behalf of the prisoners, and appeared in a fair way of obtaining their enlargement; but being ordered to join his regiment, he was prevented from further attention until his return from duty; and afterwards was commanded by Col. Johnson to go with him to Montreal, on business of importance, which effectually barred his undertaking any thing further that winter.

It afforded her many pleasing reflections when she heard that six of her relatives were freed from their difficulties, and Thomas Peart, visiting her again, contributed, in some measure, to reanimate her with fresh hopes of obtaining her own freedom. They fixed upon a scheme of carrying her off privately; but when they gave time for a full reflection, it was evidently attended with too great danger, as it would undoubtedly have much enraged the Indians, and perhaps the lives of every one concerned would have been forfeited by such indiscretion.

During the course of this winter she suffered many hardships and severe disappointments, and being without a friend to unbosom her sorrows to, they appeared to increase by concealment; but making a virtue of necessity, she summoned up a firmness of resolution, and was supported under her discouragement beyond her own expectations.

The youth and inexperience of her cousin did not allow of a sufficient confidence in him, but she had often to interest herself in an attention to, and oversight of, his conduct; and it was in some measure owing to this care, that he retained his desires to return amongst his friends.

Col. Butler sent a string of wampum to the Indian chief, who immediately called a number of the other Indians together upon this occasion, when they concluded to go down to Niagara, where they understood the design of the treaty was for the freedom of the remainder of the prisoners; for special orders were issued by General Haldimand, at Quebec, that their liberty should be obtained. At this council-fire it was agreed they would surrender up the prisoners.

When they returned, they informed Rebecca that Col. Butler had a desire to see her, which was the only information she could gain: this being a frequent custom amongst them to offer a very slight surmise of their intentions.

After this the whole family moved about six miles up Lake Erie, where they stayed about two months to gather their annual store of maple sugar, of which they made a considerable quantity.

As soon as the season for this business was over, they returned to their old settlement, where they had not continued long, before an Indian came with an account that an astonishing number of young pigeons might be procured at a certain place, by falling trees that were filled with nests of young, and the distance was computed to be about fifty miles. This information delighted the several tribes: they speedily joined together, young and old, from different parts, and with great assiduity pursued their expedition, and took abundance of the young ones, which they dried in the sun and with smoke, and filled several bags which they had taken with them for this purpose. Benjamin Gilbert was permitted to accompany them in this excursion, which must have been a curious one for whole tribes to be engaged in. On this rarity they lived with extravagance for some time, faring sumptuously every day.

As the time approached, when, according to appointment, they were to return to Niagara and deliver up the prisoners, they gave Rebecca the agreeable information, in order to allow her some time to make preparation. She made them bread for their journey with great cheerfulness.

The Indians, to the number of thirty, attended on this occasion with the two captives. They went as far as Fort Slusher in a bark canoe. It was several days before they reached Niagara Fort, as they went slowly on foot. After attending at Col. Butler's, and conferring upon this occasion, in consideration of some valuable presents made them, they released the two last of the captives, Rebecca Gilbert, and Benjamin Gilbert, jun.

As speedily as they were enabled, their Indian dress was exchanged for the more customary and agreeable one of the Europeans; and on the third of the sixth month, 1782, two days after their happy release, sailed for Montreal.

The narrative of the treatment of Thomas Peart, another of the family, still remains to be given:

He was taken along the Westward Path with the prisoners before mentioned, viz. Joseph, Sarah, and Benjamin Gilbert, jun.

Thomas was compelled to carry a heavy load of the plunder which the Indians had seized at their farm. When separated from the rest, they were assured they should meet together again in four days.

The first day's travel was in an exceeding disagreeable path, across several deep brooks, through which Thomas had to carry Sarah and Benjamin Gilbert, jun. This task was a very hard one, as he had been much reduced for want of sufficient nourishment.

The first night they lodged by the banks of Cayuga Creek, the captives being tied as usual. The next morning they took a venison, and this, with some decayed corn which they gathered from the deserted fields, served them for sustenance. This day's journey was by the side of Cayuga Creek, until they came to a steep hill, which they ascended with difficulty.

When night came on, they sought a wigwam which had been deserted precipitately upon General Sullivan's march against the inhabitants of these parts.

The land in this neighbourhood is excellent for cultivation, affording very good pasture.

Thomas Peart assured the Indians, that he, with the other captives, would not leave them, and therefore requested the favour to be freed from their confinement at night; but one of them checked his request, by saying he could not sleep if the captives were suffered to be untied.

Their meat being all exhausted, Thomas and three Indians went near three miles to gather more decayed corn; and this, mouldy as it was, they were obliged to eat, it being their only food, excepting a few winter

turnips which they met with. They went forwards a considerable distance by the side of Cayuga Creek, and then with much difficulty crossed it; immediately afterwards they ascended an uncommon miry hill, covered with springs. Going over this mountain they missed the path, and were obliged to wade very heavily through the water and mire.

In the close of the day they came to a fine meadow, where they agreed to continue that night, having no other provisions than the mouldy Indian corn they accidentally met with in the Indian plantations, which had been cut down and left on the ground by General Sullivan's army. Next morning they set forwards, walking leisurely on, so that the company who went by the other path might overtake them, and frequently stopped for them.

When night approached they came to a large creek where some Indians were, who had begun to prepare the ground for planting corn. At this place they staid two nights, and being too indolent to procure game by hunting, their diet was still very poor, and their strength much exhausted, so that they became impatient of waiting for the others, which was their intention when they first stopped.

After travelling till near noon, they made a short stay, stripped the bark off a tree, and then painted, in their Indian manner, themselves and the prisoners on the body of the tree. This done, they set up a stick with a split at the top, in which they placed a small bush of leaves, and leaned the stick so that the shadow of the leaves should fall to the point of the stick where it was fixed in the ground; by which means the others would be directed in the time of day when they left the place.

Here they separated the prisoners again: those to whom Thomas Peart and Joseph Gilbert were allotted, went westward out of the path, but Sarah Gilbert and Benjamin Gilbert, jun. with one Indian, continued in the path. This was very distressing to Sarah, to be torn from her relations, and deprived of all the comforts and even necessities of life. These two, with

the Indian who had the care of them, after they had parted with the other two and travelled forward a few miles, came to some Indians by the side of a creek, who gave them something to eat. The next day the Indian who was their pilot, exerted himself to obtain some provisions, but his endeavours proved fruitless ; they therefore suffered greatly. At night the Indian asked Sarah if she had ever eaten horse-flesh, or dog's ? She replied, she had not. He then further surprised her by asking whether she had ever eat man's flesh ? Upon her expressing her abhorrence, he replied that he should be under the necessity of killing the boy, for he could not procure any deer ! This threat, although perhaps not intended to be executed, terrified her exceedingly. He hunted with great diligence, leaving the captives by themselves, and appeared to shudder himself at what he had threatened, willing to try every resource ; but notwithstanding his exertions, her fears prevailed in a very great degree. They went forwards slowly, being very weak ; and in addition to their distress, there fell a very heavy rain, and they were obliged to continue in it, as they were without shelter. In this reduced situation they at length came to one of the huts at Canodosago, where they dressed the remains of their mouldy corn, and the day after were joined by the part of the company whom they had left ten days before.

As the few days' solitary sufferings of Sarah Gilbert had been before unrelated, the foregoing digressions from the narrative of Thomas Peart, may not be though, improper.

To return to the two who were separated from the path, and had to go forwards across mountains and vallies, swamps and creeks.

In the morning they eat the remainder of their corn. The Indians then cut off their hair, excepting a small round tuft on the crown of the head ; and, after painting them in the Indian manner, in order to make them appear more terrible, they took from them their hats. Being thus obliged to travel bare-headed in the sun, they were seized with violent head-aches ; and this,

added to a want of provisions, was truly distressing.

When they approached the Indian settlements, the Indians began their customary whooping, to announce their arrival with prisoners, issuing their dismal yells according to the number brought in.

After some short time an Indian came to them: with him they held a discourse concerning the prisoners, and painted them afresh, part black, and part red, as a distinguishing mark. When this ceremony was concluded, the Indian who met them returned, and the others continued their route.

As they were not far from the Indian towns, they soon saw great numbers of the Indians collecting together, though the prisoners were ignorant of the motives.

When they came up to this disagreeable company, the Indian who first met them, took the string that was about Thomas Peart's neck, with which he had been tied at night, and held him whilst a squaw stripped off his vest.

Joseph Gilbert was ordered to run first, but being lame and indisposed, could only walk. The clubs and tomahawks flew so thick that he was sorely bruised, and one of the tomahawks struck him on the head and brought him to the ground, when a lad of about fifteen years old ran after him, and, as he lay, would undoubtedly have ended him, as he had lifted the tomahawk for that purpose, but the king's son sent orders not to kill him.

After him, Thomas Peart was set off: he seeing the horrid situation of his brother, was so terrified, that he did not recollect the Indian, still kept hold of the string which was round his neck; but, springing forwards with great force and swiftness, he pulled the Indian over, who, in return, when he recovered his feet, beat him severely with a club. The lad who was standing with a tomahawk near Joseph Gilbert, as he passed by him, threw his tomahawk with great dexterity, and would certainly have struck him, if he had not sprung forwards and avoided the weapon. When he had got opposite to one of their huts, they pointed for him to

take shelter there, where Joseph Gilbert came to him as soon as he recovered. In the room were a number of women who appeared very sorrowful, and wept aloud; this, though customary amongst them, still added to the terror of the captives, as they imagined it to be no other than a prelude to inevitable destruction.

Their hair cropt close, their bodies bruised, and the blood gushing from Joseph Gilbert's wound, rendered them a horrid spectacle to each other.

After the lamentations ceased, one of them asked Thomas Peart, if he was hungry? he replied, he was: they then told him, "You eat by and by." They immediately procured some victuals, and set it before them, but Joseph Gilbert's wounds had taken away his appetite.

An officer, who was of the French families of Canada, came to them, and brought a negro with him to interpret. After questioning them, he concluded to write to Col. Johnson, at Niagara, relative to the prisoners.

The Indians advised them to be contented with their present situation, and marry amongst them, giving every assurance that they should be treated with the utmost respect: but these conditions were inadmissible.

After this, Joseph Gilbert was taken from his brother, as related in the narrative of his sufferings.

Thomas Peart continued at the village that night, and the next day was given to the care of a young Indian, who went with him about two miles, where several Indians were collected, dressed in horrid masks, in order, as he supposed, to make sport of his fears, if he discovered any: he therefore guarded against being surprised, and when they observed him not to be intimidated, they permitted him to return again. Not long after his arriving at the village, Capt. Rowland Monteur came in, who gave Thomas Peart some account how the others of his family had suffered, and told him that he had almost killed his mother and

Jesse, on account of Andrew Harrigar's making his escape. He had come in before the others, in order to procure some provisions for the company, who were in great need of it.

When the captain returned, Thomas Peart accompanied him part of the way, and the capt. advised him to be cheerful and contented, and work faithful for the friend, for so he styled the Indian under whose care Thomas Peart was placed, promising him that if he complied, he should shortly go to Niagara.

They employed him in chopping for several days, having previous to this taken the string from his neck, which they had carefully secured him with every night.

The plantation on which they intended to fix for a summer residence, and to plant their crop of corn, was several miles down the Genesee, or Little River. Prior to their removing with the family, some of the men went thither and built a bark hut, which was expeditiously performed, as they executed it in about two days, when they returned to their old habitation.

Thomas Peart was the next day given to the chief Indian, who endeavoured to quiet his apprehensions, assuring him he should meet with kind treatment.

The Indian manner of life is remarkably dirty and lousy; and although they themselves disregard their filth, yet it was extremely mortifying to the prisoners to be deprived of the advantages of cleanliness: and this was by no means among the number of smaller difficulties.

As Thomas Peart had been accustomed to industry, and when first among the Indians was constantly exerting himself, either in their active diversions or useful labour, they were much delighted with him. When they had concluded upon sending him to the family he was to reside with, they daubed him afresh with their red paint. He was then taken about seven miles, where he was adopted into the family, and styled "Ochnusa," or uncle. When the ceremony of adoption was performed, a number of the relatives were summoned together, and the head of them took Thomas Peart into

the midst of the assembly, and made a long harangue in the Indian language. After this he was taken into the house, where the women wept aloud for joy, that the place of a deceased relation was again supplied.

The old man whose place Thomas Peart was to fill, had never been considered by his family as possessed of any merit; and, strange as it may appear, the person adopted always holds in their estimation the merits or demerits of the deceased, and the most careful conduct can never overcome this prejudice.

As soon as the ceremony of adoption at this place was finished, he was taken by the family to Nundow, a town on the Genesee River. The head of this family was a chief or king¹ of the Senecas. But before Thomas was fully received into the family, there was a second lamentation.

Their provisions, notwithstanding it was a season of great plenty, was often deers' guts, dried with the dung, and all boiled together, which they consider strong and wholesome food. They never throw away any part of the game they take.

Thomas Peart's dress was entirely in the Indian style, painted and ornamented like one of themselves, though in a meaner manner, as they did not hold him high in esteem after his adoption.

Greatly discontented, he often retired into the woods, and reflected upon his unhappy situation, without hopes of returning to his relations, or ever being rescued from captivity.

He continued in this solitary seclusion about five weeks, when their corn was mostly consumed; and as their dependence for a fresh supply was on Niagara fort, they concluded to go thither, but at first would not consent that Thomas should accompany them; but he was so urgent, they at length consented, and the next day they had an Indian dance preparatory to their expedition.

In the route Thomas Peart got a deer, which was an acceptable acquisition, as they had been for some days without any meat, and their corn was likewise expended.

When they came within two miles of the fort they halted and stayed there until morning.

A white prisoner, who came from the fort, gave Thomas Peart a particular relation of his fellow captives: this was the first account he had of them since their separation at the Indian towns. As soon as he came to the fort, he applied to some of the officers, requesting their exertions to procure Thomas's liberty, if possible; but he was disappointed, as nothing could be then done to serve him.

He eat some salt provisions, which, as he had tasted but little salt since his captivity, (although pleasing to his palate,) affected his stomach, it being difficult for him to digest.

As he was to return with the Indians in about a week, it was very distressing, being much disgusted with the fare he met amongst them.

They returned by way of fort Slusher, and then along Lake Erie, up Buffalo Creek, taking some fish as they went. They passed by the place where Elizabeth Peart and Rebecca Gilbert were, but he had no opportunity of seeing them.

The stores they took home with them, consisted of rum, salt, and ammunition.

Lake Erie is about three hundred miles long from east to west, and about forty in breadth: it receives its supply of waters from Lakes Superior, Michigan and Huron, by a north-west passage, called the Straights of Detroit. A very long, narrow piece of land lies on its north side, which projects remarkably into the lake, and has been noticed by most travellers, and is known by the name of Long Point. There are several islands in it, which, with the banks of the lake, were more infested with different kinds of snakes, particularly the rattlesnake, than other places.

The navigation of this lake is allowed to be more dangerous than the others, on account of the high lands projecting into it; so that when sudden storms arise, boats are frequently lost, as there are but few places to land, and seldom a possibility of finding a shelter near the craggy precipices.

The waters of Erie pass through a north-east communication into the river Niagara, which, by a northerly course of near thirty-six miles, falls into Lake Ontario.

At the discharge of this river into Lake Ontario, on the east side, stands Fort Niagara; and at the entrance from Lake Erie lies Erie Fort; between these two forts are those extraordinary falls which draw the attention of the curious, and are amongst the most remarkable works of nature.

This stupendous cataract is supplied by the waters of the several lakes, and their distant springs; which after traversing many hundred miles, rush astonishingly down a most horrid precipice, and which, by a small island, is separated into two large columns, and each near one hundred and forty feet perpendicular, and in a strong, rapid, inconceivable foam and roar, extends near nine miles further; having in this distance a descent nearly equal to the first.

The Streight of Niagara is esteemed dangerous for a mile or upwards above the falls. The water of the falls raises a very heavy mist, somewhat resembling a continuation of the river, and this deception, together with the rapidity of the current, frequently hurries the ducks and geese down this dreadful precipice.

This vast body of water, after passing through the Streight of Niagara, is received by Lake Ontario, or Cataraqui, which is nearly of an oval form. Its greatest length is from north-east to south-west, and is generally allowed to be six hundred miles in circumference; and although the least of the five great lakes of Canada, is much the safest for shipping, as the channel is less obstructed by rocks or islands, than the other lakes. The south side is the most commodious for batteaux and canoes, having a moderately shelving bank and shore on that side. The other is more rocky.

Many of the rivers which fall into it are barred in their entrances by broken hills, but the vallies are uncommonly fertile.

On the south, the most considerable rivers which fall into this lake, are the great and little Seneca.

The falls of these rivers render them not navigable near the lake ; but after the carrying-places are passed, they run slow and deep.

In order to keep up the communication between the different parts of Canada, there is a portage from the landing below Niagara falls to the landing above, up three sharp hills, along which the road for about eight or nine miles, has been made as easy for carts as it possibly could ; (thence to Lake Erie is about eighteen miles,) but the stream is so swift here, that it is almost impossible to stem it for a mile or two in a ship with the stiffest gale ; though batteaux and canoes pass along without much danger, as the current is less rapid near the shore. On the north-east it empties itself into the river Cataragui.

From this short digressive account of the lakes, we may return to the situation of the prisoner, and the Indian family :

When they had consumed their last year's stock of corn, they lived very low, and were reduced to great necessity, digging what wild esculent roots they could find : this was so different from what he had been accustomed to, that he could not bear it with that cheerfulness with which the Indians met such difficulties. His painful reflections, and the want of necessaries, reduced him exceeding low.

Whilst in this distress, he happily obtained the use of a Testament from a white woman, who had been taken captive, and afterwards married amongst them : With this solacing companion, he frequently retired into the woods, and employed himself in reading and meditating upon the instruction couched in it.

The Indians directed a white girl to inform him that they intended a hunt of twenty days, and were desirous he should attend them ; to this he agreed, and the whole family accompanied the hunters. They passed by the town where Joseph Gilbert was, who informed his brother that he was going to Niagara. Thomas Peart replied that he had already been there, and then informed him how the others of their relations were dispersed.

On their way up the Genesee River, where they intended to hunt, they took a deer.

The fourth day, as Thomas Peart was beating for game, he lost his company; but at length came to some Indians who directed him. When he came to the family, much fatigued, and told them he had been lost, they were very much delighted at the perplexing situation he had been in.

The next day they moved further, hunting as they went, and in the evening fixed their quarters, where they stayed two nights.

Thomas Peart, not endeavoring to please them, they took umbrage at his neglect: this, added to a fit of the ague, induced them to leave him in the woods, he being so weak he could not keep up with them, and was obliged to follow by their tracks in the leaves.

Their provisions soon began to waste, and it was not long before it was entirely consumed; and as they took no game, they were under the necessity of eating wild cherries.

The prospect appeared very gloomy to our captive, to be thus distressed with hunger, and to be from home near one hundred miles, with the whole family; but this situation, though so alarming to him, did not appear to reach their Stoic insensibility. In this extremity one of the Indians killed a fine elk, which was a long-wished-for and delightful supply; but as the weather was very warm, and they had no salt, it soon became putrid, and filled with maggots, which they, notwithstanding, ate without reserve.

After they had been out upwards of thirty days, the Indians changed their course towards their own habitation, making but little progress forwards, as they kept hunting as they went. And as Thomas had long been uneasy, and desirous to return, not expecting to have been absent more than twenty days, they gave him some directions and a small share of provisions: he then left them after an unsuccessful hunt of forty days; and, although weak and unfit for the journey, he set off in the morning, and kept as near a northwest

course as he could, going as fast as his strength would permit, over large creeks, swamps, and rugged hills; and when night came on, made up a small fire, and being exceedingly fatigued, laid himself down on the ground, and slept very soundly. In the morning he continued his journey.

When he considered the great distance through the woods to the Indian towns, and the difficulty of procuring game to subsist on, it dejected him greatly. His spirits were so depressed, that when his fire was extinguished in the night, he even heard the wild beasts walking and howling around him, without regarding them, as with all his exertions and assiduity, he had but small hope of ever reaching the towns, but providentially he succeeded.

On the journey he ate a land tortoise, some roots and wild cherries.

When he reached the town, the Indians were pleased with his return, and inquired the reason of his coming alone, and where he had left the family he went with; which he fully informed them of.

This being the time for feasting on their new crop of corn, and they having plenty of pumpkins and squashes, gave an agreeable prospect of a short season of health, and frequent, though simple feasts.

About ten days after this, the family returned: they soon inquired if Thomas Peart had reached home, and upon being informed that he had, replied that it was not expected he ever could.

The Indians concluding to make a war-excursion, asked Thomas to go with them; but he determinately refused them, and was therefore left at home with the family, and not long after had permission to visit his brother, Benjamin Peart, who was then about 15 or 18 miles distant, down the Genesee river.

Benjamin Peart was at that time very much indisposed: Thomas, therefore, staid with him several days, and, when he recovered a little strength, left him, and returned to his old habitation.

He was thoroughly acquainted with the customs,

manners and dispositions of the Indians, and observing that they treated him just as they had done the old worthless Indian, in whose place he was adopted, he having been considered a perquisite of the squaws; he therefore concluded he would only fill his predecessor's station, and used no endeavours to please them, as his business was to cut wood for the family; notwithstanding he might easily have procured a sufficient store, yet he was not so disposed, but often refused, and even left it for the squaws sometimes to do themselves, not doubting if he was diligent and careful, they would be less willing to give him his liberty.

Joseph Gilbert came to see him, and, as has been mentioned, informed him of the decease of their father.

Some time in the fall, the king (whose brother Thomas was called) died, and he was directed to hew boards and make a coffin for him; when it was completed, they smeared it with red paint. The women, whose attention to this is always insisted on amongst the Indians, kept the corpse for several days, when they prepared a grave, and interred him; it being considered amongst this tribe, disgraceful for a man to take any notice of this solemn and interesting scene. A number of squaws collected upon this occasion, and there was great mourning, which they continued for several days at stated times. As the place of interment, as well as that appointed for weeping, was near the hut Thomas Peart resided at, he had an opportunity of indulging his curiosity, through the openings of the logs, without giving offence.

Soon after this, one of the women who was called Thomas's sister, desired him to accompany her about fifty miles towards Niagara. Some others of the family went with them, and in their way they took a deer and other game.

They were from home on this journey about six days: during the time there fell a heavy snow, which made their journey toilsome. The women were sent

homeward before the rest, to prepare something against they came.

When they had loitered at home a few days, they set about gathering their winter store of hickory-nuts. From some of them they extracted an oil, which they ate with bread or meat, at their pleasure.

Frequently before they set off on their hunting parties, they make an Indian frolic, when, commonly, all the company become extravagantly intoxicated; and when they intended to go off this winter, they first gave the preparatory entertainment.

After they were gone, Thomas Peart and the mistress of the family disagreeing, she insisted upon his joining the hunters, and living on the game, that she might save more corn. He pleaded the coldness of the season, and his want of clothing, but it would not avail. He was therefore turned out, and upon finding the hunters, he built them a hut, where they stayed for some weeks, taking the game, and eating wild meat without corn, as the supply they had raised was short.

When they were weary with their employ, they moved to their old hut, and lived in their idle manner for a long time. They then again returned to their hut, and stayed about ten days, and took several deer.

A few days after their return from hunting, they acquainted Thomas that they should set off for Niagara; which was truly grateful to him. There were fifteen of them on this visit. The old woman gave Thomas Peart a strict charge to return.

Although the prospect of seeing or hearing from his relations was delightful, yet the journey was excessively painful; the snow covering the ground a considerable depth, the cold increased, and they had to wade through several deep creeks, the water often freezing to their legs; and Thomas Peart, as well as the rest, were unclothed, excepting a blanket and pair of leggings.

In five days they came to Fort Slusher, and at the treats they there received, were most of them drunk for the day.

Next morning they went to Niagara, where he immediately made application to the British officers to solicit his release. Capt. Powell informed Col. Johnson, who requested it of the Indians; they required some time to deliberate upon the subject, not willing to disoblige the Col. and at length concluded to comply with his request; telling him, that however hard it might be to part with their own flesh, yet, to please him, they consented to it, hoping he would make them some present.

Col. Johnson then directed him to his own house, and desired him to clean himself, and sent cloths for him to dress with. Here he had plenty of salt provisions, and every necessary of life: this, with the happy regaining of his liberty, gave a new spring to his spirits, and, for a few days, he scarcely knew how to enjoy sufficiently, this almost unlooked-for change.

When recruited, he went to work for Col. Johnson, and a few weeks after had the satisfaction of his brother Benjamin Peart's company, who, though not released, was permitted to stay at the fort, and worked with his brother until spring; when Capt. Powell, lieutenant Johnson, and Thomas Peart went up Buffalo Creek, with two boats loaded with provisions, and a proportion of planting corn, together with hoes, to be distributed among the Indians.

In this expedition Thomas had the satisfaction of seeing and conversing with his sister Rebecca, which was the first of their meeting together, after a separation of a year.

At the distribution of the corn and hoes, the Indians met and made a general feast, after which they dispersed: and the officers, when they had completed their business, returned to Niagara, after an absence of eight or nine days.

Thomas Peart was settled at Col. Johnson's, to work for him at two shillings and six pence per day, till the eighth month, when six of the captives were sent to Montreal, and Thomas also had permission to

go, but he chose rather to stay, to afford his assistance to his sister, Rebecca Gilbert, and his cousin, Benjamin Gilbert, jun. who yet remained in captivity; exerting himself as strenuously as possible on their behalf.

In the fall, he went up again to Buffalo Creek, where he saw his sister and cousin a second time, and assured his sister that the Colonel intended to insist on her being released. This encouraged her to hope.

The Indians are too indolent to employ sufficient pains to preserve their grain in the winter. Therefore, those who plant near the fort, generally send the greater part to the English to preserve for them, and take it back as they want it. Therefore, what this neighbourhood had more than for a short supply, they carried with them in their boats to the fort.

In the winter, Thomas Peart undertook to chop wood for the British officers, and built himself a hut, about two miles from the fort, in which he lodged at night. A drunken Indian came to his cabin one evening, with his knife in his hand, with an intention of mischief; but, being debilitated with liquor, Thomas Peart easily wrested his knife from him.

A wolf came one night up to the door of his cabin, which he discovered the next morning, by the tracks in the snow; and, a few nights after, he paid a second visit, when Thomas fired at him, and by the blood on the snow, supposed he had mortally wounded him.

The next spring, Thomas went with the officers again up Buffalo Creek, when he afresh animated his sister, by informing her that General Haldimand had given orders to the officers to procure their liberty.

As they returned by Fort Erie, their boats were in danger from the ice in the lake and river. It conti-

ness in these parts until late in the spring; sometimes so late as the fifth month; and, as soon as it is melted, the vegetation is astonishingly quick.

About two weeks after they returned, Thomas Peart went back again with some officers, who were going to the Indians.

After a tour of fifteen days, he came again to the fort, where he stayed for several weeks, and received several letters from his relations at Montreal, by some officers who were on their way to Cataraguors, on Lake Erie, about eighty miles from Niagara; who, in their way, saw Rebecca and Benjamin Gilbert, jun. with a number of Indians, going for Niagara.

Thomas Peart made as quick dispatch as possible, to meet them, delighted with the prospect of their obtaining their liberty.

They took a porcupine, which is somewhat larger than a racoon, and covered remarkably with quills of of bone, about eight or nine inches long, which they can discharge with such force as to penetrate through a man's hand at a considerable distance.

A few days after he returned from this expedition, the captives were delivered up. These two had been with the Indians upwards of two years.

In a short time after their release, Thomas Peart procured permission for them and himself to proceed to Montreal, and was furnished with a pass, containing an order to obtain what provisions they might be in want of in their passage.

The second day of the sixth month, 1782, they went on board the ship *Limner*, and proceeded towards Montreal. When they came against the place where their father was interred, those whom they were with, gave Thomas and Rebecca notice, though they did not land, but pursued their voyage; and, after being seven days on the water, they reached Fort Lasheen, where they stayed the night, and the next day went to Montreal to their relations. Soon after

which, a letter was received from the before-mentioned Benjamin Gilbert, then at Castleton, acquainting them of his being so far on his way to Montreal, in order to give them assistance in getting home, and requesting that permission might be obtained for his coming in, which Elizabeth immediately applied to the officers for, who, with great cheerfulness, wrote in her behalf to General Haldimand, at Quebec, who readily granted her request; together with other favours to Elizabeth, worthy of her grateful remembrance; by which means Benjamin's arrival at Montreal was soon effected, where he had the pleasure once more of seeing and conversing with his relations and nearest connexions, to their great joy and satisfaction, after an absence of near three years; during which time they had but little, if any, certain account of each other.

After some time spent in inquiring after their relatives and friends, and conversing on the once unthought-of and strange scenes of life they had passed through since their separation, it became necessary to prepare for their journey homewards, which was accordingly done, and in about five weeks from the time of Benjamin's arrival, they took leave of the friends and acquaintances they had made during their residence there, whose hospitable and kind treatment merits their grateful and sincere acknowledgments, and most ardent desires for their welfare in every scene.

On the twenty-second day of the eighth month, 1782, attended by a great number of the inhabitants, they embarked in boats prepared for them, and took their departure.

Having crossed the river, and carriages being provided, they proceeded on their journey without much delay, until they came to St. John's, where they went on board a sloop, but the winds being unfavourable, rendered their passage in the lake somewhat tedious.

They did not arrive at Crown Point, until about two weeks after their departure from Montreal.

They continued here several days, and from thence went in open boats to East Bay in about two days, where they landed and stayed all night, and were next day delivered up to the officers of Vermont. Here some of the company stayed two nights, on account of Benjamin Peart's child being very ill; by which time it so recovered, that they proceeded on to Castleton, where those that went before had halted, and near that place stayed all night, and in the morning Elizabeth, the mother, having engaged to do an errand for a friend, was under the necessity of riding about thirty-five miles, which occasioned her to be absent two nights from the family, who were at Capt. Willard's; at which place Benjamin provided horses and waggons for the remainder of the journey, together with some provisions. Here they were civilly treated, and generously entertained free of expence.

The family then proceeded on, and met their mother at the house of Capt. Lanson, where they stayed that night, and until noon next day, and were also kindly treated by him.

Continuing their journey, they met with John Bracanaige; (who, together with Capt. Lanson, were passengers with them to East Bay :) he gave them an invitation to his house, which they accepted, and arrived there about noon the next day, and continued with him two nights, and were respectfully entertained.

Having prepared for prosecuting their journey, they proceeded on for the North River, where they met with Lot Trip and William Knowles, who kindly conducted the women to the house of David Sands, where they lodged that night. The rest of the family came to them in the morning, and several of them attended Friends' meeting, not having had the like opportunity for several years before.

In the afternoon they pursued their journey, the before-mentioned Lot Trip and William Knowles

accompanying them, and being in a waggon, kindly took Elizabeth and her younger daughter passengers with them, which proved a considerable relief.

In a few days they came into Pennsylvania, where they met with some of their relations and former acquaintances and friends, who were unitedly rejoiced at the happy event of once more seeing and conversing with them.

The next day, being the twenty-eighth day of the ninth month, 1782, they arrived at Byberry, the place of their nativity, and the residence of their nearest connexions and friends, where Elizabeth and her children were once more favoured with the agreeable opportunity of seeing and conversing with her ancient mother, together with their other nearest relatives and friends, to their mutual joy and satisfaction: under which happy circumstance we now leave them.

APPROPRIATE

THOUGHTS,

OCCASIONED BY THE

CAPTIVITY AND SUFFERINGS

OF

BENJAMIN GILBERT

AND HIS FAMILY.

A POEM.



AS from the forest issues the fell boar,
So human ravagers, in deserts bred,
On the defenceless, peaceful hamlet pour
Wild waste o'er all, and sudden ruin spread !

Here, undisguis'd, war's brutal spirit see ;
Its venom'd nature to the root laid bare ;
In which (trick'd up in webs of policy,)
Professing Christians vindicate their share.

Pompous profession, vaunting in a name,
Floats lightly on an ostentatious show ;
Nor dips sincere in resignation's stream,
To bring memorials from the depths below.

Sophisticated dogmas of the schools,
The flatulent, unwholesome food of strife,
With zeal pedantic, for tradition's rules
Still crucify the principle of life:

The woes of this probationary state,
Through life so mingled and diversified,
Derive their chief malignity and weight,
From murmuring discontent, and captious pride.

Transient is human life ; all flesh as grass ;
The goodliness of man but as a flower :
Fine gold must through the fervid furnace pass ;
Through death we immortality explore :

Through judgment must deliverance be known
From vile affections and their wrathful sting :
True peace pertains to righteousness alone,
That flows through faith, from life's eternal spring !

Should man (to glory call'd, and endless bliss,)
Bewail his momentary adverse doom ?
Or in deep, thankful resignation kiss
The rod that prompts him on his journey home ?

Unsearchable the providence of God,
By boasted wisdom of the son of dust :
Lo ! virtue feels oppression's iron rod,
And impious spirits triumph o'er the just !

Shall hence a self-conceited reptile dare
Th' omniscient Ruler's equity arraign ?
Say here thy wrath is fit, thy bounty there,
Good to promote, and evil to restrain ?

Believing souls unfeignedly can say,
Not mine, but thy all-perfect will be done :
If best this bitter cup should pass away,
Or be endur'd, to thee, not me, is known.

Deep tribulation in the humbly wise,
Through patience to divine experience leads ;
The ground where hope securely edifies,
Purg'd of the filth whence conscious shame proceeds.

Affliction is Bethesda's cleansing pool,
Deep searching each distemper of the mind ;
The poor way-farer, though esteem'd a fool,
Baptizing here, immortal health may find.

Though for the present grim adversity
Not joyous is, but grievous to sustain,
Humbling the Shepherd's call—"Come, learn of
me"

In lowly meekness to endure thy pain.

Yet shall it work a glorious recompense ;
Nor can the heart of Man conceive in full,
The good by infinite Beneficence,
Stor'd for the patient, unrepining soul.

Some feeble ones sustain the galling yoke,
With firmness no ferocious tempers know:
Calm resignation mitigates the stroke
Of ills, tremendous to the distant view!

If disappointment blast thy sanguine hope,
Indulg'd in sublunary prospects fair;
Conclude thy guardian angel made thee stop,
To check thy blind, thy dangerous career.

The CAPTIVE FAMILY, in savage bonds,
Trace through each rugged way and trackless
wild,
Through famine, toils unknown, and hostile
wounds,
The tender mother with her infant child;

Then with thy lighter griefs their sorrows
weigh,
Nor let thy own demerits be forgot;
Impartial inference deduce, and say
Whence thy exemption from their heavy lot?

Is it thy wisdom shields thee in the hour,
When mighty dangers o'er thy head impend?
Can thine, or other mortal arm of power,
From famine, pestilence, or storm defend

Confess 'tis mercy covers thee from harm,
A care benign, unmerited by thee ;
And if the grateful sense thy bosom warm,
Small price is paid for such felicity.

If the hard Indian's wild ferocity,
Against their race thy indignation move,
Think on the example due to them from thee,
Professing Christian equity and love :

So shall their cruel, their abhorred deeds
Instruction to the humble mind convey ;
Remind us whence all violence proceeds,
And strengthen to pursue the peaceful way.

Vengeance with vengeance holds perpetual
war :

Love only can o'er enmity prevail :
Sulphur and pitch, absurdly who prepare,
To quench devouring fire, are sure to fail,

Hear, ye vindictive ! be no longer proud ;
The high decree is past, gone forth the word :
No vain illusion—'tis the voice of God !
“ Who use the sword must perish by the sword ; ”

Perish from that divine, ennobling sense
Of heavenly good, which evil overcomes :
That light, whose energetic influence,
With piercing ray dispels bewild'ring glooms.

From whence come mortal jarrings? come
they not
From lust, from pride, from selfish arrogance?
In which, from peace and freedom far remote,
The blind goad on the blind, a slavish dance.

What ! cries the zealot, shall not Christian faith
O'er heathen infidelity prevail ?
—Yes—but the means is not thy will, thy wrath;
Means which confederate with death and hell.

Did ever tyger-hearted Spanish Chief,
By those dire massacres in story told,
Vanquish Peruvia's stubborn unbelief,
Or add one convert to the Christian fold ?

Vindictive man will still retaliate
Evil for evil, and still rack his brains,
For arguments the cause to vindicate ;
Nor knows what spirit in his bosom reigns.

Messiah is the love of God to man !
Reveal'd on earth, not t' destroy, but save ;
By wisdom's peaceful influence to maintain
Dominion over death, hell and the grave.

But why for Christian purity contend ?
Who hath, alas ! believ'd the glad report ?
How many boast the name, the name defend ;
Yet make the virtual life their scoff and sport.

Deal forth their censures with unsparing zeal,
'Gainst savage violence and cruel wrong ;
Nor dream the real, essential infidel
Holds o'er their spirits his dominion strong,

What Turkish rover, or what heathen foe,
Shews more contempt of Gospel equity,
Than those, to sultry climes remote, who go
T' enslave their fellow men, by nature free ?

The yelling warrior, with relentless hand,
Leaves parent childless, fatherless the son ;
Their griefs our tender sympathy demand ;
But what have distant Afric's children done ?

Will still the pick-thank, temporizing priest,
Give this oppression pharisaic aid ?
Will civiliz'd believers still persist
To vindicate the abominable trade ?

Th' extensive deep, unrighteous t' unfold,
West India's dark, inhuman laws explore;
What gross iniquity we there behold,
In solemn acts of legislative power?

Britons who loud for liberty contend,
Affect to guard their nation from the stain;
Yet sordidly in Mammon's temple bend,
And largely share in the ungodly gain.

What ardent execrations do we hear,
'Gainst barb'rous Mohoc's bloody Shawanese?
From father's arms their hopeful sons who tear;
From mother's breast love's tender pledges seize.

O Christian! think with what redoubled force,
'Gainst which fallacious artifice is vain,
On thee recurs thy aggravated curse,
Heaven's righteous Judge pronouncing—"Thou
"art the man."

Think for what end the Mediator came,
On earth an ignominious death to die;
Thy soul from wrath's dominion to redeem,
And to himself a people purify!

THE END.

