

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Vol. VI.

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No. III.

NEW-BRUNSWICK, *September 8th*, 1852.

THE SOCIETY convened to-day in this city, in the 2d Presbyterian Church, at 12 M., the Executive Committee having postponed the meeting from the 2d, the day originally designated, in consequence of that having been selected for another public meeting, interfering with the attendance of the members.

The Chair was taken in the absence of the President by the Hon. JAMES G. KING, one of the Vice-Presidents, who, subsequently, relinquished it to another—the Hon. STACY G. POTTS.

After the reading of the minutes of the last meeting, the CORRESPONDING SECRETARY submitted the correspondence since May, comprising letters from Hon. WM. BEACH LAWRENCE, of Rhode Island, and BENJAMIN F. FRENCH, Esq., of New York, acknowledging their election as honorary members; from JOHN CHETWOOD, Esq., of California, Rev. J. B. CONDIT, D. D., of Lane Seminary, Ohio, and WM. F. CLEMSEN, Esq., of Chillicothe, recognizing their transfer from the list of resident to that of corresponding members in consequence of removal from the State; from the Missouri Historical Society, American Antiquarian Society, and Regents of the University of the State of New York, acknowledging donations; from A. D. Bache, Esq., Superintendent of Coast Survey; Miss Catharine Veghte, of Raritan, and the Historical Societies of Connecticut and New York, transmitting donations for the Library; from Edward Armstrong, Esq., of Philadelphia; Librarian Historical Society of Massachusetts, and various gentlemen on matters connected with the operations of the Society.

THE
PENNSYLVANIA INSURRECTION.

OF

1794,

COMMONLY CALLED THE "WHISKEY INSURRECTION."

A PAPER

READ BEFORE THE NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

September 8th, 1852, by the

REV. JAMES CARNAHAN, D. D.

THE PENNSYLVANIA INSURRECTION.

The Insurrection in Western Pennsylvania, usually called the Whiskey Insurrection, is almost entirely forgotten, or if remembered and spoken of, it is only to be sneered at as having arisen from the love of whiskey, and carried on by men under the influence of that exciting stimulant.

The causes which led to this outbreak were very imperfectly understood at the time by men residing in other parts of the United States; and even after it was quelled, and peace and order restored, the same erroneous views of the motives and conduct of the leading men in Western Pennsylvania still prevailed.

A very full account of the whole transaction was written immediately after, and published the year following, by Wm. Finley and Hugh Henry Brackenridge. But as these men were suspected and charged with being instigators and leaders in the whole affair, their statements were not generally believed. Yet from personal observations and from the testimony of those who were eye-witnesses, I am satisfied that the facts stated by both these men are substantially correct; although the inferences deduced from them may frequently be erroneous. Indeed it is scarcely conceivable that men who had any regard to their own reputation, would, in the face of hundreds of living witnesses, dare to publish facts varying essentially from the truth. Great injustice has been done to Wm. Finley, H. H. Breckenridge, Albert Gallatin and others, who from their intelligence and position in public life, were supposed to have had a controlling influence in the whole movement. The character of the great body of the people of the four western counties of Pennsylvania has also been greatly misconceived. It has been supposed that they were an ignorant, lawless, semi-barbarian people, destitute of moral and religious principle, ready to do any act, however outrageous, at the bidding of a few designing and ambitious leaders. Such was not the fact. That there were some restless, lawless spirits in that region, as there are in every

other community, is not to be denied. But that there was as much intelligence and moral principle among the great body of the people as were to be found in any part of the country at that time, similarly situated, we most confidently affirm.

They were a bold, hardy race of men, inured to hardships and dangers, arising from their local situation and from the incursions of the Indians on their borders during the Revolutionary war, and afterwards, until the insurrection occurred. The peculiar circumstances of these people will account for the outbreak, without supposing they set all law and order at defiance, and that they were habitually under the influence of intoxicating drink. With the solitary exception of what took place in their resistance of the excise law, they were as orderly and observant of social duties as the people in any part of the United States. Very few robberies, murders and other high crimes occurred; and when they did occur, the culprits were regularly arraigned before courts of justice, and when found guilty, were punished according to law. Lynch law was entirely unknown. Controversies respecting property were also decided in a formal and legal manner, and when the decision of the court was announced, the parties submitted without a murmur or complaint. Alexander Addison was president of the courts in the four counties, and I venture to say that a more intelligent, learned, upright and fearless Judge was not to be found in the State. The members of the Bar were also highly respectable. Among them were James Ross, then Senator of the U. S.; Hugh H. Brackenridge, afterwards one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of Pa.; John Wood, Armstrong Semple, Young, and others. Considering the circumstances of the people of the four western counties of Pennsylvania, although we cannot justify their violent resistance to the laws, yet we shall find abundant cause to palliate in some measure the enormity of the acts committed.

Western Pennsylvania was partially settled some fifteen or twenty years before the Revolutionary war. During that war the people west of the mountains had to defend themselves against the murderous attacks of the Indians on their borders. The savage foe often made incursions into the settlements, murdered men, women and children, burnt their cabins and destroyed their grain and cattle. On one occasion they penetrated into the centre of Westmoreland county, burnt the county town, killed several of the inhabitants and carried off as prisoners the daughters of Hannah, the original proprietor of the place. In the summer season, for several years, the men placed their wives

and children in block-houses, guarded by the old men, while the young and active hoed their corn and harvested their crops in parties, some keeping watch and others performing the work. They were also called on for their quota of men to fight the British on the Atlantic coast. When a boy, I have heard from the lips of western men of the battles of Brandywine, Germantown and Monmouth, and also of the horrors and sufferings of the Jersey prison-ships. For several years after the peace of 1783 there was nothing but a horse path over the mountains; so that salt, iron, powder, lead and other necessary articles had to be carried on pack-horses from Philadelphia to Pittsburg. As late as 1794, the year of the insurrection, so bad were the roads that freight in wagons cost from \$5 to \$10 per hundred pounds. Salt sold for five dollars a bushel; iron and steel from fifteen to twenty cents per pound in Pittsburg. I need not say that now all these articles are cheaper in Pittsburg than in Philadelphia or New York. Western Pennsylvania is a hilly but remarkably healthy and fertile region, and in its virgin state the soil produced wheat, rye, corn and other grains in abundance, with very little culture. But there was no market. While the farmers east of the mountains were growing rich by means of the French revolution and the general war in Europe, those west of the mountains could find no outlet for their abundant harvests. The freight of a barrel of flour from Pittsburg to Philadelphia would cost nearly as much as it would bring in that market. The mouth of the Mississippi was then in the hands of the Spanish, and there were no houses of established character in New Orleans to which produce could be consigned. Merchants in Pittsburg and elsewhere would not purchase wheat or flour and run the risk of sending it down the river in boats, which were liable to be fired on by the Indians from the banks of the Ohio, the boatmen murdered and their cargoes destroyed.

Trade down the river was carried on in this way: A farmer of more enterprise than his neighbors would build a boat or ark of rough plank, load it with his own produce and that of his neighbors who were willing to send a venture, and he would float down the Ohio and Mississippi and sell at New Orleans for what he could get, and make his way back in a vessel to New York; or what was more common, he would come through Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia, over the mountains and through cane-brakes, wearing a girdle of Spanish dollars round his body, which might serve as a corslet in case an Indian, as was very likely, should shoot at him.

Wheat in that country was so abundant and of so little value that it was a common practice to grind that of the best quality and to feed it to horses and hogs. Rye, corn and barley would bring no price as food for man or beast. The only way left for these people to obtain a little money to purchase salt, iron and other articles necessary in carrying on their farming operations was by distilling their grain and reducing it into a more portable form, and sending the whiskey over the mountains or down the Ohio to Kentucky, then rapidly filling up and affording a market for that article. The lawfulness or morality of making and drinking whiskey was not in that day called in question. When Western Pennsylvania was in the condition described, the Federal Constitution was adopted, and a most difficult problem was presented, viz: how to provide ways and means to support the Government, to pay just and pressing revolutionary claims, and sustain an army to subdue the Indians still harrassing the frontiers. The duties on goods imported, were very far from adequate to the wants of the new Government. Taxes were laid on articles supposed to be the least necessary, and among other things on distilled liquors or on the stills with which they were manufactured. The Constitution of the U. S. provided that "all duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States."—Sec. 8th. But it is manifest that the same article may be taxed alike in all the States, and yet the tax may be very unequal and oppressive in particular parts of the country. Excise on stills and whiskey operated in this way: Little or no whiskey was manufactured in some of the States, and in different parts of the same State. The western people saw and felt that the excise pressed on them, who were the least able to bear the burden, more heavily than on any other part of the Union. They had more stills and made more whiskey than an equal population in any part of the country. There were very few or no large manufactories where grain was bought and cash paid. There was not capital in the country for that purpose. In some neighborhoods every fifth or sixth farmer was a distiller, who, during the winter season, manufactured his own grain and that of his neighbors into a portable and saleable article. They foresaw that what little money was brought into the country by the sale of whiskey would be carried away in the form of excise duties. In these circumstances it is not surprising that the people generally dreaded the burdens about to be imposed upon them—that they remonstrated through their Representatives in Congress against the enactment of the excise law; and after the law was passed, that they

petitioned for its repeal, and that they were slow in registering their stills according to law.

The origin of these people ought also to be remembered. A large majority, especially in Washington county, were either from the north of Ireland or they were descendants of Scotch Irish. They remembered, or their fathers had told them, of the exactions and oppression in the old country under the excise laws—that their domiciles were entered by excise officers—their most private apartments were examined, and that confiscations and imprisonment followed if the smallest quantity of whiskey was discovered not marked with the official brand. When the back woods people (for so they were called) saw the Inspector going round with his measuring rod, gauging their barrels and their stills, and noting the result in his book, they imagined that the same scenes were to be acted over again in the wilds of America that their fathers had witnessed in the old country. To these people no other tax of equal amount would have been half so odious. Moreover, the course pursued by the civil authorities of Pennsylvania encouraged these people to believe that excise officers might be resisted and abused with impunity and the payment of duties evaded by refusing to comply with the requirements of the law.

Previously to the formation of the Federal Union the Legislature of Pennsylvania had enacted an excise law, and an officer was sent into the western part of the State to put it in execution. He was seized by a mob, tarred and feathered, and told not to show his face again west of the mountains. The persons concerned in this outrage were not prosecuted and punished, either because they could not be identified, or because the Executive of the State thought it would be hard to enforce the execution of the law where it would be extremely onerous. There is no evidence that the State excise was ever paid west of the mountains. These people also remembered that resistance to the stamp act and duty on tea at the commencement of the American Revolution began by the destruction of the tea and a refusal to use the Royal stamps—that the design was not to break allegiance to the British throne, but to force a repeal of these odious laws. These people were, almost to a man, enemies to the British Government, and had contributed their full proportion in services in establishing the independence of the American States. They flattered themselves that they were only carrying out Whig principles and following Whig examples in resisting the excise law. These ideas pervading the great body of the people, caused those who were

orderly and peaceable citizens to look with an indulgent eye at the first acts of insult and violence to the Federal excise officers.

The first acts of violence were done to the Deputy Inspectors, men generally of low character, who had very little sensibility, and who were willing, for the paltry emoluments of the office, to incur the censure and contempt of their fellow-citizens. These sub-excise men were seized by thoughtless young men, and received a coat of tar and feathers, more through sport than from a deliberative design to oppose the law. Of several cases of this kind which occurred, I shall mention only one, which in part fell under my notice. About the last of June or the first of July, 1794, John Lyn, a Deputy Inspector, residing in Canonsburg, Washington county, was taken from his bed, carried into the woods and received a coat of tar and feathers, and he was left tied to a tree so loosely that he could easily extricate himself. He returned to his house, and after undergoing an ablution with grease and soap and sand and water, he exhibited himself to the boys in the Academy and others, and laughed and made sport of the whole matter.

Some distillers had registered their still in the Inspector's office according to law, and *Tom the Tinker's boys*, as they called themselves, broke into the distilleries, cut up the stills, destroyed the vats and other distilling apparatus. This prevented others who were willing to comply with the requirements of the law, from entering their stills in the Inspector's office. The consequence was that the U. S. Marshal served writs on all delinquent distillers in Fayette and Washington counties, requiring them to appear at the U. S. Court east of the mountains. To the surprise of the Marshal, he met with no molestation until he had served every writ except one in Washington county. And had he gone on alone and served that remaining one, it is believed he would have received no interruption. Unfortunately he called on Gen. Neville, the Chief Inspector, and requested his company as he went to serve the last writ on one of the neighbors of the Inspector. Gen. Neville was a man of high standing on account of his wealth, family connections and urbanity of manners and, before he accepted the office of Inspector of the excise, very popular in the Western country. His appearing in company with the Marshal excited the indignation of some of the neighbors, and on the return of the Marshal and Inspector, they were followed by five or six men, armed, and a gun was discharged towards them—not, it is believed, with a design to injure, but to alarm them and to show their dislike towards the Inspector.

On the day of this occurrence there was a military meeting at Mingo Creek, about seven miles distant from the Inspector's house, for the purpose of drafting men to go against the Indians. A report of the attack on the Marshal and Inspector was carried to this meeting, and the next morning before sunrise about thirty young men, headed by John Holcroft, the reputed author of the inflammatory handbills signed *Tom the Tinker*, assembled at the house of General Neville, the Inspector, and demanded the delivery of his commission, and official papers. This demand was refused, and the firing of guns commenced. Neville and his friends maintained that the assailants discharged the first gun. The insurgents asserted that the first discharge came from the house, and that their only intention was to alarm the Inspector and to cause him to deliver his papers.

The firing went on for some time from the house and from the assailants. At length a horn was sounded in the house, and then there was a discharge of fire-arms from the negro quarters which stood apart from the mansion house. From the guns of the negroes, who probably used small shots, five or six of the insurgents were wounded, one of them mortally. Forthwith the report spread that the blood of citizens had been shed, and a call was made on all who valued liberty or life to assemble at Mingo Creek meeting house, prepared to avenge the outrage. Some went willingly; others were compelled to go. A large number assembled at the place of rendezvous. Three men were appointed to direct the expedition; and Major McFarlane, who had seen service in the Revolutionary war, was chosen to command the armed force. Before they took up the line of march, the Rev. Mr. Clarke, a venerable man about eighty years of age, came among them, and he exhorted and besought them by everything sacred not to proceed. They regarded the old man as in his dotage, asserting that he was departing from the line of his profession in interfering with the politics of the day. They proceeded; and when they came within half a mile of Neville's house, leaving those who had no fire-arms in charge of the horses, they advanced. After the first attack, Neville had left his house, and Major Kirkpatrick, with ten or twelve United States soldiers; had come to defend it. Kirkpatrick was allied to the family of Neville by marriage. When the assailants approached the house, the three men who were to superintend the affair, took their station on an eminence at a distance. McFarlane and his men approached within gun-shot, and demanded Neville. It was answered that Neville was not in the house nor on the premises. His commission and offi-

cial papers were then demanded, with a declaration that if not delivered, they would be taken by force. Kirkpatrick replied that he had a sufficient force to defend the house, and he would not surrender the papers. McFarlane informed him that he would wait until the women and children, which he observed were in the house, had withdrawn, and then he would commence the attack unless his demands were complied with. The women withdrew, and the firing began on both sides.

After several rounds, the firing seemed to cease from the house, and McFarlane, supposing a parley was desired, stepped from behind a tree which protected him, and ordered his men to stop. At that instant a ball from the house struck him and he expired in a few minutes. Some of the assailants, without orders, applied a torch to the barn; from the barn the fire spread to the other outbuildings, and from them to the dwelling house. When the house caught fire, Kirkpatrick surrendered and was permitted to leave with his command uninjured. It was reported that one of the soldiers was killed and burnt up in the house. This is not certainly known. McFarlane and Kirkpatrick had been officers in the Revolutionary war, and had fought together against the common enemy. The death and funeral of McFarlane greatly increased the excitement, and runners were sent forth to call a meeting of the people at Mingo Creek meeting house to determine what measures were to be taken. In the town of Washington, among others, the messenger urged David Bradford and Col. John Marshall to attend the proposed meeting. At first they both refused. Marshall said he would have nothing to do with the business; and Bradford declined on the ground that he was Prosecuting Attorney for the county, and that his services in that capacity might hereafter be called for. Afterwards they changed their minds, and they both attended the meeting. And as they became prominent leaders in subsequent proceedings, it may be proper to premise that Marshall was an Irishman by birth, came to this country when young, before the Revolutionary war; had been Sheriff of the county, and had occupied other important stations. He was esteemed a sober-minded business man, and the part which he took in what followed, surprised all who knew him. Bradford was a native of Maryland—had been a member of the Legislature of Virginia before the line between that State and Pennsylvania was known. The greater part of Fayette and Washington counties was supposed to belong to Virginia. He was considered as a second or third-rate lawyer. He was rash,

boisterous, and acting from the impulse of the moment, he did not look far ahead ; and he possessed a kind of eloquence well suited to urge forward an infuriated mob.

When Bradford and Marshall arrived at Mingo Creek, mingled with the crowd, heard the grievances stated, and the story of what they called the murder of McFarlane, their sympathies were excited, and they became as furious as any present at the meeting. Marshall, in firm and decisive language, avowed his determination to go forward and to resist tyranny and oppression at all hazards. Bradford declaimed and wrought up the feelings of the people, already excited, to the highest pitch. This was a mass meeting composed chiefly of those in the immediate neighborhood, and open to every one who pleased to attend. The most hot and violent spirits of the county, and of the adjacent parts of Westmoreland and Allegany, were there. The more intelligent and sober-minded part of the community remained at home. Several gentlemen of Pittsburg, from motives of policy, attended. They presumed that if they did not attend, it would be inferred that they were in alliance with Neville and his friends who resided in or near that town. Among these from Pittsburg was H. H. Breckenridge, who went at the particular request of Col. Prestly Neville, the son of the Inspector.

Mr. Brackenridge was educated in the College of New Jersey, under Dr. Witherspoon, and was a class-mate of James Madison, late President of the United States ; and of Phillip Freneau, the poet of the Revolution ; and a fellow-student with Wm. Bradford, Attorney General of the U. S. ; of Col. A. Burr, Henry Lee, Governor of Virginia ; Morgan Lewis, Governor of New York ; Aaron Ogden, Governor of New Jersey ; Brockhorst Livingston, Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. S., and other distinguished men. After he was graduated he took license as a preacher of the Gospel, became a Chaplain in the Revolutionary army, preached political sermons and encouraged the soldiers to fight. At the close of the war he studied law and located himself in Pittsburg. He was an accomplished classical scholar, an able and successful lawyer, a man of keen wit and great eccentricity of character. For many years he was at the head of the Bar in western Pennsylvania, and finally he became an Associate Judge in the Supreme Court of the State. He wrote a work called "Modern Chivalry"—a book second in genuine humor only to its great prototype, *Don Quixotte de la Mancha*. At the meeting at Mingo Creek, and in every stage of the insurrection, he exhibited the versatility of

several Regiments in the four Western counties, requiring them to assemble their commands at the usual place of rendezvous, fully equipped with fire-arms and ammunition and four days' provision, and from thence to march to Braddock's fields, so as to arrive on Friday, the 1st of August; that if any of their men had no arms, to bring them on, and arms and ammunition would be furnished; stating that letters had been taken from the mail, making important disclosures; assuring them that they would have an opportunity to display their military skill and valor. This letter was signed by Canon, Bradford, Marshall, Speer and three or four others, and sent by messengers in different directions. The officers in Washington and Allegany generally obeyed the summons. Some, however, put the paper in their pockets, determined to say nothing about it; but their men heard of the call and assembled, and the officers thought it prudent to go with them. From Fayette and the eastern part of Westmoreland very few attended. In Washington county hundreds were forced to drop their scythes and sickles in their harvest field; and as they proceeded in squads to the place of rendezvous, they carried every one with them, willing or unwilling. Those who had horses, rode, those who had not, went on foot. The number assembled on Braddock's field is variously estimated at from five to seven thousand. During the day, men were assembling, some in regiments, some in companies, some in squads of eight or ten; and as they arrived, guns were fired, drums beat, and the hills rang with shouts.

Braddock's fields are on the north side of the Monongahela, near the mouth of Turtle creek, and about eight miles from Pittsburg. The people of that town were greatly alarmed, apprehensive that the design was to attack and burn the place, and perhaps to murder some of the inhabitants. The grounds of apprehension were, that Col. Neville, son of the Inspector, Major Kirkpatrick, and the writers of the intercepted letters were there, and also the U. S. Arsenal. Mr. Brackenridge states that he was greatly terrified, and meditated fleeing from the country; but whither to go he knew not. All the roads leading to and over the mountains he believed were guarded, so as to catch any who might attempt to escape. To go down the Ohio river among strangers, he had not the means, and he seriously thought of crossing the Allegany river and making his way through the woods to some Indian town, and throw himself on the mercy of hostile savages.

A meeting of the inhabitants of Pittsburg was called to determine

what was to be done. After much discussion, it was thought advisable to appoint a Committee to meet the insurgents on Braddock's field as friends, and if they were received as such, well; if not, to make the best terms they could. The Committee, accompanied by other citizens, went, with fear and trembling, and to their great joy, were received in a friendly manner. They joined the Committees from other parts of the country in deliberating on what measures were to be taken.

David Bradford assumed the office of Major General, Mounted on a superb horse in splendid trappings, arrayed in full martial uniform, with plumes floating in the air and sword drawn, he rode over the grounds, gave orders to the military and harangued the multitude. Never was mortal man more flattered than was David Bradford on Braddock's field. Everything depended on his will. The insurgents adored him, and those who hated and despised him, paid him the most servile homage, in order to be able to control and manage him.

The Grand Committee from the different townships spent the night in discussing various projects. It is believed that the real object in calling the people to Braddock's fields was to unite them in sustaining those who had violated the laws of the State and resisted the General Government, and to make them share the common fate. But it would not do to avow this object. Other purposes must be proposed. One was to take the U. S. arsenal in the neighborhood of Pittsburg and to supply themselves with arms and ammunition. To this proposition there were serious objections. These military stores were deposited in the arsenal in preparation to subdue the Indians on their borders; and if the Indians were not subdued, they would break in on Western Pennsylvania, Kentucky and the new settlements on the Ohio. This scheme was abandoned. Another project was to march into Pittsburg and to expel from the place and from the country Col. Neville, Kirkpatrick, the authors of the intercepted letters, and all others known to be unfriendly to their cause. To this project the Committee of Pittsburg objected, believing that in the excited state of those on the field, it could not be done without bloodshed. Finally this project was abandoned on the assurance and solemn pledge that the people of Pittsburg would within eight days banish, or cause to leave the place, all those obnoxious to the people assembled. We may remark that Gen. Neville the Inspector, and the U. S. Marshal, had already made their way down the Ohio to the Kennawha, and from thence through Virginia, over the mountains to Philadelphia. The plan of

the Pittsburg Committee was, if possible, to prevent the people from entering Pittsburg; and if that could not be done, to fall in with the wishes of the insurgents, and under the guise of friends to prevent mischief. It was soon ascertained that to dissuade Bradford and the people from entering Pittsburg was impossible. The Committee then professed to favor the design—invited them with apparent cordiality to visit the town and to receive the hospitality of the citizens, saying that they wished the honor of a visit in order to show the country and the world that although under high provocation, they could behave in an orderly manner, as citizen soldiers ought to do. In carrying out this deception, Brackenridge acted his part so well that he became a favorite with the insurgents, and they forgave the hard words which he had uttered respecting treason and hanging at Mingo Creek.

The invitation to visit Pittsburg was accepted, and the following day they marched to the town. There are two roads leading from Turtle Creek and Braddock's fields to Pittsburg. That traveled by wagon passes down the margin of the Allegheny river. The other, which answered for footmen and horsemen, runs parallel and near to the Monongahela. The Pittsburg Committee, to prevent the militia from coming in sight of the U. S. arsenal and the soldiers who guarded it, advised the Monongahela route. It was taken. And the procession halted on a beautiful open plain, now covered with houses, lying between the town, as it then was, and Grant's Hill. The good people of Pittsburg brought out a plentiful collation of hams, poultry, dried venison and bear meat, not forgetting, as the day was hot, water and whiskey. Mr. Brackenridge tells us that the entertainment cost him four barrels of good old Monongahela; and he assures us that he had much rather lose the whiskey, good as it was, than that a single quart of human blood had been spilled.

As it was neither convenient nor desirable to lodge so many guests in Pittsburg, it was a matter of no small anxiety and difficulty to devise ways and means of transporting the visitors over the river before nightfall. The ferry-boats were not sufficient to carry over the horses as well as the footmen in so short a time. On examination it was found that the horsemen could ford the river on a bar formed at the junction of the Monongahela and the Allegheny. Guides were furnished, and the horsemen passed over in that way. The footmen were carried over in boats; and when the work was finished, care was taken that all the boats should be brought to the Pittsburg side and well secured.

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the Pittsburg Committee was, if possible, to prevent entering Pittsburg; and if that could not be done, to dissuade the wishes of the insurgents, and under the guise of friendship to dissuade the chief. It was soon ascertained that to dissuade the people from entering Pittsburg was impossible. Brackenridge professed to favor the design—invited them with hospitality to visit the town and to receive the hospitality of the town; that they wished the honor of a visit in order to show the world that although under high provocation they could behave in an orderly manner, as citizen soldiers ought to do. In giving out this deception, Brackenridge acted wisely. He became a favorite with the insurgents, and they forgot the wrong which he had uttered respecting treason and hanging.

The invitation to visit Pittsburg was accepted, and the militia marched to the town. There are two roads from Braddock's Creek and Braddock's fields to Pittsburg. That travels down the margin of the Allegheny river. The other is for footmen and horsemen, runs parallel and near the Allegheny. The Pittsburg Committee, to prevent the militia from going to the U. S. arsenal and the soldiers who guard it, took the Monongahela route. It was taken. And the people of the beautiful open plain, now covered with houses, and the town, as it then was, and Grant's Hill. The good people brought out a plentiful collation of hams, poultry, and bear meat, not forgetting, as the day was hot, whiskey. Mr. Brackenridge tells us that the entertainment of the militia of good old Monongahela; and he assures us that they did not lose the whiskey, good as it was, than that a single drop of blood had been spilled.

As it was neither convenient nor desirable to lodge the militia in Pittsburg, it was a matter of no small anxiety to devise ways and means of transporting the visitors to the town at nightfall. The ferry-boats were not sufficient to carry the militia as well as the footmen in so short a time. On the 15th of August, we found that the horsemen could ford the river on the Allegheny at the junction of the Monongahela and the Allegheny. The militia finished, and the horsemen passed over in that way. The militia were carried over in boats; and when the work was finished, the boats were taken to the Allegheny, and secured that all the boats should be brought to the Pittsburg and secured.

On the hill which overhangs the Monongahela, Major Kirkpatrick owned a farm. In the night the barn was fired, and the hay and grain of the tenant consumed. At the same time an attempt was made to burn Major Kirkpatrick's house in the town; but was unsuccessful, through the interference of some gentlemen in whom the incendiaries had confidence. Thus ended the expedition to Braddock's fields and to Pittsburg.

The citizens of Pittsburg met in town meeting, and after much discussion it was voted that it was expedient that the persons named by the insurgents should leave the town and vicinity according to the stipulation entered into on Braddock's fields. In effecting the object Mr. Brackenridge took an active part, maintaining that the removal of these persons was the only means of averting the fury of an enraged populace. We may as well here as elsewhere state that, by a subsequent vote of the citizens of Pittsburg, the expelled persons were within a few weeks re-called, and that Mr. B. did not favor their return at that time. The part which he took in this matter greatly displeased the persons driven off, and their friends; so that he felt himself in an unpleasant position, through fear of the insurgents on the one hand, and the hatred of the friends of the Government on the other.

He defended himself against the latter in this way: He said he had searched the reports of European and American Courts to find a precedent to justify his conduct; but he had not been successful. In oriental history he had found a case which he thought was perfectly analagous. It was to this effect: Two men were traveling together, and their path lay on the margin of a deep pond of water. One of them slipped and fell into the pond. The bank was higher than the water. He struggled, and could not get out. His companion, seeing he would be drowned, lay down on the bank, reached over and caught the drowning man by the hair and dragged him up the bank; but in coming up, one of his eyes was put out. He was enraged on account of the loss of his eye, and sued his fellow-traveler before the Cadi for destroying his eye. The Cadi was puzzled, and referred the case to the Caliph. The Caliph was also puzzled, and called for the advice of a very learned lawyer, Abbi Joseph. Joseph, having heard the case, gave this decision: that the plaintiff should have his choice of two things, viz: to go back into the pond as he was before, and take his chance of getting out the best way he could, or to be satisfied with the loss of his eye. I make, said Brackenridge, the same offer to these men. Let them be placed in the same position they were, and

fall into the hands of the insurgents, or let them be content with the inconvenience they have suffered in being driven from home for a short time.

During this period of misrule, serious acts of violence were done. In the cant language of the day, *Tom the Tinker and his boys* were busily engaged. Inflammatory articles were published in the newspapers and posted up in handbills. Liberty poles were erected, and labeled with *liberty, no excise, and death to traitors*. Registered stills were destroyed, and the house of Wells, excise-man in Westmoreland county, was burnt. Fear and distrust pervaded the community. Those who were opposed to these unlawful doings dared not communicate their sentiments to their neighbors, who perhaps were equally opposed to these transactions. A single example will show the state of things. On a week day there was a religious meeting and a lecture in the academy at Canonsburg. After the service was closed and the people had gone out, John McDowell, a very respectable man, an elder in the Presbyterian church, and who had represented the county in the State Legislature, stood on the steps of the academy and exhorted the people to have no participation in these unlawful proceedings, saying they were wicked, and would end in the ruin of those concerned. That as Christians they were bound to obey the laws of the land, however oppressive they might be. What he said was reported abroad, and an attempt was made to burn his barn, and severe threats were uttered against his person.

At first good men stood aloof, remained at home and attended to their business, except when taken by force and compelled to assist in erecting liberty poles, and to be present at public gatherings. After the outrages were committed, they were restrained by prudence or timidity from making known their real sentiments. My own opinion is, that if when the fury was at its height, the people of the western counties could have expressed their opinions by secret ballot, a large majority would have been against these unlawful proceedings. This opinion we think is confirmed by the fact that in October following, before the fury had subsided, Albert Gallatin, although he did not reside in the district, was elected a member of Congress to represent the counties of Washington and Allegany. Gallatin, as we shall see in the sequel, was a conservative opposed to mob law. Two other candidates had been in the field canvassing the counties for several weeks. Gallatin was nominated by a few men in the vicinity of Canonsburg, only three days before the election, and yet he was elected by a large

majority over both his rivals. This is the first time this distinguished man appeared in the councils of our nation, and his public career from that time is well known, and need not be described. His name fills a large and honored place in the history of our country. Perhaps it is not known to some present, that at the time under consideration, he resided in an obscure part of Fayette county, on the Monongahela near the mouth of Cheat river, on the border of Virginia. He had established a glass manufactory, and built up a small village called New Geneva, in memory of his native place. He had imported workmen from Germany, and the business was profitable to himself, and beneficial to the western country. In his absence, attending the National Legislature, some of his best workmen were decoyed away, by promises of higher wages, by capitalists in Pittsburg. This is the origin of those splendid glass-works in that city, whose wares surpass any in this country, and rival the best manufactures of Europe. You will please distinctly to notice that Gallatin was not present at any of the meetings which we have mentioned; and yet it has been asserted and believed by many that he was the head and leader of the insurrection. He was not at the burning of Neville's house; he was not at Mingo creek when the meeting at Parkinson's ferry was appointed; he was not at Braddock's fields or Pittsburg. He was at home some fifty or sixty miles distant, attending to his business. Shortly before the meeting at Parkinson's ferry, he attended a meeting of the distillers of Fayette county in Union Town, after writs had been served on those who had not registered their stills, and no doubt gave his counsel in reference to the measures adopted. At this meeting two resolutions were passed: First, That distillers would register their stills and pay the duty, or they would abandon the business. Second, That those on whom writs had been served, would employ legal counsel and enter their appearance in the U. S. Court east of the mountains. In these resolutions there is nothing but what every good citizen in similar circumstances ought to do. At this meeting, letters of invitation to appoint delegates to attend the meeting at Parkinson's ferry were received and read, but no vote was passed, or even a motion made to accept the invitation. A few days before the meeting at Parkinson's, Gallatin attended a military training in his neighborhood, and as it was understood that other townships in Fayette had appointed delegates to Parkinson's ferry, he was chosen to represent his township, and he consented to go. And this was the first time he attended any meeting growing out of the insurrection.

It will be recollected that every meeting which had previously taken place was a mass meeting, and that every one present had a right to speak and to vote and to act as he pleased or rather as the leaders might dictate. The meeting at Parkinson's ferry was to be a meeting of delegates from each of the townships in the four counties. Letters of invitation had also been sent to Bedford county, Pa., and to the adjacent counties of Virginia.

From Bedford county Pa., two delegates attended, and from Ohio county, Va., six. So that six counties were partially represented. The whole number of delegates in attendance was two hundred and twenty-six, and a much greater number of spectators.

The place of meeting was very unfavorable to calm deliberation. It was on the western bank of the Monongahela, not far from Mingo Creek, the cradle of the insurrection, and only one mile from the house of Major McFarlane, who was killed in the attack on Neville's house. The meeting was held in the open air, under the shade of native trees. Col. Cook was appointed chairman, and Albert Gallatin secretary. Gallatin was very reluctant to act as secretary, but as he was unanimously called on to act in that capacity, he thought he ought not to decline.

David Bradford opened the meeting with a long speech, relating what had been done at Neville's house, stating that Neville had discharged the first gun. He placed every thing done by the insurgents in a favorable light, read the intercepted letters, gave an account of the expulsion of the letter-writers at Braddock's fields, and finally said they were now called on to decide the mode in which the common cause was to be maintained, and suggested what ought to be done, viz. : to procure arms and ammunition, to subscribe money, raise volunteers or draft militia, to appoint committees, to have the superintendence of the several departments. Col. John Marshall supported the suggestions of Bradford, and read five resolutions which he had previously prepared. The first resolution complained of the injustice of requiring the people of the Western country to attend the federal courts, three hundred miles from their residence. To this resolution no objection was made. The second resolution respected making preparation to resist, provided the rights of the Western people were infringed. This was opposed by Gallatin, as unnecessary and improper at the present time. Brackenridge affected to oppose Gallatin in order to make the people believe he was on their side, but he came to the same conclusion with Gallatin for different reasons.

The third and fourth resolutions were modified at the suggestion of Brackenridge without much difficulty. The fifth resolution was that they would support the laws and government of their respective States, and those of the U. S., the excise law, and the taking away citizens from their respective counties excepted.

Gallatin endeavored to show that injury to persons and property in opposing the excise law could not be done without violating the laws of the State. He alluded to the burning of Kirkpatrick's barn, &c. When he mentioned the burning of the barn, one of the delegates called out, "What! do you blame that?" Gallatin was embarrassed, and paused for a moment, and on recovering himself said, "If you had burned Kirkpatrick in it, it might have been something; but the barn had done no harm." "Aye, aye," said the hot-headed men, "that's right enough." The incident shows how difficult it was to manage these people, and how adroitly Gallatin avoided an uproar. The five resolutions were then committed to Gallatin, Bradford, Brackenridge, and Herman Husbands, to be put in due form. The second resolution was amended by this committee so as in a great measure to remove its warlike character. Still Bradford, contrary to the wishes of Gallatin, insisted that these words should be added: *And in case of any sudden emergency to take such measures as they* (i.e. the Committee of Safety) *may think proper.*

The fifth resolution was confined to the maintainence of the municipal laws of the State, because it was morally certain that to support the excise law could not be carried. The resolutions as amended by the Committee were adopted by the Delegates without much difficulty. A Standing Committee of sixty, called the Committee of Safety, one from each township, was then chosen by the Delegates present, from their own number. This Committee agreed to meet at Brownsville on the second day of September.

During this meeting, the Commissioners of the State and of the General Government arrived on the opposite side of the river, and this occasioned great difficulty. The people assembled wished to have a conference and to know immediately what was to be done. The friends of peace and order knew it would be of no avail, and would probably, in the temper the people then were, produce disastrous consequences. They succeeded in having a committee of twelve, three from each of the four counties, appointed to meet the Commissioners at Pittsburg.

On the second day of the meeting at Parkinson's, the proclamation

of Washington arrived and was read, and it produced anger and rage. The idea of drafting militia to quell the insurrection, and the charge of being guilty of treason, made them think they should arm themselves in defense.

It is to be recollected that the delegates on this occasion did not represent the true sentiments of the people. The peaceable part of the community remained at home and attended to their harvest when these delegates were chosen, and some good men chosen refused to attend. The Committee of Sixty were also chosen from those present, and of course it was not a fair representation. On the morning of the meeting a liberty pole was erected, and the following inscription attached: *Equal Taxation and no Excise!—No Asylum for Traitors and Cowards!*

The spectators also were chiefly of those who had been concerned in the previous riots. During the whole of this meeting, Mr. Brackenridge conducted in such a way as to make the insurgents believe he was on their side; yet by his management he greatly aided in carrying out the views of Gallatin. So equivocal was his conduct that Gallatin himself did not know on which side Brackenridge was. James Ross, Senator of the U. S. and one of the Commissioners appointed by the President, understood the maneuvering of Brackenridge, and made to him some important suggestions, which Brackenridge executed in his own way. Wm. Finley, a member of Congress from Westmoreland, was present, but took no active part except in advising with those who were for peace. James Edgar, from Buffalo, Washington county, was there as a delegate, and rendered important service by his influence and counsel. This truly great and good man, little known beyond the precincts of Washington county, was a native of North Carolina, and had removed to Western Pennsylvania at an early period. He had a good English education, had improved his mind by reading and reflection, so that in theological and political knowledge he was superior to many professional men. He had as clear a head and as pure a heart as falls to the lot of mortals, and he possessed an eloquence which, although not polished, was convincing and persuasive. Yet he lived in retirement on his farm, except when the voice of his neighbors called him forth to serve the Church or the State. He was a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church, one of the Associate Judges of Washington Co., had been a member of the Convention of Pennsylvania at the adoption of the Federal Constitution, and had occasionally represented his county in the State Legislature.

During the time of these troubles, I recollect to have heard him at Buffalo, on Monday after a sacramental occasion, address a congregation of at least two thousand people, on the subject of the insurrection, with a clearness of argument, a solemnity of manner, and a tenderness of Christian eloquence which reached the understanding and penetrated the heart of every hearer. The consequence was that very few in his neighborhood were concerned in the lawless riots. Yet his persuasive voice could not stay the fury of the people at Parkinson's Ferry.

On the 20th of August the conferees or Committee of twelve met the Commissioners of the State and of the General Government at Pittsburg. Thomas McKean, the Chief Justice of the State, and Gen. William Irwin, were Commissioners in behalf of Pennsylvania; and William Bradford, Attorney General of the U. S., Caspar Yates and James Ross on the part of the General Government. The Commissioners on the part of the U. S. proposed an amnesty of all offenses before that date, and certain beneficial arrangements for adjusting delinquencies and prosecutions for penalties now pending.

The Commissioners in behalf of the State proposed an amnesty of all indictable offenses against the laws of the State, on condition of keeping the peace and complying with the terms proposed by the U. S. In both cases the terms proposed were to be accepted by the Committee of Safety, which was to meet at Brownsville. Among the Committee of twelve from the people were Gallatin, Brackenridge, Marshall, and David Bradford. They all agreed to the terms proposed except Bradford; and after a private conference with some of the Commissioners, he also assented to the terms proposed. Before the close of the meeting at Parkinson's Ferry, Marshall seemed to waver, and to be looking for some way to back out. An opportunity was now offered. The only thing which the Committee of twelve asked more than what was offered, was longer time; believing the people could not be brought to change their mind in so short a period. This could not be granted. And the Commissioners of the Government required the Committee of Sixty to meet at Brownsville five days sooner than the time appointed, viz: on the 28th of August, instead of the 2d of September.

While the Government Commissioners were in Pittsburg, a liberty pole was erected in front of their lodgings, with the usual inscription of rebellion. On the morning of the conference, a very ill-advised handbill was posted up at the market-house, under the title of the In-

dian Treaty. These doings made a very unfavorable impression on the minds of the Commissioners, and of course were reported to the Government. Mr. Brackenridge was charged with being the author of the Indian Treaty; but it was afterwards proved that he was not.

On the 28th of August, the Committee of sixty, called the Committee of Safety, met at Brownsville to receive the report of the Committee of twelve, and were surrounded with a large number of spectators, chiefly from the infected district. And about the time the meeting was organized, a company of sixty or seventy riflemen, attended by a troop of horse, appeared on the ground, paraded through the streets with drum and fife, and finally arranged themselves among the spectators to see what was going on. This meeting was also held in the open air. Those of the Committee who were for submission, believed the military intended to overawe them, and those who were for continued resistance, concluded that the riflemen designed to enforce their wishes by power of arms. The one party rejoiced, and the other trembled. The Committee of twelve dared not make their report which was in favor of accepting the conditions proposed.

After some time it was ascertained that the riflemen and horse, without knowing that the Committee of Sixty were to meet at Brownsville on that day, had come for a different purpose. In the vicinity of Brownsville there was a wealthy and very respectable man of the Society of Friends, usually called Quakers, who, some time before, in jest, had called the Committee of Safety "the Scrub Congress." And these riflemen had come twenty or thirty miles to chastise him; that is, to tar and feather him, to burn his house or a mill which he owned on the Redstone near Brownsville. As soon as these facts were ascertained, the Committee of Sixty informed the riflemen that they could not permit the execution of their purpose—that the Committee of Safety were invested with plenary powers to administer justice, to punish all offenses against themselves and the people of the four counties. Accordingly, to prevent violence, they ordered Samuel Jackson (for that was the offender's name,) to be brought before them that they might hear the case, and if found guilty, prescribe the punishment. Jackson was brought. A tall, thin man, with a broad-brimmed hat and straight-breasted drab coat; and he stood in the presence of his judges and accusers with a firm and unmoved countenance, not knowing whether life or death awaited him. The charge was proved by two witnesses. The question was, what should be done with the culprit? Mr. Brackenridge very gravely proposed that he

should be punished according to the Jewish law—"an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." He eulogized this law as one of the most just, reasonable and humane laws ever enacted; that it required injuries to be punished in kind, just in proportion to the offense—neither more nor less. If, said he, a man should insult you by pulling your nose, you are not to knock him down, because you might hurt him more than he had hurt you. Nor are you to send him a polite note requesting the honor of exchanging a shot with him, because you might kill him, or he might kill you; but you are to do to him precisely as he had done to you—that is, pull his nose. He also told an anecdote respecting the manner in which Oliver Cromwell punished a man who had used insulting language towards him. And although this was the most effective part of his speech, I shall not repeat it. My proposition, continued Brackenridge, is that we punish this man according to the Jewish law, and after the example of that illustrious republican, Oliver Cromwell. And whereas it has been proved that Samuel Jackson has called us, the Honorable the Representatives of the four Western Counties of Pennsylvania, "the Scrub Congress," no matter whether in jest or in earnest, I move that we pay him in his own coin—that we call him "a scrub," and that he be known by the name of Scrub Samuel as long as the world lasts, and then we shall be even with him. This motion was carried by acclamation, amidst a tremendous roar, in which the riflemen heartily joined. Jackson apologised and ordered a couple of buckets of whiskey to be brought out, took a drink with the riflemen, and they parted good friends.

Although the matter which brought the riflemen to Brownsville was amicably adjusted, they still remained on the ground until near night, and deterred the Committee of twelve from making their report. As soon as the military had departed, the conferees made their report. The report was in favor of accepting the terms proposed by the Government. Notwithstanding his apparent acquiescence when in Pittsburg, Bradford urged the rejection of the terms without delay. He said the conditions were so degrading that no one who had the spirit of a freeman could hesitate a moment.

James Edgar begged for a little time for consideration before they took a step which might involve the country in a civil war. In a strain of keen irony, which Bradford seemed to take for truth, he extolled the talents, learning, penetration and courage of the eloquent gentleman. He said that Mr. Bradford could see by intuition into the most

difficult subjects, and that when he saw the path of duty plain before him, he had courage and skill adequate to every emergency. For his own part he was slow of apprehension ; he could not at once, like the gentleman who urged an immediate decision, know what might be said against the motion. He wanted a little time to think the subject over, and perhaps he might be brought to see his way clear to follow the gentleman as his leader. There might be others in the same state of mind with himself ; and he appealed to the gentleman's acknowledged candor and liberality to give his weaker brethren a little time to think of the subject ; that unanimity in so important a crisis was greatly to be desired.

An adjournment until the next morning took place. Immediately after the adjournment, Bradford crossed the Monongahela and lodged on the same side of the river with the riflemen, who had gone over a short time before him. This circumstance gave rise to the belief that he had passed the night with those armed men, and that he would probably return in the morning with them, and compel the Committee of Sixty to reject the proposals of the Commissioners on the part of the Government. In the morning Bradford returned without the military ; still it was feared that they were waiting for orders from him to appear. This idea greatly embarrassed the proceedings of the day.

Between Gallatin, Brackenridge and Edgar there was a dispute who should speak first. The two latter refused, and Gallatin with some reluctance commenced. It was admitted by all who heard him that Gallatin on no other occasion ever delivered so able and convincing an argument. He explained the nature of our Government, the duties of rulers and of their constituents, the necessity of submitting to laws which bore hard on a particular part of the community, until they could be altered in a regular constitutional way. His speech was long, calm and intellectual, containing no expressions calculated to irritate or create angry feelings. Brackenridge followed in a more animated strain. He appealed to the fears of the people—stated the dangers to which they were exposed. He said the General and State Governments had taken steps, from which they could not recede. The Western people could not refuse submission to a particular law, and at the same time remain a part of the Government. Hemmed in from commerce by the mountains on one side, and on the other by the Indians and British, the mouth of the Mississippi blocked up by the Spanish, they must become isolated and independent. An alliance with either

of these was impossible. They had no military stores, nor means of procuring them. The Government was raising an army to subdue them. Can you, he asked, defeat an army of 15,000 men? Can you drive back an army of twice that number if the first be repulsed? Where are your arms, your ammunition, your money to feed and clothe your soldiers? You have brave men—men skilled in the use of fire-arms; but yield you must, sooner or later, and then follows confiscation and imprisonment, and hanging of those who survive.

When Brackenbridge closed, James Edgar commenced a most solemn address. He dwelt chiefly on their moral obligations to the Government under which they lived—that by their Representatives in Convention they had adopted the Federal Constitution—that they had elected legislative, and executive officers—that the legislative, judicial and executive officers had sworn to support the Government, and that the people had put themselves under the protection of the laws, all which acts was a solemn acknowledgment of their allegiance. To violate these obligations was to break the most sacred and solemn ties that could bind man to man, or man to God. If these things were allowed to take place, no confidence could be placed in each other. The most solemn promises and contracts would not be binding; and men calling themselves Christians could place less confidence in each other than in the savages on their borders. He described in a touching manner the distressing situation into which they had brought themselves by their inconsiderate acts—that through sympathy with their friends, many had involved themselves in perilous circumstances—that to persist in resistance would involve the innocent with the guilty in one common ruin; and that he did not deem it unbecoming to say that those who refused submission must answer at the bar of God for the blood that would be shed in a civil war. He dwelt on these topics at great length, and expostulated with his fellow-citizens in the most tender and affecting manner.

These speeches were delivered without any previous preparation, except a full knowledge of the subject and a deep feeling as to the result. Of course, much of the matter and the whole of the manner can never be regained.

Bradford then rose, and contrary to his engagements with the Commissioners of the Government, he opposed the acceptance of the propositions in the most violent terms. He spoke of resources, of arms and ammunition—of the valor of the Western men—of their skill with the rifle, to which they had been accustomed from their child-

hood. We will meet, said he, our foes in one of those narrow passes in the mountains where four men cannot walk abreast. We will hurl down upon them the rocks from above—defeat the first army that enters the mountains, take their arms and baggage, and then we will be doubly able to defeat any army that may be sent against us ; and much more in the same strain.

The question was then put, "Shall a vote be taken?" and decided in the negative—not a single person rising except the Committee of twelve. It was perceived that the members of the General Committee were afraid to let their sentiments be known, and the question was put—"Shall the vote be taken by ballot?" And again no one rose except the Committee of twelve. It was then proposed that the Secretary should write on slips of paper, as much alike as possible, "Aye" on one end, and "No" on the other—that one of these should be delivered to each, and he should take which end he pleased, so that no one could possibly know how another voted. This was agreed to. The question was then on the following resolution, viz : "That in the opinion of this Committee, it is the interest of the people of this country to accede to the proposals made by the Commissioners of the U. S." The result was, 34 ayes and 23 noes.

I ought to have mentioned that during the meeting hand bills were circulated, signed by *Tom the Tinker*, asserting that the Committee of twelve had been bribed at Pittsburg—that the Commissioners had come over the mountains with their saddle-bags loaded with gold, and had induced the Committee of twelve to agree to the terms of the amnesty. Tar and feathers and burning were threatened to those who should vote for submission on the terms proposed. The truth is that the fear of the mob prevented many from following the dictates of their own sober judgment.

After the vote, finding that a majority were against him, Bradford left the ground. It was voted that the Committee of twelve should again wait on the Commissioners of the Government, and, if possible, obtain better terms. And as the first Committee refused to act, a new one was appointed, and repaired to Pittsburg. Their first proposition not being unanimously accepted, the Commissioners changed the terms and required that every individual in the four western counties should, before or on the 11th of September, sign a promise to abstain from all acts of violence, and to aid in the execution of the laws—the excise included—as a condition of amnesty. The Committee earnestly requested longer time, so that the people might be brought to

understand the situation in which they were placed. But it could not be granted. Only ten days intervened between the offer of new terms and the day on which each individual should secure an amnesty of the past by a written promise of submission to the laws. Four of these days passed before the terms of submission were printed, leaving only six days to circulate information over a region much larger than New Jersey. There was no opportunity to instruct the people respecting what was to be done. The consequence was that in some places the people did not meet at all. In others, a few of the most turbulent met in their election districts, and the peaceable, who had no concern in the riots, remained at home; or if they went, they were overawed by threats. In the district where the disorders commenced, and in some other places, many went to the meetings armed, determined to prevent, by force, signing the conditions of escaping the penalties incurred. Some refused to sign because they had had no concern in the riots. Thus in Fayette county very few signed, because they had permitted the U. S. Marshal to serve his writs, and had entered into cognizance to answer before the U. S. Court. No writs had been served in Westmoreland, and no injury had been done except by a few individuals who had burned the Collector's house.

On the day of signing, there were several examples of mean and cowardly conduct. Men who blustered and swore they would be death to any one who would put his hand to the paper, came to the magistrate after others had been withdrawn, and begged with tears to be permitted to sign, and after they had signed, denied to those whom they had led astray that they had signed. The truth is that many were convinced of their guilt and danger, and yet they were afraid of those around them. And the very persons of whom they were afraid were kept back from the same motive. No one dared to avow his real sentiments.

All the Commissioners of the Government had returned to Philadelphia before the day of signing except James Ross, who remained to carry the signatures to the Government. Two scoundrels who, armed with rifles, had prevented their neighbors from signing, followed Mr. Ross a day's journey, giving out when they left home that they were going to take the papers from him, but when they overtook him, they begged him to carry their names to the President as submissive citizens. Bradford and Marshall signed on the day appointed. Bradford made a long speech, and exhorted the people to submit, putting his own submission on the ground that he was deserted by others. Be-

fore the Army arrived he left the country and fled to New Orleans, and he never returned. He was aware that his speeches at Brownsville, on the 28th and 29th of August, excluded him from the benefit of the amnesty; for it did not embrace acts done after the 22d of that month. Brackenbridge was absent attending a court at Greensburg, and did not return to Pittsburg on the day of signing until it was too late, and he signed the next morning.

The report of the Commissioners was so unfavorable, that the President thought it necessary to send over the mountains the army already collected. But within a few days after Mr. Ross left with the papers signed, a sudden and great change took place in the sentiments and conduct of the insurgents, and a meeting of the Committee of Safety was called at Parkinson's ferry, on the 2d of October.

At this meeting, Wm. Finley and David Reddick were appointed Commissioners to wait on the President and to assure him that submission and order could be restored without the aid of military force. Without delay they crossed the mountains, and met the President with the army at Carlisle. As they approached Carlisle, they received the most alarming accounts of the excitement and rage of the army against the Western people, and they were advised by persons in whom they had confidence, not to enter or pass through Carlisle; that disorder and insubordination prevailed in the camp; that two men, one in Lebanon and the other near Carlisle, had been killed, and that threats of taking summary justice on the insurgents were freely uttered. On entering Carlisle they found that the report of the excitement and insubordination of the army had not been exaggerated. The tavern-keeper with whom they lodged, and others advised the Commissioners not to appear in the streets. In short, there appeared to be as strong a disposition in the army as there had been in the insurgents to enforce Lynch law. It required all the authority and influence of Washington to maintain order and subordination in the army. The truth is, that in order to rouse the militia of New Jersey and the lower part of Pennsylvania, exaggerated accounts, if that were possible, of the doings of the Whiskey Boys had been circulated, and the papers of Tom the Tinker had been distributed. In these papers Tom had ridiculed the Jersey militia, calling them "The Water Melon Army," telling them they had better stay at home and thrash their buckwheat, or if they must fight, to make war on the crabs and oysters in their bays rather than meet the Whiskey Boys. A song written by Gov. Howell and sung in the camp, had no small effect in inspiring the militia with

patriotic arder to put down the rebellion.* Finley and Reddick were not molested except with opprobrious language in the streets. They called on the President and were politely received, and had several interviews with him, generally in the presence of Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury. They made known to the President the great change that had taken place in the views and feelings of the people west of the mountains after the Commissioners of the Government had returned. That the great body of the people who had no concern in the disorders, remained quietly at home and attended to their business, had become convinced that the violence used would ruin the country. That they had formed themselves into associations to suppress disorder and to promote submission to the laws; that the most disastrous consequences were apprehended from taking over the mountains an army so excited as that collected. Washington received the communication with great attention, and replied in substance that the chief expense of the army had already been incurred, and that he would unite the disorderly part of the army with those whose good conduct could be relied on, and he apprehended no injury would be done to the property or persons of the people, provided no resistance was made; but if a single gun was fired he could not answer for the consequences. The Commissioners returned, called a meeting of the Committee of Safety at Parkinson's ferry, and made their report. At this meeting assurances were received from all parts of the country that resistance to the laws had been abandoned, and that no excise officer would be molested in the execution of his duties.

The same Commissioners, with two additional, were appointed to meet the President at Bedford, and inform him of the state of the country. When they arrived at Bedford, they found that the President having visited the left division of the army, consisting of the Virginia and Maryland militia assembled at Cumberland on the Potomac, had been at Bedford, and had returned to Philadelphia before they arrived.

They then returned to Union Town, and had an interview with Henry Lee, Governor of Virginia, whom Washington had appointed major-general of the expedition. They were received by him with great civility, and assured that no exertions would be wanting on his part to prevent injury to the persons and property of the peaceable

* This song, and a journal kept during the expedition, by Major William Gould, of the Jersey Troops, will be found in the Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society, Vol. III.

inhabitants. The right division of the army advanced from Bedford into Westmoreland county. The foot halted and encamped for several weeks, a mile and a half east of the Youghiogany river, so that from this central position they could reach any part of the country where resistance was likely to be made. The horse proceeded to the vicinity of Parkinson's Ferry. Those encamped near the Youghiogany made sad havoc on the poultry, pigs, and cattle in the neighborhood. Complaints of these depredations were so frequent, that general orders were issued that those detected in plundering would be severely punished. But in many cases the officers deemed it prudent to connive at the violations of the general orders. Jonathan Forman, of Monmouth county, N. J., who had been an officer in the Revolutionary war, and who commanded a regiment in the Western expedition, told me this trick played upon him. Soon after the general orders against plundering had been issued, two of his men came to him one morning, told him they had been out hunting the day previous, and had shot a nice young bear, and requested him to accept a quarter for dinner. It was the quarter of a shoat or young hog, which they had skinned, and made look as much like bear meat as they could. He accepted the present, dined on it, and praised the delicious flavor of the bear meat, thinking it better to be deceived than to punish his neighbors, who at home were on an equality with him.

Companies of horsemen were scattered in different directions over the country, and as there was no opposition, it was thought the army was about to return. On the night of the 13th of November, a frosty night, about one o'clock, the horse was sallied forth, and before daylight arrested in their beds about two hundred men. A company of Virginia horse were stationed for several days near Canonsburg, and I give the manner of their proceeding as a sample of what probably occurred in other places. About two o'clock in the morning they surrounded the house where I lodged, and some came in and ordered my landlord, an old man, to rise and guide them to a neighborhood about eight miles distant, where he was well acquainted. He had no horse. They inquired where a horse could be found. He named two or three places. They wanted a guide to the stables. The old man had no servant in the house. Two boys belonging to the Academy lodged in an upper chamber. The older one, of an impetuous temper, had talked big in favor of the insurgents, and he believed the horsemen had come to arrest him, and he lay trembling in bed. The younger, more considerate, had always condemned the insurgents. Conscious of innocence

he jumped up and ran down stairs half dressed, to see what was going on. The horsemen slapped him with their scabbards, and ordered him to show them the stables. He had to go, and run about a quarter of a mile without shoes, frosty as it was. No horse was found at the first stable, and then he had to run as far in a different direction, and happily found a horse. The epithets, young insurgent, with additional hard words, were liberally applied with an occasional slap to quicken his steps. This lad was afterwards the Rev. Dr. O. Jennings, of Nashville, Tenn.

My own lodgings were in a back-room below stairs, in company with a student of the Academy several years older than I was. He was a sober, pious young man, who had been compelled to go to the burning of Neville's house, and also to Braddock's Fields. On hearing the noise I made an attempt to rise, but my friend, believing the men with swords were in search of him, begged me to lie still. There he lay, with head covered, trembling and panting until the horsemen had departed. In justice to the Virginia, Maryland, and Philadelphia horsemen, it must be said they made arrests and treated their prisoners with as much gentleness and humanity as practicable. Yet we can easily imagine what terror seized mothers, and sisters, and wives, when their sons, and brothers, and husbands were taken out of bed, and carried off they knew not whither. That night was afterwards called "the dismal night."

To the New Jersey horsemen was assigned the duty of arresting those who resided in Mingo Creek settlement, the region where the insurrection commenced, and where the most disgraceful acts of violence had been committed. Whether this region was assigned by accident to the New Jersey horsemen, or that they might have an opportunity of taking revenge for the insults Tom the Tinker had offered, calling the Jersey militia the Water Melon Army, &c., we know not. But the universal testimony is, that arrests were made in that region accompanied with circumstances of barbarity and terror seldom equalled. Men were dragged out of their beds loaded with curses, threatened with hanging and death in the presence of their wives and children, and not permitted to collect clothes necessary to protect them from the inclemency of the season, and driven off on foot when they had horses in their stables. About forty of these men were brought to a house near Parkinson's Ferry, and thrust into a wet and muddy cellar, tied two and two back to back, and kept there twenty-four hours without food or drink. A fire was kindled for the guard, but the pris-

oners were not suffered to come near it, nor was the owner of the house permitted to do anything to relieve the sufferings of his neighbors. The following day they were driven twelve miles on foot, through mud and water to Washington. During this march, instances of cruelty are told too bad to be repeated. This treatment was attributed to the commanding officer rather than to the men. Indeed, the men when they saw their prisoners exhausted with hunger and fatigue ready to faint, alighted from their horses, placed their prisoners on their saddles, and waded themselves through mud nearly knee deep. A large number of prisoners from Washington county were collected together in the county town, and taken thence to Pittsburg under guard. The object in taking them to Pittsburg was that they might be examined by the District Judge, so as to ascertain which of them ought to be taken to Philadelphia for trial. I saw them when on their way, as they entered Canonsburg, and were placed in a large upper room in the Academy, to lodge for the night. They were conducted by the Philadelphia and New Jersey cavalry. The contrast between the Philadelphia horsemen and the prisoners was the most striking that can be imagined. The Philadelphians were some of the most wealthy and respectable men of that city. Their uniform was blue, of the finest broadcloth. Their horses were large and beautiful, all of a bay color, so nearly alike that it seemed any two of them would have made a good span of coach horses. Their trappings were superb. Their bridles, stirrups, and martingales glittered with silver. Their swords, which were drawn and held elevated in the right hand gleamed in the rays of the setting sun. The prisoners were also mounted on horses, of all shapes, sizes, and colors; some large, some small, some long tails, some short, some white, some black, some fat, some lean, some of every color and form that can be named. Some had saddles, some blankets, some bridles, some halters, some with stirrups, some with none. The riders also were as various and grotesque in their appearance. Some were old, some young, some hale, respectable looking men, others were pale, meager, and shabbily dressed. Some had great coats, others had blankets on their shoulders. The countenance of some was downcast, melancholy, dejected; that of others stern, indignant, manifesting that they thought themselves undeserving such treatment. Two Philadelphia horsemen rode in front, and then two prisoners, and so two horsemen and two prisoners alternately throughout a line extending perhaps half a mile. I have more than once seen gangs of fifty or sixty negroes tied to a long rope, two and

two opposite to each other, and marched to a distant slave-market, but their anguish and indignation was not to be compared to that manifested by these western men. If these men had been the ones chiefly guilty of the disturbance it would have been no more than they deserved. But the guilty had signed the amnesty, or had left the country before the army approached. It has been estimated that between one and two thousand men with rifles in their hands, had withdrawn and remained absent until the army left the country. The District Judge and the Prosecuting Attorney had a most arduous and delicate task to discriminate between those who were guilty and those who were innocent; and the great number arrested made it impossible for a single judge to examine within any reasonable time the case of each individual. There were several persons not clothed with judicial authority, who assisted in making preliminary examinations. Among these, Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury, took an active and distinguished part.

To the Secretary the country owes much. Through his intelligence and energy the finances of the country, in a deranged and bankrupt state, were restored to system and order; and means were provided for paying at least in part, the debts of the Revolutionary war, and of giving confidence in the pecuniary responsibilities of the General Government. But as Mr. Hamilton and those who acted with him were not acquainted with the people in Western Pennsylvania, they made many mistakes. They dismissed, as innocent, some who were among the most guilty; while they doomed others, perfectly innocent, to be carried to Philadelphia on charge of treason. It was natural that the Secretary of the Treasury, finding his financial arrangements violently opposed, should be chafed and irritated. He crossed the mountains prepossessed with the idea that some leading and distinguished men in that country, such as William Finley, Albert Gallatin, H. H. Brackenridge and John Smiley were the authors of the rebellion; and when he could not obtain evidence of the fact, he charged the persons examined with prevarication and falsehood, and even intimated to them that their own safety depended on implicating men who had done all they could to quell the insurrection.

I omit several cases of this kind that might be mentioned, and notice only that of Mr. Brackenridge, as stated by himself. Mr. B. was two days closeted in a private room, under examination by the Secretary. In the course of the examination, Mr. Hamilton suggested that witnesses who were not candid in giving testimony against others,

could not expect to avail themselves of the benefits of the amnesty. As Mr. Brackenridge was proceeding with his narrative, the Secretary remarked, "I observe, Sir, one leading trait in your account—a disposition to excuse the principal actors; and before we go further, I must be candid and inform you of the delicate situation in which you stand. You are not within the amnesty. You did not sign upon the day; and although the Government may not be disposed to act rigorously, yet you are in its power, and it will depend on the candor of your account, what your fate will be." Mr. B. answered, "It is true, Sir, I am not within the amnesty. I did not sign on the day; and I am sensible of the extent of the power of the Government; but were the narrative to begin again, I would not change a single word."

In his history of the Western Insurrection, Mr. Finley attributes the exertions of the Secretary of the Treasury to find evidence against Gallatin, Smiley and himself, not to an honest belief that they had fostered and encouraged the insurrection, but to a desire to destroy their influence with the people, because they were opposed to his official acts.

I cannot believe that Mr. Hamilton acted from any such unworthy motive; but that he was led to believe that these men were at the foundation of the rebellion, and that he wished to ascertain the real actors and those who urged it forward. Yet I am as fully persuaded that these men never advised any other than constitutional measures to obtain the repeal of the excise law, which they knew operated very unequally and oppressively on the people west of the mountains. I want no other proof of this than that the people in the neighborhood of Finley, Gallatin and Smiley, and with whom they had frequent intercourse, were quiet during the disturbance, and not one of them was charged with a single misdemeanor. It is true that Gallatin acted as Secretary at the first meeting at Parkinson's Ferry, and that one of the resolutions signed by him, as Secretary, had a warlike aspect. But it is equally true that he modified and softened the other resolutions, and that he opposed, in Select Committee, that which spoke of resistance in certain contingencies; and having borne testimony against the resolution, he signed it as the Secretary of the meeting. If he had done otherwise, he must have refused to act as Secretary, and lost all influence with the people and suffered them to go headlong to ruin.

It will be recollected that during the disturbance Mr. Brackenridge was in a great fear of being mobbed by the insurgents. When the army was approaching he thought he saw a storm, still more appalling,

arising from another quarter. The part he took in expelling Col. Neville and others from Pittsburg had enraged them against him. These men had gone to Philadelphia, and, as he feared, had prejudiced the Government and the officers of the army against him. He thought of leaving the country; but through the advice of his friends, he determined to remain and abide the issue. When Gen. Morgan, who commanded the Virginia Dragoons, arrived in Pittsburg, some of his men, at a late hour in the night, after Mr. Brackenridge had retired, broke into his yard, and were about to enter his house. His servants ran and informed the General, and he came bare-headed and dispersed his men. Concerning this transaction, Brackenridge quaintly remarks, that he was very thankful to Gen. Morgan for saving his life; yet the General "had no objections to having him conducted out of the world in a legal way." It seems the General made great exertions afterwards to find proof that Brackenridge was guilty of treason.

When Brackenridge observed the manner in which witnesses were examined—the implied promises of impunity if testimony were given against some leading men—he did not know but that some criminal might accuse him as his leader, in order to escape punishment. He knew also that the speeches made at Mingo Creek and Parkinson's Ferry were of so equivocal a character that if one part were reported without the other, treasonable expressions might be found. He was aware, too, that his conversation and conduct at Braddock's fields were intended to make the insurgents believe, and did make them believe, that he was on their side. For these and other reasons he apprehended danger. And he probably would have had serious difficulty, if James Ross, one of the Commissioners of the Government, who knew his motives and understood the eccentricity of his character, had not been with him at Braddock's fields and Parkinson's Ferry.

He was bound over to attend the Court east of the mountains, as a witness. There were several cases of persons taken to Philadelphia for trial who were entirely blameless. I mention only one. Col. John Hamilton was Sheriff of Washington county, resided in Mingo Creek settlement, commanded a regiment of militia in that neighborhood; many of his men were concerned in the riots; yet he stood aloof and prevented all the mischief he could—took no notice of the order to march his regiment to Braddock's fields—rode to Washington and prevailed on Marshall to countermand the order; but it was too late. And finding that his men would go, he went with them with a view to prevent mischief; and he did render important service.

During the riots he had repeatedly declared himself ready, as Sheriff, to arrest and bring into court any man against whom a writ might be issued. And such was the energy of his character that no one who knew him, doubted his word. But Bradford, the Prosecuting Attorney of the county, was the leader of the insurgents. Addison, the Presiding Judge, was absent east of the mountains, and the inferior magistrates had not the courage to issue a writ. Yet this man was marked as a victim, taken to Philadelphia without any previous examination of his case, paraded through the streets with an ignominious badge on his hat, and thrown into prison. After remaining in prison ten weeks, his case was brought before the Supreme Court on a writ of *habeas corpus*; and he was admitted to bail. At the Circuit Court, the June following, a bill of misprison of treason was sent to the Grand Jury; but every witness examined testified strongly in his favor, and he was dismissed.

In conducting the examinations at Pittsburg and at other places in Western Pennsylvania, the conduct of Judge Peters were marked with justice and humanity. He seemed unwilling to commit any for trial, against whom there was not probable evidence of guilt. From a portion of the army there were loud complaints, because so many were released. They complained that after all their fatigue and hardships so few of the insurgents would be hung.

It is possible that to prevent the army from taking summary justice, the Judge sent to Philadelphia more than he otherwise would have sent. After being kept in jail four or five months, the prisoners were tried before Judge Paterson, assisted by Judge Peters; and of the large number taken to Philadelphia, only two were condemned to be hung. The truth is, that the most criminal had signed the conditions of amnesty or had fled from the country and escaped the penalty of the law.

One of those condemned was an ignorant German, a man of violent passions, who had assisted in burning the Collector's house in Westmoreland county, convicted chiefly on the testimony of a man who was the leader in that wicked transaction. The other was John Mitchell, one of the men who had robbed the U. S. mail at the instigation of his cousin, D. Bradford.

Mitchell had absconded until the judiciary had left the country. He then returned and delivered himself up to Gen. Morgan, who remained through the winter with about fifteen hundred men. Struck with the ignorance and stupidity of the man, Gen. Morgan affected

not to believe that he was concerned in robbing the mail. But he insisted that he was the man; and the General gave him a pass to go to Philadelphia and to deliver himself to the Marshal, hoping that he would have sense enough to make his escape; but he had not. He was arrested and tried, and condemned to be hung. These two men, who, in the language of Mr. Brackenridge, were not worth hanging, were reprieved and afterwards pardoned by the President.

Many important salutary lessons might be deduced from the imperfect narrative given; but having already trespassed too long on the patience of the Society, I will merely suggest a few topics on which each one can reflect at his leisure.

First. In a country so extensive as the United States, with such a diversity of climate and soil, leading the citizens to such a variety of pursuits and occupations, it appears to me impossible to raise a revenue to sustain the Government by direct or internal taxation. The Constitution of the United States declares that "all duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;" that is, the same articles shall be taxed alike throughout our extensive territory. The consequence will be, that taxes not felt at all in some places, will press heavily on others, as did the excise on whiskey in Western Pennsylvania, and will tempt the people to rebel. We have great reason to be thankful that the duties on importations from foreign countries are sufficient to pay the expenses of our Government. In this case, every individual is at liberty to purchase or not to purchase foreign goods, and of course to pay or not to pay, at his pleasure, the expenses of our General Government.

Second. We see the disastrous consequences of mob law: the innocent are as likely to suffer as the guilty.

Third. When a number of persons combine together to do wrong, reason is dethroned and argument is of no avail. You may convince each individual of his error; but he will not and he dare not break ranks. He is afraid of his neighbor; and his neighbor may be as desirous as he is to back out, but he dare not; and this feeling may pervade the whole community, and no one will dare to express his real sentiments. This truth was illustrated by the Committee of Safety refusing to vote openly at the meeting at Brownsville.

Fourth. In a commotion such as that in Western Pennsylvania, froth and bubbles will rise to the surface of the agitated waters, and swell and glitter in the sunbeams for a short time, and then burst and vanish

from the sight. Witness D. Bradford and other leaders of the Western Insurrection.

Fifth. Those who are the most turbulent and outrageous when surrounded by a multitude agreeing with them in sentiment and feeling, are usually the most dastardly and sneaking when danger comes. Witness those who fled from the country when the army was crossing the mountains.

Sixth. On this occasion Washington manifested his usual wisdom in calling out an army so large as to render opposition hopeless, and by this means avoiding the effusion of human blood.

Lastly. This occurrence was salutary as an example, showing that the Federal Government was not a rope of sand, which might be broken at the will of any section of the country whenever any State or part of a State thought a particular law unjust or oppressive.