

## CHAPTER XIII.

## JOHNSON'S FAMILY ; LAST DAYS ; EUTHANASIA.

WHILE the brown Lady Johnson, Mollie Brant, presided over the mansion, and her dusky brood attended the manor school, the daughters of Johnson and of Catharine Wisenberg were trained under the care of a governess who made them familiar with the social graces of London and the polite accomplishments and standard literature of England. Mary Brant, though not only an Indian, but a Mohawk Indian in spirit, was to her dying day, in the old English and Hebrew sense of the word, a virtuous woman. She had the virile qualities of worth, excellence, and abilities, and not only managed her household to the satisfaction of her lord, but kept herself well informed and interested in the two worlds in which lived the people of the Long House and those of Christendom. More than one English lady visiting at the Hall was surprised to find this Iroquois woman so cultivated, refined, and alert, not only with womanly intuition, but equipped with information as to the life and thoughts in which they and their husbands moved.

Johnson was happy in the careers of his children born in wedlock, so far as he lived to witness them. His first-born child, John, was the especial pride of

his father, though he never won the regard of his neighbours. He had the misfortune to be the son of a great man, and to be constantly compared with his father. He was educated under Domine Vrooman and other clergymen of the Dutch Reformed and Anglican Churches. He often accompanied his father on his journeys, notably the adventurous one to Detroit in 1761. Later he was placed in command of three hundred Iroquois; but these unfortunately deserted their commander, who had not the power, like his father, to sweeten the rigours of discipline by magnetic personality and system. He had considerable experience in the field with the militia, but never won much personal popularity. Visiting England to complete his education, he was presented at court, and knighted at St. James's, Nov. 22, 1765. He later became a member of the Assembly, being pitted against Colonel Schuyler, who rightly or wrongly — more probably the latter — imagined the father to be prodding the son or using him for a cat's-paw.

On the 29th of June, 1773, Sir John was married to Miss Mary Watts, of New York City, the wedding being at the bride's house. The bridal tour was a trip up the Hudson River when Nature was dressed in her glorious summer robes. A stay at Albany marked by brilliant social attentions, and the ride up the loveliest of valleys, completed the journey. Johnson Hall was then embosomed in a wealth of foliage and flowers, and bright with the pageantry which manor life could on special occasions display. Sir John, on the death of his father, succeeded to an estate which,

with the exception of that of the founder of Pennsylvania, was probably the largest ever held by a private individual in America. At the request of the Indians to Johnson, and of the latter to the king, Col. Guy Johnson was made Superintendent of Indian Affairs, assisted by Colonel Claus ; but Sir John succeeded to the office of major-general of the militia. To tell the story of his Tory career in the Revolution is no part of our plan. "The Life and Misfortunes and Military Career of Brig.-Gen. Sir John Johnson, Baronet," has been ably written by Gen. J. Watts De Peyster. In this book a list of Sir William Johnson's descendants are given.

Johnson usually called Anne, his first daughter, Nancy, and often wrote to her while away from home. A son of one of the Palatine Germans, Daniel Claus, a noted Indian fighter, captain of militia, and a man of considerable culture in German, English, and the Iroquois languages, and withal a favourite of Sir William, fell in love with Miss Nancy, and married her in July, 1762. The nuptials were celebrated at Johnson Hall with great rejoicing. Claus assisted his father-in-law and Joseph Brant in translating and preparing the Book of Common Prayer in the Mohawk language. In thus following up and completing the work of Domine Barnhardus Freeman, of Schenectady, a manual of devotion was prepared for the Mohawks which was in use until near the second half of the present century. As colonel of militia, Claus saw long and varied service in New York, Canada, and the West.

Mary Johnson, the baronet's second daughter, married in March, 1763, her cousin Guy, a nephew of Sir William and his private secretary. Guy Johnson was later an active member of the Assembly from Tryon County, and was always a helpful assistant of his uncle. Their daughter Mary became wife of Sir Colin Campbell, and mother of Gen. Sir Guy Campbell. Guy Johnson's career in devastating the valleys of New York during the Revolution is too well known to need repetition here.

The absorption of Johnson's mind in his multifarious labours and in the interests of the community in which he lived, scarcely gave him time to study carefully the great political movements leading to the Revolution. The time had now come when the continued folly of the king and Parliament acting as irritant and stimulant upon people in whom a love of freedom was inborn, was to result in independence. The long training in the border wars had educated a generation of soldiers who did not fear to meet either the mercenaries or the regulars of Great Britain, while also well able to profit by the mistakes of the king's agents, and to organize government for themselves. On the civil side, the people of New England, led and trained by Congregational clergymen rather than by lawyers, were educated into the idea of resistance to the king and Parliament on grounds of abstract right. In the Middle and Southern States regularly educated publicists and lawyers trained in England were much more numerous. The continued invasion by the king of their rights as Englishmen

was their theme ; and resistance was made, and final victory expected, not by revolution, but through the right application of the law and tradition which had been so often violated. In many of the colonies a well-grounded fear lest a politically organized church should be forced upon them, as well as hatred of England's avaricious policy of holding the colonies as a close market, had also their influence in bringing about separation.

Johnson, too busily occupied to follow every step of the movements, yet sympathized with the people, even while sincerely loyal to the Crown. As member of the Council in New York City, he witnessed not only the frequent turbulent expressions of the populace, but also saw from the firm temper of the Assembly signs of the coming danger. While John Dickinson, of Pennsylvania, and Samuel Adams, of Massachusetts, were discussing the political situation and the principles at stake, the people of New York showed by their acts their constant determination to resist all invasion of their rights by either the king or his agent. The governor, Sir Henry Moore, who dissolved the Assembly in 1769, found out quickly that the members were re-elected by overwhelming majorities. His sudden death called to the office of acting governor, for the third time, Dr. Cadwallader Colden.

In the following March the political sky, already full of the portents of a coming storm, gathered a deeper blackness when the fact became known that the House of Commons in London had refused to receive the representative of the New York Assembly.

In spite of prophetic warnings and wise cautions in Parliament, the determination to make merchandise of the colonies stupefied and debauched the conscience of the average lord and commoner of commercial England, as the opium question in China stupefies and debauches it yet. The government was as much determined on a war with the American colonies, and for much the same purpose, as so many of Great Britain's later wars have been waged, — for the sake of maintaining trade. Of the twenty-five or thirty wars, even during Victoria's reign, the majority have been for the purpose of forcing trade and making money. In a word, the war of King George and his Parliament in 1775 against the colonies was a shopkeeper's war for a market. "British interests" then, as now, meant trade and profits. Johnson felt the injustice of the British Government's acts when he wrote in 1769: "Whatever reason or justice there may be in the late steps, there is a probability of their being carried farther than a good man can wish." Nevertheless, Sir William was wisely non-committal on the burning question.

The Sons of Liberty in New York became active and turbulent, and made the lives of ultra-loyalists, like Colden, a burden. The royal troops had been by his orders summoned to New York City, after he had been driven to take refuge in the fort on the outbreak of violence when the stamps arrived from England. These soldiers were now the targets of scorn, especially after the Assembly had refused indemnity to Colden, who kept on recommending them to sup-

plicate the paternal tenderness of their gracious sovereign George. After concurring in the spirited resolutions of the Legislatures of Virginia and South Carolina, the Assembly had also defeated a cunning scheme to win from them a vote of money to support the king's military forces.

The hatred between the soldiers and the Sons of Liberty burst into flame at the battle of Golden Hill, Jan. 18, 1770, in New York City, when the first blood of the American Revolution was spilled. The Sons of Liberty had erected an emblem of their freedom and hereditary rights. The liberty-pole, and their meetings with speeches under it, were survivals of the old custom of their Teutonic ancestors, who met in the folk moot under the chosen oak-trees in the forests of Germany before Christendom began. The liberty-pole with its spars was obnoxious to the red-coats, who with saw and gunpowder tried to destroy it. The citizens resisted, but the unarmed and unorganized mob broke before the charge of armed men with bayonets. Having finally succeeded in sawing the pole into kindling-wood, the military piled the fragments before the doors of the tavern where the Sons of Liberty met.

The citizens were now thoroughly roused, and on the 18th a riot broke out, in which clubs and cutlasses were used, and in which the soldiers were worsted; though several citizens were wounded, and one of them, a sailor, died. When at Golden Hill, or John Street, between Cliff Street and Burling Slip, the riot was stopped by the arrival of British officers, who

ordered their men back to camp. Conspicuous in the affrays of next day were the sailors, who in revenge for the death of their comrade clubbed the soldiers and drove them out of the streets into their barracks. On the 5th of February a new liberty-pole was erected on ground purchased for the purpose, and it remained until 1776.

The Sons of Liberty succeeded in carrying out the non-importation act so vigorously that the market became empty of goods used as presents to the Indians. Johnson was in danger of becoming seriously embarrassed. The Cherokees, who in January, 1770, intended to go to war with the tribes in the West and Southwest, wanted the Six Nations to join them. These at once resolved first to ask the advice of Johnson, who appointed a council at German Flats, hoping to win the Cherokees away from their purpose. Johnson was obliged to write to the chairman of the Sons of Liberty to get permission to receive or purchase a package invoiced to him which they held in bond, promising to use the goods only for the Indians. The request was cheerfully granted, and the goods delivered.

In company with Dr. Shuckburgh, who composed or introduced the tune of "Yankee Doodle," Johnson met the Indians, half famished as they were on account of the failure of crops through caterpillars. The result of the council was that the Cherokees gave up their proposed war, and the treaty of Fort Stanwix was ratified in detail.

Perhaps it was from this incident that the New



Yorkers prepared to dress themselves as Mohawk Indians, and tumble the tea into the waters of the East River, when it should come. On the 9th of July, hearing that all taxes, except upon tea, had been removed, the Committee of One Hundred agreed to receive all imports except tea. Johnson's storehouses were now well stocked with imported Indian goods. Indian trade, which had come almost to a standstill, was resumed, much to the joy of all the Six Nations. The red men could not comprehend the white man's politics, or realize that the love of money was the root of the evil of war also. They could not understand that titles of nobility, commissions in the army, stars, garters, decorations, and things most noble were peddled by government and purchased by money.

So rebellious a spirit as that manifested in New York must be rebuked, and so the king and his counsellors chose as the proper man to curb it, the infamous William Tryon. This Irishman had been an army officer, but through his wife's influence obtained the post of lieutenant-governor of North Carolina in 1764; becoming governor in 1765. He was the fit tool of the kind of a king and parliament that ruled England at this time. Living while at Newbern, N. C., in amazing luxury, at the cost of the oppressively taxed colonists, he delighted in scorning their remonstrances and in crushing out their liberties. Goaded to desperation, the Sons of Liberty, after five years of vain petition for redress, met to the number of nearly two thousand on the banks of the Alamance River. Tryon marched out from his "palace" with

an army of one thousand regular British troops, infantry, cavalry, and artillery, to suppress them. On the 15th of May, 1771, the Regulators, or Sons of Liberty, sent Tryon a message offering to lay down their arms if he would redress their grievances. Tryon advanced with the idea of scattering the patriots before the reinforcements coming from all parts of the province should encourage the Regulators. When within a hundred yards of the patriot ranks, his officers read the riot act. It was met by shouts of defiance. Tryon then ordered his men to fire. They hesitated. Rising in his stirrups, Tryon in a rage cried out, "Fire — on them, or on me," at the same time discharging his pistol and felling a victim. In the two hours' musketry battle which ensued, the ammunition of the poorly armed patriots being soon exhausted, the decisive victory of Tryon was obtained when the artillery was ordered up, and the unequal contest decided by rounds of grape and canister. Twenty of the Sons of Liberty were left dead on the field, the wounded being carried off. Of Tryon's men, sixty were killed or wounded.

Although practically unknown to popular American history, this was the first battle of the American Revolution. For a few weeks Tryon held high revel of execution and devastation in North Carolina, and was then, in the height of his glory, transferred to New York; the Earl of Dunmore, who from Oct. 18, 1770, had served for a few months on Manhattan Island, being ordered to Virginia.

Tryon, who reached New York July 8, 1772, soon

became known among the New York Sons of Liberty as "Bloody Billy." Before the Assembly he made a conciliatory speech attributing his butchery in North Carolina to the special favour of a kind Providence. With consummate address and flattery, and the adroit distribution of ministerial patronage, he managed to hoodwink the Assembly. Backed by the order of the British Government that his salary should be paid out of the revenue, and becoming thus independent of the colony, he was well fitted to be the king's tool. To the amazement of the patriots like Schuyler, and of other colonies, the Legislature of New York seemed to have reversed its former record, and to have become hopelessly subservient.

Local affairs were meanwhile well attended to. Early in January, 1772, Sir William Johnson, who had long believed with Philip Schuyler that a division of Albany County should be made, forwarded a petition from the people in all parts of the county. After considerable discussion a bill was passed by which the old county of Albany was divided into three counties, — Albany, Tryon, and Charlotte. All the civil officers, except one who had been nominated by Johnson, were appointed, and the county-seat of Tryon County was fixed by the Government at Johnstown. At Johnson's suggestion, Tryon County was divided into the townships of Mohawk, Stone Arabia, Canajoharie, Kingsland, and German Flats.

Johnstown now became the centre of bustle and activity. New roads were laid out, and a jail and county court-house built; while new settlers came in

by scores to select lots and build houses. In the midst of his pressing local occupations, Johnson, who had been elected a trustee, — his name standing first on the list of Queen's, now Rutgers College, chartered Nov. 10, 1766, — received an invitation to visit New Brunswick, N. J. He was obliged to decline to attend. The college went into operation in 1771; but its sessions were soon interrupted, both professors and students entering the patriot army when the war broke out.

Remaining at home, he entertained at the Hall, in July, Governor Tryon and his wife. Tryon, as avaricious as he was murderous, had come into the Valley under pretence of holding a council with the Indians to redress their grievances against Klock and others. In reality his purpose was speculation in land; and the use of his office, like that of so many royal governors of New York, was to swell his private purse, while taking advantage of his high position. Although the Indians rehearsed their troubles, and Tryon listened, they obtained from the governor, who was too busy with his money-making schemes, no satisfaction. After reviewing the militia at Johnstown, Burnet's Field, and German Flats, fourteen hundred men in all, and purchasing a large tract of land north of the Mohawk, Tryon returned to New York. His name was not suffered to remain on the map of New York; for Tryon County before many years became one of the first of the nineteen counties in the United States named after General Montgomery. Shortly afterward Tryon appointed Johnson major-general of the Northern Department.

At a council with the chief sachems of the Confederacy of the Six Nations held at his house, at the order of Lord Dartmouth, Johnson obtained from them their assent to the purchase of twenty-three thousand acres north of the Ohio, by the Ohio Company. After telling the chiefs that as a mark of the king's friendship to them Fort Pitt was to be demolished, the sachems agreed to the settlement of what grew to be the State of Ohio.

Just at the time when Sir William Johnson was in the midst of the most varied activities, and was the most popular and influential man in the whole province of New York, his physical strength failed. For several years the inroads upon his constitution had warned him to seek the rest from labours and from social indulgence which seemed impossible to him. For the last ten years before his death he had suffered at intervals from dysentery, which often kept him an invalid in bed for weeks. During these periods of weakness the unextracted bullet received at Lake George in 1755 irritated his nerves, and made his wound very painful. Even when recovered from the attacks of the disease which threatened to be chronic, active exercise was frequently impossible for a long time afterward. This suffering, though so grievous to himself, was providentially turned to the advantage of millions. It was the occasion of the revelation to the world of the health-giving waters of Saratoga Springs. With a touching solicitude for his personal good, the Mohawks had called his attention to the remedial value of the High Rock Spring, to which they always turned

aside in their wanderings or hunts eastward. On the 22d of August, 1767, Sir William left the Hall, and was borne to these springs by his devoted Mohawks. He travelled in a boat to Schenectady, and on their shoulders in a litter to Saratoga. A halt over night was made at Ballston Lake in the cabin of an Irishman named Michael McDonald. Reaching the springs by way of the Indian trail next day, his faithful bearers built a bark hut, and tenderly cared for him during the five days he was able to spend there,— for pressing letters soon called him home. The Adirondack air charged with ozone, and the cleansing and healing waters greatly benefited him. After his return, when this fact was known, others followed his example. Known for ages to the aborigines, its line of fame went out through all the earth; and gradually the evolution of the most famous watering-place in America followed. It is noteworthy that a camp of the red men is still found at Saratoga Springs.

Stone, in his biography of Johnson, calls attention to the coincidence that while Johnson was recovering at Saratoga, Dieskau was dying at Surene near Paris. Both had been leaders of the opposing forces, and both had been wounded at Lake George twelve years before. Arriving on the 4th of September, he was in time to hail his knighted son, John, just home from Europe. Had the vital nerve of an electric cable thrilled under the ocean, Johnson would have heard, four days later, of the decease of his illustrious antagonist.

Other trips for the sake of health were made to the

sea-shore at New London, Conn.; but owing to the fact of his being so often overworked, he was frequently prostrated in summer by his old enemy. When Cresap's war broke out in 1774, he was almost discouraged. Chief Logan's relatives — the Delaware chief Bald Eagle, and the Shawanese sachem Silver Heels — had been murdered by white men, who were too eager to improve red men off the face of the earth. The treaty of Fort Stanwix had not only been trampled under foot by the whites, but the murderers of Silver Heels had, perhaps unwittingly, but certainly in accordance with Indian interpretation, committed a symbolical act which was not private, but national and declarative. It meant war. After the white murderer had shot Bald Eagle, who was alone on the river, he scalped the chief, and propping his body upright in his canoe, sent him adrift down the stream. No note of a congress or decree of a royal court could be to the red man more distinctly a declaration of war than was the bloody freight which this boat bore to the Indians.

To the Six Nations the murder of Logan, their kinsman, was a direct insult and irritating challenge; yet instead of rushing to massacre, they came to their friend Johnson to ask his counsel. For weeks before the congress which he called to meet at his house, July 7, 1774, he was in constant correspondence with his agents in the Ohio and Illinois country. As fast as the chiefs arrived, he persuaded them privately to refrain from war, and to trust in him to obtain justice. Six hundred Indians, many of them

from great distances, were impatiently waiting at Johnson Hall while the war raged on the borders of Virginia. Though Johnson was sick with dysentery, he took no thought of self. From a sick-bed he rose to attend the council. After preliminaries, the meeting on the 9th of July, 1774, was addressed by an eloquent Seneca chieftain. Fortunately, God's day of rest intervened; but on Monday—the last of Johnson's days on earth—his answer was given. For two hours, on a hot day and in the glare of a July sun, with all his old-time fire of eloquence, this friend of the red man spoke in grave discourse. His diction was fiery, rhetorical, impassioned at times; but he spoke judiciously on the problem in hand, pleading that they should not rush into war, but await the course of law. Six hundred dark faces, unrippled with emotion, were fixed intently with burning but immovable eyes, and with the gravity of statues, on the speaker during the long discourse. Then after the peroration, pipes and tobacco were passed around, and the conference broke up, that the auditors might prepare, through their orator, a reply.

Johnson never heard the Indians' rejoinder. A few minutes after the conclusion he was taken with relapse. Supported to his library, he soon became unconscious, and before sunset was dead.

It was euthanasia. Past all call to decide between Indian tribe and tribe, between white murderers and red, between serving conscience and king, between following the colonies for freedom under law or supporting arbitrary despotism under the fiction of power



by the grace of God, Johnson rested from his labours. He was one of the Makers of America, building grander than he knew. His place in history is sure. Had he lived a decade later!—but here we enter the region of conjecture, the ground forbidden to history.