New York Magazine, or Literary Repository (1790-1797)

[1. September 1790]

For the New-York Magazine.

An original and interesting letter, by the late Mrs. Ann E. Bleecker, to

her friend Miss S. T. E. describing the sufferings of Mr. Kittle’s fa-

mily, at Schochticook, in the French and English war, prior to the last.--

Several short practical essays from the same elegant and descriptive pen, we

have had the high satisfaction of presenting to the public eye in our former

numbers.

HISTORY OF MARIA KITTLE

Dear Susan,

HOWEVER fond of novels and

romances you may be, the un-

fortunate adventures of one of my

neighbours, who died yesterday, will

make you despise that fiction, in

which, knowing the subject to be fa-

bulous, we can never be so truly in-

terested. While this lady was expir-

ing, Mrs. C-- V--, her near

kinswoman, related to me her unhap-

py history, in which I shall now take

the liberty of interesting your bene-

volent and feeling heart.--

Maria Kittle was the only issue of

her parents, who cultivated a large

farm on the banks of Hudson, eigh-

teen miles above Albany. They were

persons of good natural abilities, im-

proved by some learning; yet, con-

scious of a deficiency in their educa-

tion, they studied nothing so much

as to render their little daughter truly

accomplished.

Maria was born in the year 1721.

Her promising infancy presaged a ma-

turity of excellencies; every amiable

quality dawned through her lisping

prattle; every personal grace attend-

ed her attitudes and played over her

features. As she advanced through

the playful stage of childhood, she

became more eminent than a Pene-

lope for her industry; yet, soon as the

sun declined, she always retired with

her books until the time of repose,

by which means she soon informed

her opening mind with the princi-

ples of every useful science. She was

beloved by all her female companions,

who, though they easily discovered

her superior elegance of manners,

instead of envying, were excited to

imitate her. As she always made one

in their little parties of pleasure on

festival days, it is no wonder that she

soon became the reigning goddess

among the swains. She was impor-

tuned to admit the addresses of num-

bers, whom she politely discarded,

and withdrew herself a while from

public observation. However, the

fame of her charms attracted several

gentlemen of family from Albany,

who intruded on her retirement, so-

liciting her hand. But this happi-

ness was reserved for a near relation

of her's, one Mr. Kittle, whose me-

rits had made an impression on her

heart. He, although not handsome,

was possessed of a most engaging ad-

dress, while his learning and moral

virtues more particularly recommend-

ed him to her esteem. Their parents

soon discovered their reciprocal pas-

sion, and highly approving of it, has-

tened their marriage, which was ce-

lebrated under the most happy au-

spices.

Maria was fifteen when married.

They removed to his farm, on which

he had built a small neat house, sur-

rounded by tall cedars, which gave it

a contemplative air. It was situated

on an eminence, with a green enclo-

sure in the front; graced by a well-

cultivated garden on one side, and on

the other by a clear stream, which,

rushing over a bed of white pebble,

gave them a high polish, that cast a

soft gleam through the water.

Here they resided in the tranquil

enjoyment of that happiness which so

much merit and innocence deserved;

the indigent, the sorrowful, the un-

fortunate, were always sure of con-

solation when they entered those

peaceful doors. They were almost

adored by their neighbours, and even

the wild savages themselves, who of-

ten resorted thither for refreshments,

when hunting, expressed the greatest

regard for them, and admiration of

their virtues.

In little more than a year they

were blessed with a daughter, the

lovelier resemblance of her lovely

mother; as she grew up her graces in­

creasing, promised a bloom and un-

derstanding equal to her's; the Indi-

ans, in particular, were extremely

fond of the smiling Anna; whenever

they found a young fawn, or caught

a brood of wood-ducks, or surprised

the young beaver in their daily ex-

cursions through the forests, they pre-

sented them with pleasure to her;

they brought her the earliest straw-

berries, the scarlet plumb, and other

delicate wild fruits, in painted bas-

kets.

How did the fond parents' hearts

delight to see their beloved one so

universally caressed? When they

sauntered over the vernal fields with

the little prattler wantoning before

them collecting flowers, and pursu-

ing the velvet elusive butterfly, Ma-

ria’s cheek suffusing with rapture,

"oh, my dear!" she would say, "we

are happier than human beings can

expect to be; how trivial are the evils

annexed to our situation? may God

avert that our Heaven be limited to

this life!"

Eleven years now elapsed before

Mrs. Kittle discovered any signs of

pregnancy; her spouse silently wish-

ed for a son, and his desires were at

length gratified; she was delivered of

a charming boy, who was named,

after him, William.

A French and Indian war had

commenced sometime before, but

about eight months after her delivery,

the savages began to commit the most

horrid depredations on the English

frontiers. Mr. Kittle, alarmed at

the danger of his brother, who dwelt

near Fort-Edward, (the eldest being

just married to a very agreeable young

woman) invited them to reside with

him during the war.

They were scarce arrived when the

enemy made farther incursions in the

country, burning the villages, and

scalping the inhabitants, neither re-

specting age or sex. This terribly

alarmed Mrs. Kittle; she began to

prepare for flight, and the next even-

ing after receiving this intelligence,

as she and Mr. Kittle were busily em-

ployed in packing up china and other

things, they were accosted by several

Indians, whose wigwams were con-

tiguous to the village of Schochti-

cook, and who always seemed well

affected to the English. An elderly

savage undertook to be prolocutor, and

desired the family to compose them-

selves, assuring them they should be

cautioned against any approaching

danger. To inforce his argument,

he presented Maria with a belt inter-

woven with silk and beads, saying,

"there, receive my token of friend-

ship.--we go to dig up the hatchet,

to sink it in the heads of your ene-

mies: we shall guard this wood with

a wall of fire--you shall be safe." A

warm glow of hope deepened in Ma-

ria’s cheek at this. Then ordering

wine to be brought to the friendly

savages, with a smile of diffidence,

"I am afraid," said she, "necessity

may oblige you to abandon us, or

neglect of your promise may deprive

us of your protection."--"Neglect

of my promise," retorted he with

some acrimony, "no, Maria, I am

a true man; I shoot the arrow up to

the Great Captain every new moon:

depend upon it I will trample down

the briers round your dwelling, that

you do not hurt your feet." Maria

now retired, bowing a grateful ac-

knowledgment, and leaving the sa-

vages to indulge their festivity, who

passed the night in the most vocife-

rous mirth.

Mrs. Kittle with a sort of exulta-

tion, related the subject of their con-

ference to her husband, who had ab-

sented himself on their first appear-

ance, having formed some suspicion

of the sincerity of their friendship,

and not being willing to be duped by

their dissimulation. "And now,"

added Maria, smiling, "our fears

may again subside: oh! my dear,

my happiness is trebled into rapture,

by seeing you and my sweet babes

out of danger." He only sighed,

and reaching his arm round her po-

lished neck, pressed her to his bosom.

After a short pause, "my love," said

he, "be not too confident of their

fidelity, you surely know what a small

dependence is to be placed in their

promises; however, to appear suspi-

cious, might be suddenly fatal to us,

we will therefore suspend our jour-

ney to Albany for a few days."--

Though Maria's soul saddened at the

conviction of this truth; though her

fears again urged her to propose im-

mediate flight, yet she acquiesced;

and having supped with the family,

this tender pair sunk asleep on the

bosom of rest.

Early the next morning Mr. Kittle

arose; first impressing a kiss on Maria's

soft cheek, as she slumbered with her

infant in her arms. He then awak-

ed his brother, reminding him that

he had proposed a hunting match the

preceding evening. "It is true,"

replied Peter, "but since hostilities

have commenced so near us as the

Indians inform, I think it rather im-

prudent to quit the family."--

"Come, come," replied the other,

"do not let us intimidate the neigh­

bours by cloistering ourselves up with

women and children."--"I reject

the thought," rejoined Peter, "of

being afraid." Then having dressed

himself, while his brother charged

their pieces, they left the house, and

traversed the pathless grass for many

hours without perceiving any thing

but small birds, who filled the fra-

grant air with melody. "Peter,"

said Mr. Kittle, casting his eyes a-

round the lovely landscape, "what

a profusion of sweets does nature ex-

hale to please her intelligent creatures.

I feel my heart expand with love and

gratitude to Heaven every moment,

nor can I ever be grateful enough. I

have health and competence, a lovely

fond wife, whose smile would calm

the rudest storm of passion, and two

infants blossoming into perfection;

all my social ties are yet unbroken--

Peter, I anticipate my Heaven--!

But why, my brother, do you turn

pale? what dreadful idea stiffens

your features with amazement? what

in God's name ails you, Peter, are

you unwell? sit down under this tree

awhile."--To these interrogatories

Peter replied, "excuse my weakness,

I am not unwell, but an unusual

horror chilled my blood; I felt as if

the damps of death prest already

round my soul; but the vapour is

gone off again, I feel quite better."

Mr. Kittle cheered his brother, attri-

buting his emotion to fear, who, by

this time, having reassumed his com-

posure, entered into discourse with

cheerfulness, refusing to return home

without having killed any thing.

Then rising, they proceeded thro’

lofty groves of pine, and open fields,

that seemed to bend under the heavy

hand of Ceres. At last, disappoint-

ment and fatigue prevailed on them

to return home; they had gone far-

ther than they apprehended; but

passing along the bank of the river,

within a few miles of Mr. Kittle's,

they espied a fat doe walking secure-

ly on the beach, which Peter softly

approaching, levelled his piece with

so good an aim, that the animal drop-

ped. Instantly at the explosion, this

seeming success was, however, the

origin of their calamities; for imme-

diately after two savages appeared,

directed in their course by the firing.

Setting up a loud yell, they ran up

to the brothers and discharged their

fire arms. Mr. Kittle started back,

but Peter received a brace of balls in

his bosom. He recoiled a few steps

back, and then sunk down income-

passed by those deadly horrors of

which in the morning he had a pre-

sentiment. Mr. Kittle stood awhile

aghast, like a person just waked from

a frightful dream; but on seeing the

Indian advancing to tear the scalp

from his dying brother, he suddenly

recollected himself, and shot a bullet

through his head. Then grappling

with the other, who was loading

again, he wrestled his firelock from

him, and felled him to the ground

with the butt end of it. This was

no time for reflection, or unavailing

laments; the danger was eminent!

So leaving the savages for dead, with

a mournful silence Mr. Kittle hasten-

ed to throw the deer from off his

horse, and laid his bleeding brother

across him.

When our souls are gloomy, they

seem to cast a shade over the objects

that surround us, and make nature

correspondent to our feelings: so Mr.

Kittle thought the night fell with a

deeper gloom than usual. The soft

notes of evening birds seemed to be

the responses of savage yells. The

echo of his tread, which he never

before regarded, now rung dismally

hollow in his ears. Even the rust-

ling of the winds through the leaves

seemed attended with a solemnity

that chilled him with cold tremors.

As he proceeded with his mournful

charge, his feelings were alarmed for

his dear Maria; he dreaded the agi-

tation and distress this adventure

would throw her in--but it was un-

avoidable!

The sound of his horse's feet no

sooner invaded the ears of Maria,

than seizing a light, she sprung with

a joyful impatience to the door, and

was met by her partner pale and

bloody, who endeavoured to prevent

too sudden a discovery of this cala-

mity. But at the first glance she

comprehended the whole affair, and

retiring a few steps, with the most

exquisite agony in her countenance,

"oh! Mr. Kittle," she cried, clasping

her hands together, "it is all over--

we are betrayed--your brother is kil-

led!"--"Too true, oh! too fatally

true," replied he, falling on his knees

beside her as she sunk down,” "my

angel! the very savages that solemnly

engaged to protect us have deprived

him of life; but I am yet alive, my

Maria, be comforted--I will instant-

ly procure carriages, and before morn-

ing you and your innocents shall be

beyond the reach of their malevo-

lence."

By this time the family had croud-

ed about them, and with grievous

wailings were enquiring the particu-

lars of this sad adventure. Mr. Kit-

tle having related every circumstance

with brevity, ordered the corpse to

be laid in a remote chamber, desiring

at the same time a horse to be saddled

for him. Then, more oppressed by

his wife's griefs than his own, he led

the disconsolate fair to her chamber,

where, being seated, she sighing de-

manded where he intended to go at

that time of night. "Only," said

he, "to the village of Schochticook

to hire a couple of waggons; I shall

return in an hour I hope, with a pro-

per guard to secure our retreat from

this hostile place." Maria was silent;

at length she burst into a flood of tears,

which his endearments only aug-

mented. Then expostulating with

him, "is it not enough," cried she,

"that you have escaped one danger,

but must you be so very eager to en-

counter others? besides, you are spent

with sorrow and fatigue--let one of

your brothers perform this silent ex-

pedition.--"It is impossible," re-

plied the tender husband; "how can

I dare to propose a danger to them

from which I would shrink myself?

their lives are equally precious with

mine--but God may disappoint our

fears, my love." He would have

continued, but his spouse, rising from

her seat, interrupted him--"At least,

my dear, before you leave us give

your lovely babes a farewell embrace,

that if fate should--should--separate

us, that yet shall sweeten our hours

of absence." Here she found her-

self clasped in her consort's arms, who

exclaimed, "my Maria! I love you

passionately, and if the least shadow

of danger did appear to attend this

night's travel, for your sake, for my

blessed children's sake I would decline

it--but I have left the Indians life-

less, who, no doubt, attacked us from

some private pique--nor will they

be discovered until morning."--

"Well then," Maria answered, "I

no longer oppose you; forgive my

fears." Mean while as she stept

to the cradle for her suckling, the fair

Anna, who was listening at the door,

anxious to hear her parents’ senti-

ments on this occasion, quitted her

station, and flew to them swift as

light, dropping on her knees before

her father, and looked up in his face

with the most attractive graces, and

the persuasive eloquence of simplicity.

Her neck and features were elegantly

turned, her complexion fairer than

the tuberose, and contrasted by the

most shining ringlets of dark hair.

Her eyes, whose brilliancy were sof-

tened through the medium of tears,

for a while dwelt tenderly on his

countenance. At length, with a

voice scarce audible, she sighed out,

"oh, Papa! do not leave us; if any

accident should happen to you,

Mamma will die of grief, and what

will become of poor Anna and Billy?

who will care for me? Who will teach

me when my Papa, my Mamma's

Papa is gone?"--"My sweet child,"

replied he, embracing her and hold-

ing her to his bosom, "there is no

danger; I shall return in an hour,

and before to-morrow you shall be

safe on the plains of Albany, and my

heart shall exult over the happiness of

my family.”

Mrs. Kittle now approached with

her playful infant in her arms; but its

winning actions extorted nothing but

groans from her pained bosom, which

was more stormy than Ontario Lake,

when agitated by fierce winds. Mr.

Kittle perceiving this uncommon e-

motion, gently took the child from

her, and repeatedly kissed it, while

new smiles dimpled its lovely aspect.

"Oh!" said he to himself, "this

gloom that darkens Maria's soul is

supernatural!--it seems dreadfully

portentious!--Shall I yet stay?" But

here a servant informing him that his

horse was ready, he blushed at his

want of fortitude; and having con-

quered his irresolution, after the most

affecting and solemn parting, he quit-

ted his house, never to review it

more!

*(To be continued.)*

[2. October 1790]

Maria then walked sadly back

again, and having assembled

the family in a little hall, they closed

and barred the doors. Mrs. Cornelia

Kittle, Maria's sister-in-law, was far

advanced in her pregnancy, which

increased her husband's uneasiness for

her; and they were debating in what

manner to accommodate her at Al-

bany, when the trampling of feet

about the house, and a yell of com-

plicated voices, announced the Indi-

ans’ arrival. Struck with horror and

consternation, the little family croud-

ed together in the center of the hall,

while the servants, at this alarm, be-

ing in a kitchen distant from the

house, saved themselves by a precipi-

tate flight. The little Billy, frighten-

ed at such dreadful sounds, clung fast

to his mother's throbbing breast, while

Anna, in a silent agony of amaze-

ment, clasped her trembling knees.

The echo of their yells yet rung in

long vibrations through the forest,

when, with a thundering peal of

strokes at the door, they demanded

entrance. Distraction and despair

sat upon every face. Maria and her

companions gazed wildly at each o-

ther, till upon repeated menaces, and

efforts to break open the door, Co-

rnelia's husband giving all for lost, lei-

surely advanced to the door. Corne-

lia seeing this, uttered a great shriek,

and cried out, "oh God! what are

you doing, my rash, rash, unfortu-

nate husband? you will be sacrificed."

Then falling on her knees, she caught

hold of his hand, and sobbed out,

"oh! pity me, have mercy on your-

self, on me, on my child!"--"Alas!

my love," said he, half turning, with

a look of distraction, "what can we

do? let us be resigned to the will of

God!" So saying, he unbarred the

door, and that instant received a fatal

bullet in his bosom, and fell back-

ward writhing in the agonies of death;

the rest recoiled at this horrible spec-

tacle, and huddled in a corner, send-

ing forth the most piercing cries; in

the interim the savages rushing in

with great shouts, proceeded to man-

gle the corpse, and having made an

incision round his head with a crook-

ed knife, they tugged off his bloody

scalp with barbarous triumph. While

this was perpetrating, an Indian, he-

deously painted, strode ferociously up

to Cornelia, (who sunk away at the

sight, and fainted on a chair) and clift

her white forehead deeply with his

tomahack. Her fine azure eyes just

opened, and then suddenly closing

forever, she tumbled lifeless at his

feet. His sanguinary soul was not

yet satisfied with blood; he deform-

ed her lovely body with deep gashes,

and tearing her unborn babe away,

dashed it to pieces against the stone

wall, with many additional circum-

stances of infernal cruelty.

During this horrid carnage, the

dead were stripped, and dragged from

the house, when one of the hellish

band advanced to Maria, who cir-

cling her babes with her white arms,

was sending hopeless petitions to Hea-

ven, and bemoaning their cruelly

lost situation--as he approached, ex-

pecting the fatal stroke, she endea-

voured to guard her children, and

with supplicating looks, implored for

mercy. The savage attempted not to

strike; but the astonishing Anna shel-

tered herself behind her Mamma,

while her blooming suckling quitting

her breast, gazed with a pleasing

wonder on the painted stranger.--

Maria soon recognized her old friend

that presented her with the belt, thro’

the loads of shells and feathers that

disguised him. This was no time,

however, to irritate him, by remind-

ing him of his promise; yet, guess-

ing her thoughts, he anticipated her

remonstrance. "Maria," said he,

"be not afraid, I have promised to

protect you--you shall live and dance

with us around the fire at Canada;

but you have one small incumbrance,

which, if not removed, will much

impede your progress thither;" so say-

ing he seized her laughing babe by

the wrists, and forcibly endeavoured

to draw him from her arms. At this,

terrified beyond conception, she ex-

claimed, "oh God! leave me--leave

me my child! he shall not go, though

a legion of devils should try to se-

parate us!" holding him still fast,

while the Indian applied his strength

to tear him away, gnashing his teeth

at her opposition, "help! God of

Heaven!" screamed she, "help!

have pity--have mercy on this infant!

Oh God! oh Christ! can you bear

to see this? O mercy! mercy!

mercy! let a little spark of compass-

sion save this inoffending--this love-

ly angel!” By this time the breath-

less babe dropt its head on its bosom;

the wrists were nigh pinched off, and

seeing him just expiring, with a

dreadful shriek she resigned him to

the merciless hands of the savage,

who instantly dashed his little fore-

head against the stones, and casting

his bleeding body at some distance

from the house, left him to make his

exit in feeble and unheard groans.--

Then indeed, in the unutterable an-

guish of her soul, she fell prostrate,

and rending away her hair, she roar-

ed out her sorrows with a voice louder

than natural, and rendered awfully

hollow by too great an exertion.

"Oh, barbarians!" she exclaimed,

"surpassing devils in wickedness, so

may a tenfold night of misery enwrap

your black souls, as you have depri-

ved the babe of my bosom, the com-

fort of my cares--my blessed cherub

of light and life--Oh hell! are not

thy flames impatient to cleave the

center and engulph these wretches in

thy ever burning waves? are there no

thunders in Heaven--no avenging

Angel--no God, to take notice of

such Heaven-defying cruelties?"--

Then rushing to her dead infant with

redoubled cries, and clapping her

hands, she laid herself over his man-

gled body--again softened in tears

and moans, she wiped the blood from

his ghastly countenance, and prest

him to her heaving bosom, alternately

caressing him and her trembling An-

na, who, clinging to her with bitter

wailings, and kissing her hands and

face, entreated her to implore the sa-

vages for mercy. "Do, my angel

Mamma," she urged, "do beg them

yet to pity­-beg them yet to save you

for my poor, poor Papa's sake!--

Alas! if we are all killed, his heart

will break!--Oh! they can't be rocks

and stones!--Don't cry Mamma,

they will spare us!” Thus the little

orator endeavoured to console her af-

flicted mother; but their melancho-

ly endearments were soon interrupted

by the relentless savages, who having

plundered the house of every valua-

ble thing that was portable, returned

to Maria, and rudely catching her

arm, commanded her to follow them;

but repulsing them with the boldness

of despair, "leave me, leave me,"

she said, "I cannot go--I never will

quit my murdered child! too cruel

in your mercies, you have given me

life only to prolong my miseries!"--

Mean while the lovely Anna, terri-

fied at the hostile appearance of the

enemy, left her Mamma (struggling

to disengage herself from the Indians)

and fled precipitately to the house.

She had already concealed herself in

a closet, when Mrs. Kittle pursuing

her, was intercepted by flames, the

savages having fired the house. The

wretched child soon discovered her

deplorable situation, and almost suf-

focated by the smoke, with piercing

cries called for help to her dear, dear

mother.--Alas! what could the un-

happy parent do? whole sheets of

flames rolled between them, while in

a phrenzy of grief, she screamed out,

"oh! my last treasure! my beloved

Anna! try to escape the devouring

fire--come to me my sweet child--

the Indians will not kill us--Oh! my

perishing babe! have pity on your

mother--do not leave me quite desti-

tute!" Then turning to the calm

villains who attended her, she cried,

"why do you not attempt to rescue

my sweet innocent? can your unfeel-

ing hearts not bear to leave me one--

a solitary single one?” Again calling

to her Anna, she received no answer,

which being a presumption of her

death, the Indiana obliged Maria and

her brother Henry to quit the house,

which they effected with some diffi-

culty, the glowing beams falling a-

round them, and thick volumes of

smoke obscuring their passage; the

flames now struck a long splendor

through the humid atmosphere, and

blushed to open the tragical scene on

the face of Heaven. They had scarce

advanced two hundred yards with

their reluctant captives, when the

flaming structure tumbled to the earth,

with a dreadful crash. Our travelers

by instinct turned their eyes to the

mournful blaze, and Maria bursting

afresh into grievous lamentations,

cried, "there, there my brother!

my children are wrapt in arching

sheets of flames, that used to be cir-

cled in my arms--they are entomb-

ed in ruins that breathed their slum-

bers on my bosom--yet, oh! their

spotless souls even now rise from this

chaos of blood and fire, and are plead-

ing our injured cause before our God,

my brother!" He replied only in

sighs and groans--he scarcely heard

her, horror had froze up the avenues

of his soul, and all amazed and trem-

bling, he followed his leaders like a

person in a troublesome dream.

The distant flames now cast a fain-

ter light, and the northern breeze

bent the columnes of smoke over the

south horizon. Sad and benighted

they wandered through almost impe-

netrable swamps, forded the broad

stream of Tomhanick, and the rapid

river of Hosack; they passed through

deserted settlements, where the yel-

ling of solitary dogs increased the

solemnity of midnight, nor halted

till the stars, emitting a feebler lustre,

presaged the approach of day. Maria,

overcome by sorrow and fatigue, im-

mediately sunk helpless at the foot of

a tree, while the savages (who were

six in number) kindled a fire, and

prepared their meal, (in a calabash)

which consisted only of some parched

maize pulverized and enriched with

the fat of bears flesh. Observing

Maria had fallen asleep, they offered

not to disturb her, but invited Henry

Kittle to partake of their repast. He

durst not refuse them, and having

swallowed a few mouthfuls of their

unpalatable food, and accepted of a

pipe of tobacco, he desired leave to

repose himself, which being readily

granted, they soon followed his ex-

ample, and sunk asleep, leaving two

centinels to guard against surprise,

which precaution they always make

use of.

I am sorry, dear Susan, to quit

Maria in this interesting part of her

history; but order requires that we

should now return to her spouse,

whom we left on his way through

the wood.

The village of Schochticook is

situated on a circular plain, surround-

ed by high hills, rising in form of an

amphitheatre. Mr. Kittle had just

gained the verge when, chancing to

cast his eyes around, he perceived the

whole southern hemisphere suddenly

illuminated with a bright blaze;

however, being accustomed to the

forests being often fired to clear it

from the under-wood, he was not

much surprised, but proceeded to

descend the hill. On his arriving

with the account of his brother’s

murder, the place was put in the

highest commotion--the men fitting

up their arms, and the women cla-

mouring about them, highly impor-

tunate to be removed to Albany; but

the night being very dark, this man-

oeuvre was deferred till morning;--

nor could Mr. Kittle prevail on a

single person to return with him dur-

ing the darkness--he felt himself

strangely agitated at this disappoint-

ment, and refusing to repose himself,

with great impatience he watched the

first orient beam of Phosphor, which

appearing, he sat off for home with

two waggons and a guard of three

Indians. As he approached his late

happy dwelling, his bosom dilated

with the pleasing hope of soon extra-

cating his beloved family from dan-

ger, he chid the slowness of the car-

riages, and felt impatient to dissipate

the apprehensions of Maria, to kiss

the pendant tear from her eye, and

press his sportive innocents to his bo-

som. While these bright ideas play-

ed round his soul, he lifted up his

eyes, and through an opening in the

woods beheld his farm--but what

language can express his surprise and

consternation at seeing his habitation

so suddenly desolated! a loud ex-

clamation of amaze burst from the

whole company at so unexpected a

view--the blood revolted from Mr.

Kittle’s cheek--his heart throbbed

under the big emotion, and all aghast,

spurring on his horse, he entered the

enclosure with full speed.--Stop here

unhappy man! here let the fibres of

thy heart crack with excruciating mi-

sery--let the cruel view of mangled

wretches, so nearly allied to thee,

extort drops of blood from the cleav-

ing bosom!--It did--it did. Utter-

ing a deep groan he fell insensible

from his horse, while his attendants,

hastening towards him, were shocked

beyond conception at the dismal spec-

tacle, and starting back with averted

eyes from the dead, were thunderstruck,

not having power to move or speak.

After a while two Indians (who be-

ing used to sanguinary scenes, reco-

vered themselves first) took a blanket,

and walking backward to the man-

gled Cornelia, threw it over her nak-

ed body; the others then timidly ad-

vanced, and Mr. Kittle opening his

eyes, groaned again bitterly; then

raising himself on his knees, with a

look of unutterable anguish he called

upon his dear Maria. Alas! No

voice, but the solemn repetition of

his own cries were articulated to him:

then rising with an air of distraction,

he stalked round the bloody scene,

and examined the dead bodies, first

uncovering the pale visage of Corne-

lia, he surveyed in silence her dis-

torted features; but perceiving it was

not Maria, he gently laid the cloth

over again, and turning furiously,

caught up his ghastly infant, whose

little body was black with contusions,

and his skull horribly fractured. Al-

most fainting under his mournful

load, and staggering at the dreadful

discovery, he deposited it again on

the bloody earth, and clapping his

hands together repeatedly with vio-

lence, oh hell! hell! he cried, you

cannot inflict torments so exquisite as

those I now suffer! how am I crush-

ed to the center! how deeply am I

degraded below the worms of the sod!

Oh! my children! my children!

where are you now? Oh! my wife!

my Maria! the beloved of my bo-

som, are you too fallen a sacrifice?

Why do I survive these miseries, my

God? how can mortality support

them? Burst--burst my shrinking

heart, and punish a wretch for not

having died in the defence of such

lovely and innocent beings! Oh!

why was I absent in this fatal hour?

why did not their groans vibrate on

my soul that I might have flown to

their aid? Thus wildly lamenting

and wandering among the smoaking

ruins, he picked up some of the cal-

cined bones of his once beautiful

Anna. At this sight despair shook

his soul afresh, new agonies convuls-

ed his features, and dropping the sad

evidence of his miseries, he extend-

ed his arms to Heaven, and roared

out--revenge, great God! revenge if

thou art just and kind as represented!

Oh! that I had the power of an

archangel to thunder eternal horrors

on the guilty wretches who have blast-

ed the bud of my happiness, who

have darkened the brightest eyes that

ever opened on the light!

The men here interfering, to con-

sole him observed, the bones were

probably those of his brother Peter;

but on finding his skeleton entire,

Mr. Kittle insisted that it must have

been Maria and Anna, who having

hid themselves, had doubtless perish-

ed in the flames. Again, in the fu-

rious extravagance of passion, he tore

the hair from his head, and casting

himself prostrate on the ashes, he ga-

thered the crumbling bones to his

bosom, while the big drops of an-

guish issued at every pore, till life,

unable longer to sustain the mental

conflict, suspended her powers, and

once more deprived him of sensation.

His companions having laid him on

a wagon, now conferred together

in what manner to proceed, and ap-

prehending an attack from the sava-

ges, they unanimously concluded to

lay the dead bodies on the remaining

carriage, and make the best of their

way to Schochticook, which they

accordingly performed with great

silence and expedition.

You may judge, my dear, what a

panic the appearance of this mourn-

ful cavalcade struck over the inhabit-

ants of this defenseless village. Mr.

Kittle was gently laid on a bed, and

being let blood, his respiration be-

came less obstructed, though he con-

tinued senseless till his unfortunate

family were interred.--Six weeks

elapsed before he recovered any de-

gree of strength; but even then he

appeared pale and emaciated, like a

second Lazarus; his disposition was

entirely changed, his looks were

fierce, his attitudes wild and extra-

vagant, and his conversation, which

formerly was sensible, commanding

attention by a musical voice, now

was incoherent, and his cadence deep

and hollow, rather inspiring terror

than any pleasing sensation. Thirst-

ing for revenge, and perceiving that

solitude only tended to corrode his

moments with the blackest melancho-

ly, he soon after entered the British

service in the capacity of gentleman

volunteer, and signalized himself by

his prudence and intrepidity, attract-

ing the particular notice of his officers,

who being affection with his misfor-

tones, proffered their services to him

with so much friendship and candour,

as obliged him to accept of them, and

yet lightened the obligation.

*(To be continued.)*

[3. November 1790]

But doubtless, my dear, your

generous sensibility is alarmed

at my silence about Mrs. Kittle; I

think we left her reposing under a

tree--she was the first that awaked

as the sun began to exhale the crystal

globules of morning, when half ris-

ing, and reclining on her elbow, she

surveyed the lovely landscape around

her with a deep sigh; they were on

an eminence that commanded an un-

limited prospect of the country every

way. The birds were cheerful; the

deer bounded fearless over the hills;

the meadows blushed with the ena-

mel of Flora; but grief had sadden-

ed every object in her sight--the

whole creation seemed a dark blank

to the fair mourner. Again recol-

lection unlocked the sluices of her

eyes, and her soft complaints disturb-

ed her savage companions, who, ris-

ing and kindling up the dying em-

bers, began to prepare their victuals,

which they invited her to partake of.

This she declined with visible de-

testation; and turning to her bro-

ther, with the dignity of conscious

merit in distress, “No,” said she,

“I never will receive a morsel from

those bloody hands yet dropping with

recent murder!--let me perish--let

the iron hand of famine first pinch

out my vitals and send me after my

children!” Notwithstanding this,

Henry added his solicitations that

she should accept of some refresh-

ment, reminding her of the conse-

quence of her fatal resolution, which

could be deemed no otherwise than

suicide. Finding this had no effect,

he tried to touch her feelings on a

softer key--“Remember, Maria,”

said he, “you have a tender husband

yet living; would you wish to deprive

him of every earthly consolation?

Would you add affliction to affliction,

and after he has performed the sor-

rowful obsequies of his children, to

crush all his remaining hope by the

news of your voluntary death? No,

live my sister! be assured he will soon

get us exchanged, when soft sympa-

thies shall wash away your sorrows,

and after a few years, who knows

but the smiles of a new lovely pro-

geny may again dawn a paradise of

happiness on you.” Maria was af-

fected, and half raising her eyes from

the earth, she replied, “Oh, my bro-

ther! How consoling do your words

sink on my heart! Though my reason

tells me your arguments are impro-

bable and fallacious, yet it soothes

the tempest of my soul--I will try

to live--perhaps I may again behold

my dear--dear--dear--husband!”

Here a flood of tears interrupted her.

As this conversation was held in

English, the savages were inquisitive

to know the subject of it, at the same

time enjoining them both never to

utter a syllable in the presence except

in their own uncouth dialect, which,

as they perfectly understood, they

could not excuse themselves from.

Henry then informed them that his

sister, objecting to their method of

preparing food, had desired him to

prevail with them to indulge her in

dressing her meals herself. This they

readily granted, and farther to ingra-

tiate themselves in the prisoners’ fa-

vour, they dispatched a young Indi-

an to hunt for partridges or quails

in the groves adjoining them: He

instantly returned with a brood of

wood-pigeons, scarcely fledged,

which he presented to Henry, who

cleaned and broiled them on sticks,

with an officious solicitude to please

his sister, which she observed with a

look of gratitude, and taking a pi-

geon from the stick, began to eat

more from complaisance than incli-

nation. Henry was delighted at her

ready acquiescence, and their repast

being ended, they proceeded on their

tiresome journey with less repining

than the preceding night. Maria

was exempted from carrying a bur-

den, yet she found the fatigue almost

intolerable. They continually passed

through a scene of conflagration, the

savages firing every cottage in their

way, whose mournful blaze catching

the dry fields of grain, would scorch

off hundred of acres in a few mo-

ments, and form a burning path for

their destroyers. As the sun ad-

vanced to his zenith, its rays beat

fiercely on our travelers, augmented

by the crackling flames around them;

when meeting with a cool stream of

water, Maria was commanded to sit

down (being overheated) while the

rest approached the rivulet; the In-

dian that guarded Maria was stoop-

ing down to drink, when a loud rust-

ling among the leaves, and trampling

of bushes attracted his attention; he

listened awhile seemingly much a-

larmed, then starting up suddenly, he

flew to Maria, and caught hold of

her hair, aiming his hatchet at her

head: the consequence was obvious,

and her fate seemed inevitable; yet,

with a stoical composure, she folded

her arms across, and waited the fatal

stroke with perfect resignation; but

while the weapon was yet suspended

over her, chancing to look around,

he perceived the noise to proceed from

a large deer, whose antlers were in-

tangled in the branches of a thicket.

Though an uncivilized inhabitant of

the forest, he blushed at his precipi-

tancy, and returning the instrument

of death to his girdle, after some he-

sitation made this apology: “Maria,

this sudden discovery is well for you;

I thought we had been pursued, and

we never suffer our prisoners to be re-

taken; however, I was imprudent to

attempt your life before there was a

probability of your being rescued:”

then desiring her to rise and drink,

he quickly shot the deer, his associ-

ates helping him to skin it. Instead

of quenching her thirst she sat down

pensive on the flowery margin, cast-

ing her eyes carelessly on the stream;

she knew not whether to esteem her

late deliverance from death a happy

providence or protraction of misery.

Observing the spotted trout, and other

fish, to dart sportively across the wa-

ter, she could not help exclaiming,

“Happy! happy animals! you have

not the fatal gift of reason to embitter

your pleasures; you cannot anticipate

your difficulties by apprehension, or

prolong them by recollection; inca-

pable of offending your Creator, the

blessings of your existence are secur-

ed to you: Alas! I envy the mean-

est among ye!” A gush of tears

concluded her soliloquy; and being

called to attend the company, she

arose, and they began their journey

for the afternoon. Henry desiring to

have a piece of venison (having left it

behind, seldom incommoding them-

selves with more than the hide and

tallow) they returned and obliged

him with a haunch, which was very

fat: at the next interval of travel he

dressed it for himself and Maria. In

the evening they crossed the river

somewhat below Fort-Edward, in a

canoe left hid under some bushes for

that purpose. They observed the

most profound silence until the en-

tered the woods again; but it was

very late before they halted, which

they did in a deep hollow, surround-

ed by pines whose tops seemed to be

lost in the clouds. It was necessary

here to light a fire, for the wolves

howled most dreadfully, and the

whole forest rung with the cries of

wild beasts of various sorts. The con-

fines of hell could not have given

Maria more dismal ideas than her

present situation; the horrid gloom of

the place, the scowling looks of her

murderous companions, the shrill

shrieks of owls, the loud cries of the

wolf, and mournful screams of pan-

thers, which were redoubled by dis-

tant echoes, as the terrible sounds

seemed dying away, shook her frame

with cold tremors: she sunk under

the oppression of terror, and almost

fainted in Henry’s arms: however,

on perceiving the beasts durst not ap-

proach the light, but began to retire,

she became a little more assured, and

helped Henry to erect a booth of pine

branches, making a bed of the same

materials in it while he prepared their

supper; having eaten, and kindled a

large fire in the front of her arbour,

she laid down and soon fell in a deep

sleep; she felt herself refreshed by

this unexpected repose, and the next

morning, with some alacrity, conti-

nued her journey, hoping at last to

arrive at some Christian settlement.

Arriving at Lake-Champlain, they

raised a wigwam on the bank, ex-

pecting the coming of Indians from

the opposite shore to carry them over.

Here our unfortunate captives were

stript of their habits, already rent to

pieces by briers, and attired each

with remnants of old blankets. In

this new distress Mrs. Kittle ventur-

ed to expostulate with the savages,

but it was talking to the stormy oce-

an; her complaints served only to di-

vert them; so retiring among the

bushes, she adjusted her coarse dress

somewhat decently, and then seating

herself silently under a spreading tree,

indulged herself in the luxury of sor-

row. Henry, sensible that they es-

pected more fortitude from him, and

that if he sunk under his adverse for-

tune, he should be worse treaded,

affected to be cheerful; he assisted

them in catching salmon, with which

the lake abounds; an incredible

quantity of wild fowl frequenting

the lake also, he laid snares for those

of the lesser sort, (not being allowed

fire-arms) and succeeded so well, that

his dexterity was highly commended,

and night coming on, they regaled

themselves on the fruits of their in-

dustry. The night was exceedingly

dark, but calm; a thick mist hovered

over the woods, and the small ridgy

waves softly rolled to the shore, when

suddenly a large meteor, or fiery ex-

halation, passed by them with sur-

prising velocity, casting on every side

showers of brilliant sparkles. At

sight of this phaenomenon, the Indians

put their heads between their knees,

crying out in a lamentable voice,

“Do not--do not--do not!” con-

tinuing in the same attitude until the

vapour disappeared. Henry, with

some surprise, demanded the reason

of this exclamation; to which they

replied, “What he had seen was a

fiery dragon, on his passage to his

den, who was of so malevolent a

temper, that he never failed, on his

arrival there, to inflict some peculiar

calamity on mankind.” In about

five minutes after the earth was vio-

lently agitated, the waves of the lake

tumbled about in a strange manner,

seeming to emit flashes of fire, all

the while attended with most tremen-

dous roarings, intermixed with loud

noises, not unlike the explosion of

heavy cannon. Soon as the Indians

perceived it was an earthquake, they

cried out, “Now he comes home!”

and casting themselves in their former

posture, filled the air with dismal

howlings. This was a terrible scene

to Maria, who had never been wit-

ness to so dreadful a convulsion of

nature before; she started up and fled

from her savage companions towards

an eminence at some distance, where

dropping on her knees, she empha-

tically implored the protection of

Heaven: however, she was followed

by an Indian and Henry; the latter

highly affected with her distresses,

taking hold of her trembling hand,

“But why, my sister!” said he

“have you fled from us? is the gloom

of a forest more chearing than the

sympathizing looks of a friend?”

“No, my brother!” replied Maria,

“but the thought was suggested to

me, that the supreme God perhaps

was preparing to avenge himself of

these murderers by some awful and

uncommon judgment, and I fled from

them as Lot did from Sodom, lest I

might be involved in the punishment

of their guilt.” They conversed in

English, which displeasing the Indi-

an, he ordered them to return to the

wigwam, threatening to bind Maria

fast if she offered to elope again. The

shock being over, silence again spread

through the realms of darkness, when

a high wind arose from the north and

chilled our half-naked travelers with

excessive cold. The savages, (whose

callous skins were proof against the

inclement weather) not caring to

continue their fires, lest they should

be discovered and surprised by some

English party, they passed here a

very uncomfortable night; but the

wind subsiding, and the sky growing

clear, the sun rose peculiarly warm

and pleasant, streaming ten thousand

rays of gold across the lake. Maria

had scarcely performed her oraisons,

when the savages, forming a circle

round her and Henry, began to dance

in a most extravagant manner, and

with antic gestures that at another

time would have afforded mirth to

our travelers. Having continued

their exercise some time, they incon-

tinently drew out boxes of paint,

and began to ornament their captives

with a variety of colours; one hav-

ing crossed their faces with a stroke

of vermillion, another would inter-

sect it with a line of black, and so

on until the whole company had

given a specimen of their skill or

fancy.

Soon after two canoes arrived, in

which they passed over the lake,

which was uncommonly serene and

pleasant. They proceeded not far

on their way before they were ob-

liged to halt for two days, on account

of Maria’s inability to travel, her

feet being greatly swollen and lace-

rated by the flinty path. At length,

by easy stages, they came in view of

an Indian settlement, when Maria’s

long unbent features relaxed into a

half smile, and turning to Henry,

“Here, my brother!” said she, “I

shall find some of my own sex, to

whom simple nature, no doubt, has

taught humanity; this is the first pre-

cept she inculcates in the female

mind, and this they generally retain

through life, in spite of every evil

propensity.” As she uttered this

elogium in favour of the fair, the

tawny villagers, perceiving their ap-

proach, rushed promiscuously from

their huts with a execrable din, and

fell upon the weary captives with

clubs and a shower of stones, accom-

panying their strokes with the most

virulent language; among the rest an

old deformed squaw, with the rage

of a Tisiphone, flew to Maria, aim-

ing a pine-knot at her head, and

would certainly have given the

wretched mourner her quietus had

she not been opposed by the savage

that guarded Mrs. Kittle: he at first

mildly expostulated with his passion-

ate countrywoman; but finding the

old hag frantic, and insatiable of

blood, he twisted the pine-know from

her hand, and whirled it away to

some distance, then seizing her arm

roughly, and tripping up her heels,

he laid her prostrate, leaving her to

howl and yell at leisure, which she

performed without a prompter.--

Maria was all in a tremor, and has-

tily followed her deliverer, not car-

ing to risk another encounter with

the exasperated virago. By this time

the rage and tumult of the savages

subsiding, the new-comers were ad-

mitted into a large wigwam, in the

center of which blazed a fire. After

they were seated, several young In-

dians entered with baskets of green

maize in the ear, which, having roast-

ed before the fire, they distributed

among the company.

Mrs. Kittle and her brother com-

plaining of the bruises they met with

at their reception, an old Indian

seemed to attend with great concern,

then leaving the place, in a little time

returned with a bundle of aromatic

herbs under his arm, the juice of

which, he expressed by rubbing them

between two stones with flat surfaces;

this he gave them to drink, applying

the leaves externally. They instant-

ly found relief from the medical qua-

lity of this extraordinary plant, and

composing themselves to sleep, ex-

pected a good night’s repose; but

they were mistaken, for their enter-

tainers growing intoxicated with spi-

rituous liquors, which operating dif-

ferently, it produced a most compli-

cated noise of yelling, talking, sing-

ing, and quarrelling: this was a

charm more powerful than the wand

of Hermes to drive away sleep; but

grown familiar with sorrow and dis-

appointment, Maria regarded this as

a trifle, and when Henry expressed

his concern for her, smiling, replied,

“We must arm ourselves with pati-

ence, my brother! we can combat

with fate in no other manner.”

It were endless to recapitulate mi-

nutely every distress that attended the

prisoners in their tedious journey; let

it suffice, that having passed through

uncommon misery, and imminent

danger, they arrived at Montreal.

Here the savages were joined by seve-

ral scalping parties of their tribe, and

having previously fresh painted them-

selves, appeared in hideous pomp, and

performed a kind of triumphal entry.

The throng of people that came out

to meet them threw Maria in the most

painful sensations of embarrassment;

but as the clamours and insults of the

populace encreased, a freezing tor-

por succeeded, and bedewed her

limbs with a cold sweat--strange chi-

meras danced before her sight--the

actings of her soul were suspended

--she seemed to move mechanically,

nor recollected herself till she found

she was seated in the Governor’s hall,

surrounded by an impertinent, inqui-

sitive circle of people, who were en-

quiring into the cause of her disor-

der, without attempting any thing

towards her relief. Discovering her

situation, she blushingly withdrew to

a dark corner from the public gaze,

and could not help sighing to herself,

“Alas! but a very few days ago I

was hailed as the happiest of women

--my fond husband anticipated all

my desires--my children smiled

round me with filial delight--my

very servants paid me the homage

due to an angel--oh! my God!

what a sudden, what a deplorable

transition! I am fallen below con-

tempt.” As she thus moralized on

her situation, an English woman

(whom humanity more than curiosi-

ty had drawn to the place) approach-

ed Maria, and observing her tears and

deep dejection, took hold of her hand,

and endeavoured to smile, but the

soft impulses of nature were too strong

for the efforts of dissimulation--her

features instantly saddened again, and

she burst into tears, exclaiming, (with

a hesitating voice,) “Poor, forlorn

creature! where are thy friends!

perhaps the dying moments of thy

fond parent, or husband, have been

cruelly embittered with the sight of

thy captivity! perhaps now thy help-

less orphan is mourning for the breast

which gave him nourishment! or thy

plaintive little ones are wondering at

the long absence of their miserable

mother!”--“Oh! no more! no

more!” interrupted Maria, “your

pity is severer than savage cruelty--I

could stand the shock of fortune with

some degree of firmness, but your

soft sympathy opens afresh the wounds

of my soul! my losses are beyond

your conjecture--I have no parent!

no sportive children! and, I believe,

no husband! to mourn and wish for

me.” These words were succeeded

by an affecting silence on both sides:

mean while the Indians testified their

impatience to be admitted to the

Governor by frequent shouts; at

Length his Excellency appeared, and

Having held a long conference with

The savages, they retired with his Se-

cretary, and our prisoners saw them

no more.

*(To be continued.)*

[4. December 1790]

After their exit the Governor

Turning round to Maria and

Henry, demanded who they were?

Mrs. Kittle’s perplexity prevented

her reply; but Henry, in a most re-

spectful manner, gave him a succinct

account of their misfortunes. The

Governor perceiving him sensible and

communicative, interrogated him far-

ther, but he modestly declined giv-

ing any political intelligence. Ob-

serving that Maria suffered greatly in

this interview, he soon concluded it,

after having presented several pieces

of callicoes and stuffs to them, desir-

ing they would accept what they had

occasion for. Mrs. Kittle immedi-

ately singled out a piece of black cal-

limanco with tears of gratitude to

her benefactor; who, smiling, ob-

served she might chuse a gayer co-

lour, as he hoped her distresses were

now over. Maria shook her head in

token of dissent, but could make no

reply. He then dismissed them, with

a small guard, who was directed to

provide them with decent lodging.

Henry was accommodated at a

bakers, while his sister, to her no

small satisfaction, found herself plac-

ed at the English woman’s who, on

her arrival, had expressed so much

good nature.--She had scarcely en-

tered, when Mrs. D.--, presenting

her with a cordial, led her to a couch,

insisting on her reposing there a little,

“for,” says she, “your waste of

spirits requires it.”

This tenderness, which Maria had

long been a stranger to, relaxed every

fibre of her heart: She again melted

into tears; but it was a gush of grate-

ful acknowledgment, that called a

modest blush of pleasure and per-

plexity on Mrs. D--‘s check. Be-

ing left alone, she soon fell in a pro-

found sleep; and her friend having

prepared a comfortable repast, in less

than an hour awaked her, with an

invitation to dinner--“and how do

you find yourself, my sister?” said

she instinctively, seizing Maria’s hand

and compressing it between hers;

“may we hope that you will assist

us in conquering your dejection?”--

Maria smiled benignly through a

chrystal atmosphere of tears, and kis-

sing the hand of her friend, arose.

Having dined, and being now equip-

ped in decent apparel, Maria became

the admiration and esteem of the

whole family. The tempest of her

soul subsided in a solemn calm; and

though she did not regain her viva-

city, she became agreeably convers-

able.

In a few days, however, she felt

the symptoms of an approaching fe-

ver. She was alarmed at this, and

intimated to Mrs. D--her fears

of becoming troublesome. “Do not

be concerned,” returned that kind

creature; “my God did not plant

humanity in my breast to remain there

an inactive principle.” Maria felt

her oppression relieved by this gene-

rous sentiment; and indeed found her

friendship did not consist in profess-

sion, as she incessantly tended her

during her illness with inexpressible

delicacy and solicitude. When she

was again on the recovery, Mrs.

D--one day ordered a small truck

covered with Morocco leather to be

brought before her, and opening it,

produced several sets of fine linen,

with some elegant stuffs and other

necessaries--“See,” said she, “what

the benevolence of Montreal has done

for you. The ladies that beg your

acceptance of these things, intend

likewise to inhance the favour, by

waiting on you this afternoon.”--

“Ah!” interrupted Maria, “I want

Them not; this one plain habit is

enough to answer the purpose of

dress for me. Shut the chest my dear

Mrs. D--, and keep them as a

small compensation for the immense

trouble I have been to you.”--“If

this is your real sentiment,” replied

her friend, (shutting the chest, and

presenting her the key,) “return

your gifts to the donors; and since

you will reward me for my little of-

fices of friendship, only love me, and

believe me disinterested, and I shall

be overpaid.”--“I see I have wrong-

ed your generosity,” answered Maria.

“Pardon me, my sister, I will offend

no more. I did not think you mer-

cinary--but--but--I meant only to

disengage my heart of a little of its

burden.”--As this tender contest was

painful to both parties, Mrs. D--

rising abruptly, pretended some bu-

siness, promising to return again di-

rectly.

In the afternoon Maria received

her visitants in a neat little parlour.

She was dressed in a plain suit of

mourning, and wore a small muslin

cap, from which her hair fell in art-

less curls on her fine neck: her face

was pale, though not emaciated, and

her eyes streamed a soft languor over

her countenance, more bewitching

than the sprightliest glances of viva-

city. As they entered she arose, and

advancing, modestly received their

civilities, while Mrs. D--handed

them to chairs: But hearing a well-

known voice, she hastily lifted up her

eyes, and screamed out in an accent

of surprise, “Good Heaven! May

I credit my senses? My dear Mrs.

Bratt, my kind neighbor, is it re-

ally you that I see?” Here she found

herself clasped in her friend’s arms,

who, after a long subsiding sigh,

broke into tears. The tumult of pas-

sion at length abating--“Could I

have guessed, my Maria,” said she,

“that you was here, my visit should

not have been deferred a moment af-

ter your arrival; but I have mourn-

ed with a sister in affliction, (permit

me to present her to you,) and while

our hearts were wrung with each

other’s distress, alas! we enquired

after no foreign calamity.” Being

all seated, “I dare not,” resumed

Maria, “ask after your family; I

am afraid you only have escaped to

tell me of them.” Not so, my sister,”

cried Mrs. Bratt; “but if you can

bear the recollection of your misfor-

tunes, do oblige me with the recital.”

The ladies joined their entreaty, and

Mrs. Kittle complied in a graceful

manner.

After some time spent in tears,

and pleasing melancholy, tea was

brought in; and towards sun-set Mrs.

D--invited the company to walk

in the garden, which being very

small, consisted only of a parterre, at

the farther end of which stood an

arbour covered with a grape-vine.

Here being seated, after some chat

on indifferent subjects, Maria desired

Mrs. Bratt (if agreeable to the com-

pany) to acquaint her with the cir-

cumstances of her capture. They all

bowed approbation; and after some

hesitation Mrs. Bratt began:--

“My heart, ladies, shall ever re-

tain a sense of the happiness I enjoy-

ed in the society of Mrs. Kittle and

several other amiable persons in the

vicinage of Schochticook, where I

resided. She in particular cheered

my lonely hours of widowhood, and

omitted nothing that she thought

might conduce to my serenity. I had

two sons; she recommended the edu-

cation of them to my leisure hours.

I accepted of her advice, and found

a suspension of my sorrows in the

execution of my duty. They soon

improved beyond my capacity of

teaching. Richard, my eldest, was

passionately fond of books, which he

studied with intense application.

This naturally attached him to a se-

dentary life, and he became the con-

stant instructive companion of me

evening hours. My youngest son,

Charles, was more volatile, yet not

less agreeable; his person was charm-

ing, his wit sprightly, and his ad-

dress elegant. They often impor-

tuned me, at the commencement of

this war, to withdraw to Albany;

but as I apprehended no danger, (the

British troops being stationed above

us, quite from Saratoga to the Lake)

I ridiculed their fears.

“One evening as my sons were

come in from reaping, and I was

busied in preparing them a dish of

tea, we were surprised by a discharge

of musketry near us. We all three

ran to the door, and beheld a party

of Indians not twenty paces from us.

Struck with astonishment, we had no

power to move, and the savages again

firing that instant, my Charles drop-

ped down dead beside me. Good

God! what were my emotions?

But language would fail, should I

attempt to describe them. My sur-

viving son then turning to me, with

a countenance expressive of the deep-

est horror urged me to fly. “Let

us begone this instant,” said he; “a

moment determines our fate. O!

my mother! you are already lost.”

But despair had swallowed up my

fears; I fell shrieking on the body of

my child, and rending away my hair,

endeavoured to recall him to life with

unavailing laments. Richard in the

mean while had quitted me, and the

moment after I beheld him mounted

on horseback, and stretching away to

the city. The Indians fired a volley

at him, but missed, and I flatter my-

self that he arrived safe--And now,

not all my prayers and tears could

prevent the wretches from scalping

my precious child. But when they

rent me away from him, and dragged

me from the house, my grief and

rage burst forth like a hurricane. I

execrated their whole race, and called

for eternal vengeance to crush them

to atoms. After a while I grew a-

shamed of my impetuosity; the tears

began again to flow silently on my

brow, and as I walked through the

forest between two Indians, my soul

grew suddenly sick and groaned in

me; a darkness more substantial than

Egyptian night fell upon it, and my

existence became an insupportable

burthen to me. I looked up to Hea-

ven with a hopeless kind of awe, but

I murmured no more at the dispensa-

tions of my God, and in this frame

of sullen resignation I passed the rest

of my journey, which being nearly

similar to Mrs. Kittle’s, I shall aboid

the repetition of. And now permit

me (said she, turning to the French

ladies) to acknowledge your extreme

goodness to me. I was a stranger,

sick and naked, and you took me in.

You indeed have proved the good Sa-

maritan to me, pouring oil and wine

in my wounds.” “Hush! hush!”

cried Madame de Roche, “you esti-

mate our services at too high a rate.

I see you are no connoisseur in minds;

there is a great deal of honest hospi-

tality in the world, though you have

met with so little.”

“I now reject,” interrupted Mrs.

Bratt, “all prejudices of education.

From my infancy have I been taught

that the French were a cruel perfidi-

ous enemy, but I have found them

quite the reverse.”

Madame de R. willing to change

the subject, accosted the other stran-

ger--“Dear Mrs. Willis, shall we

not be interested likewise in your

misfortunes?”--“Ah! do,” added

Mademoiselle V. “my heart is now

sweetly tuned to melancholly. I love

to indulge these divine sensibilities,

which your affecting histories are so

capable of inspiring.” –Maria then

took hold of Mrs. Willis’s hand, and

pressed her to oblige them.--Mrs.

Willis bowed. She dropt a few tears;

but assuming a composed look, she

began--

*(To be continued.)*

[5. January 1791]

“I am the daughter of a poor

clergyman, who being con-

fined to his chamber, by sickness, for

several years, amused himself by edu-

cating me. At his death, finding

myself friendless, and without mo-

ney, I accepted the hand of a young

man who had taken a leased farm in

Pennsylvania. He was very agree-

able, and extravagantly fond of me.

We lived happily for many years in

a kind of frugal affluence. When

the savages began to commit out-

rages on the frontier settlements, our

neighbours, intimidated at their ra-

pid approaches, erected a small fort,

surrounded by a high palisade. Into

this the more timorous drove their

cattle at night; and one evening, as

we were at supper, my husband (be-

ing ordered on guard) insisted that I

should accompany him with the chil-

dren (for I had two lovely girls, one

turned of thirteen years, and another

of six months.) My Sophia assented

to the proposal with joy. “Mamma,”

said she, “what a merry woman the

Captain’s wife is; she will divert us

the whole evening, and she is very

fond of your company: come, I

will take our little Charlotte on my

arm, and papa will carry the lan-

thorn.” I acceded with a nod; and

already the dear charmer had hand-

ed me my hat and gloves, when some-

body thundered at the door. We

were silent as death, and instantly

after plainly could distinguish the

voices of savages conferring together.

Chilled as I was with fear, I flew to

the cradle, and catching my infant,

ran up into a loft. Sophia followed

me all trembling, and panting for

breath cast herself in my bosom.

Hearing the Indians enter, I looked

through a crevice in the floor, and

saw them, with menacing looks, seat

themselves round the table, and now

and then addressed themselves to Mr.

Willis, who, all pale and astonished,

neither understood nor had power to

answer them. I observed they took

a great pleasure in terrifying him,

by flourishing their knives, and gash-

ing the table with their hatchets.

Alas! this sight shot icicles to my

soul; and, to increase my distress,

my Sophia’s little heart beat against

my breath, with redoubled strokes, at

every word they uttered.

“Having finished their repast in

a gluttinous manner, they laid a fire-

brand in each corner of the chamber,

and then departed, driving poor Mr.

Willis before them. The smoke soon

incommoded us; but we dreaded our

barbarous enemy more than the fire.

At length, however, the flames be-

ginning to invade our retreat, trem-

bling and apprehensive we ventured

down stairs; the whole house now

glowed like a furnace; the flames

rolled towards the stairs, which we

hastily descended; but just as I sat

my foot on the threshold of the door,

a piece of timber, nearly consumed

through, gave way, and fell on my

left arm, which supported my infant,

miserably fracturing the bone. I in-

stantly caught up my fallen lamb,

and hasted to overtake my Sophia.

There was a large hollow tree conti-

guous to our house, with an aperture

just large enough to admit so small a

woman as I am. Here we had often

laughingly proposed to hide our chil-

dren, in case of a visit from the olive

coloured natives. In this we now

took shelter; and being seated some

time, my soul seemed to awake as

it were from a vision of horror: I

lifted up my eyes, and beheld the

cottage that lately circumscribed all

my worldly wealth and delight,

melting away before the devouring

fire. I dropt a tear as our apostate

first parents did when thrust out from

Eden.

“The world lay all before them,

where to chuse their place of rest,

and Providence their guide. Ah!

Eve thought I, hadst thou been like

me, solitary, maimed, and unpro-

tected, thy situation had been deplo-

rable indeed. Then pressing my

babe to my heart, “how quiet art

thou, my angel,” said I; “sure--

sure, Heaven has stilled thy little

plaints in mercy to us.”--“Ah!”

sobbed Sophia, “now I am com-

forted again that I hear my dear

mamma’s voice. I was afraid grief

would have for ever deprived me of

that happiness.” And here she kissed

my babe and me with vehemence.

When her transports were moderated,

“how cold my sister is,” said she,

“do wrap her up warmer, mamma;

poor thing, she is not used to such

uncomfortable lodging.”

“The pain of my arm now called

for all my fortitude and attention;

but I forbore to mention this afflict-

ing circumstance to my daughter.

“The cheerful swallow now be-

gan to usher in the dawn with melo-

dy; we timidly prepared to quit our

hiding place; and turning round to

the light, I cast an anxious eye of

love on my innocent, wondering

that she slept so long. But oh! hor-

ror and misery! I beheld her a pale,

stiff corpse in my arms (suffer me to

weep, ladies, at the cruel recollect-

tion;) it seems the piece of wood

that disabled me, had also crushed my

Charlotte’s tender skull, and no won-

der my hapless babe was quiet. I

could no longer sustain my sorrowful

burden, but falling prostrate, almost

insensible, at the dreadful discovery,

uttered nothing but groans. Sophia’s

little heart was too susceptible for so

moving a scene. Distracted between

her concern for me, and her grief for

the loss of her dear sister, she cast

herself beside me, and with the soft-

est voice of sorrow, bewailed the fate

of her beloved Charlotte--her sweet

companion--her innocent, laughing

play-fellow. At length we rose,

and Sophia, clasping all that remain-

ed of my cherub in her arms, “Ah!”

said she, “I did engage to carry you,

my sister, but little did I expect in

this distressing manner.” When we

came in sight of the fort, though I

endeavoured to spirit up my grieved

child, yet I found my springs of ac-

tion began to move heavily, my

heart fluttered, and I suddenly faint-

ed away. Sophia, concluding I was

dead, uttered so piercing a cry, that

the centinel looking up, immediate-

ly called to those in the fort to assist

us. When I recovered, I found m-

self in a bed encircled by my kind

neighbours, who divided their ex-

pressions of love and condolement be-

tween me and my child. I remain-

ed in the fort after this; but, ladies,

you may think, that bereft as I was

of so kind a husband and endearing

child, I soon found myself solitary

and destitute. I wept incessantly;

and hearing nothing from my dear

Willis, I at length resolved to traverse

the wilds of Canada in pursuit of

him. When I communicated this to

my friends, they all strongly oppos-

ed it; but finding me inflexible, they

furnished me with some money and

necessaries, and obtained a permission

from the Governor to let me go un-

der protection of a flag that was on

the way. Hearing likewise that a

cartel was drawn for an exchange of

prisoners, I sat out, flushed with hope,

and with indefatigable industry and

painful solicitude, arrived at Mon-

treal, worn to a skeleton (as you see

ladies) with fatigue.

“I omitted not to enquire of every

officer, the names of prisoners who

had been brought in. At length I

understood that Mr. Willis had pe-

rished in jail, on his first arrival, of

a dysentery.--Here my expectations

terminated in despair. I had no mo-

ney to return with, and indeed but

for my Sophia no inclination--the

whole world seemed dark and chear-

less to me as the fabled region of Cim-

meria, and I was nigh perishing for

very want, when Mrs. Bratt, hearing

of my distress, sought my acquaint-

ance: she kindly participated my

sorrows, and too--too generously

shared her purse and bed with me.--

This, ladies, is the story of a broken-

hearted woman; nor should I have

intruded it in any other but the house

of mourning.”

Here she concluded, while the

ladies severally embracing her, ex-

pressed their acknowledgements for

the painful task she had complied

with to oblige their curiosity--

“Would to Heaven!” said Madame

de R--, “that the brutal nations were

extinct, for never--never can the

united humanity of France and Bri-

tain compensate for the horrid cruel-

ties of their savage allies.”

They were soon after summoned

to an elegant collation; and having

spent best part of the night together,

the guests retired to their respective

homes.

During two years, in which the

French ladies continued their boun-

ty and friendship to Mrs. Kittle, she

never could gain the least intelligence

of her husband. Her letters, after

wandering through several provinces,

would often return to her hands un-

opened. Despairing at length of ever

seeing him, “ah!” she would say to

Mrs. D--, “my poof husband has

undoubtedly perished, perhaps in his

fruitless search after me, and I am

left to be a long--long burden on

your goodness, a very unprofitable

dependant.”

In her friend’s absence she would

descend into the kitchen, and submit

to the most menial offices; nor could

the servants prevent her; however,

the apprised Mrs. D--of it, who

seized an opportunity of detecting her

at her labour. Being baffled in her

humble attempt by the gentle re-

proaches of her indulgent patroness,

she sat down on the step of the door,

and began to weep. “I believe,

good Mrs. D--,” said she, “were

you a hard task-master, that exacted

from these useless hands the most sla-

vish business, I could acquit myself

with cheerfulness: my heart is like

ice, that brightens and grows firmer

by tempests, but cannot stand the

warm rays of a kind sun.” Mrs.

D--was beginning to answer,

when hearing a tumult in the street,

they both hasted to the door, and

Maria, casting her eyes carelessly over

the crowd, in an instant recognized

the features of her long-lamented

husband, who sprang towards her

with an undescribable and involunta-

ry rapture; but the tide of joy and

surprise was too strong for the de-

licacy of her frame. She gave a

faint exclamation, and stretching out

her arms to receive him, dropped

senseless at his feet. The succession

of his ideas were too rapid to admit

describing. He caught her up, and

bearing her in the hall, laid his pre-

cious burden on a settee, kneeling be-

side her in a speechless agony of de-

light and concern. Mean while the

spectators found themselves wonder-

fully affected--the tender contagion

ran from bosom to bosom--they wept

aloud; and the house of joy seemed

to be the house of lamentation. At

length Maria opened her eyes and

burst into a violent fit of tears--Mr.

Kittle, with answering emotions, si-

lently accompanying her; then clasp-

ing his arms endearingly round her,

“it is enough, my love,” said he;

“we have had our night of affliction,

and surely this blessed meeting is a

presage of a long day of future hap-

pines; let me kiss off those tears,

and shew by your smiles that I am

indeed welcome.” Maria then bend-

ing fondly forward to his bosom, re-

plied, sighing, “alas! how can your

beggared wife give you a proper re-

ception!--she cannot restore your

prattling babes to your arms!--she

comes alone--alas! her presence will

only serve to remind you of the trea-

sures--the filial delights you have

lost.”--“God forbid,” answered he,

“that I should repine at the loss of

my smaller comforts, when so capital

a blessing as my beloved Maria is so

wonderfully restored to me.” Here

he was in civility obliged to rise and

receive the compliments of Mrs.

Bratt, Mrs. Willis, and Madame de

R--, who, hearing of his arrival,

entered just then half breathless, with

impatience and joy. The company

encreased. An elegant dinner was

prepared. In short, the day was de-

voted to pleasure; and never was

satisfaction more general--festivity

glowed on every face, and compla-

cency dimpled every cheek.

After tea Maria withdrew in the

garden, to give her beloved an ac-

count of what had befallen her dur-

ing their separation. The eloquence

of sorrow is irresistible. Mr. Kittle

wept, he groaned, while all impassi-

oned (with long interruptions of grief

in her voice) she stammered through

her doleful history, and yet she felt

a great satisfaction in pouring her

complaints into a bosom whose feel-

ings were in unison with her’s--they

wept--the smiled--they mourned,

and rejoiced alternately, with an

abrupt transition from one passion to

another.

Mr. Kittle, in return, informed

her, that having thrown himself

into the army, in hopes of ending a

being that grew insupportable under

the reflection of past happiness--he

tempted death in every action where-

in he was engaged, and being dis-

appointed, gave himself up to the

blackest melancholy. “This gloomy

scene,” he observed, “would soon

have been closed by some act of des-

peration, but one evening, sitting

pensive in his tent, and attentively

running over the circumstances of his

misfortunes, a thought darted on his

mind that possibly his brother Henry

might be alive.” This was the first

time the idea of any one of his fa-

mily’s surviving the general murder

had presented itself to him, and he

caught at the flattering suggestion as

a drowning wretch would to a plank.

“Surely--surely,” said he, “my bro-

ther lives--it is some divine emana-

tion lights up the thought in my soul

--it carries conviction with it--I

will go after him--it shall be the

comfort and employment of my life

to find out this dear brother--this last

and only treasure.” Persuaded of

the reality of his fancy, he commu-

nicated his design to a few of his mi-

litary friends; but they only laughed

at his extravagance, and strongly

dissuaded him from so wild an un-

dertaking. Being discouraged, he

desisted; but shortly after, hearing

that a company of prisoners (who

were enfranchised) were returning to

Quebec, he got permission to accom-

pany them. After a very fatiguing

journey he arrived at Montreal, and

was immediately introduced to the

General Officer, who patiently heard

his story, and treated him with great

clemency. Having obtained leave to

remain a few days in town, he re-

spectfully withdrew, and turning

down a street, he enquired of a man

who was walking before him, where

lodgings were to be let? The stran-

ger turned about, civily taking off

his hat, when Mr. Kittle, starting

back, grew as pale as ashes--“Oh,

my God!” cried he, panting, “oh!

Henry, is it you! is it indeed you!

No, it cannot be!” Here he was

ready to fall; but Henry, with little

less agitation, supported him; and a

tavern being at hand, he led him in.

The master of the hotel brought in

wine, and they drank off many glasses

to congratulate so happy a meeting.

When their transports were abated,

Henry ventured to tell him that his

Maria was living and well. This

was a weight of joy too strong for

his enfeebled powers--he stared wild-

ly about. At length, recovering him-

self, “take care, Henry,” said he,

“this is too tender a point to trifle

upon.”--“My brother,” replied

Henry, “be calm, let not your joy

have a worse effect than your grief--

they both came sudden, and it be-

hoves a man and a christian to shew

as much fortitude under the one as

the other.”--“Alas! I am prepared

for some woeful deception,” cried

Mr. Kittle; “but, Henry, this sus-

pence is cruel.”--“By the eternal

God!” rejoined his brother, “your

Maria--your wife--is in this town,

and if you are composed enough,

shall immediately see her. Mr. Kit-

tle could not speak--he gave his hand

to Henry, and while (like the Apos-

tles friends) he believed not for joy,

he was conducted to her arms, and

found his bliss wonderfully real.