

ing to and fro, throwing an uncertain light upon the tremulous foliage; the solemn chanting of hymns, swelling and falling on the night winds; the impassioned exhortations, the earnest prayers, the sounds, shrieks or shouts bursting from persons under intense agitation of mind; the sudden spasms, which seized upon scores and unexpectedly dashed them to the ground—all conspired not only to invest the scene with terrific interest, but to work up the feelings to the highest pitch of excitement." It is said that the meetings were protracted to a late hour of the night, keeping the feelings long upon the stretch. The preaching was fervid and impassioned, many of the preachers, unable to control their emotions during the ceremony, going about in "a singing ecstasy," shouting and shaking hands with others as much excited as themselves. In this way everything was done to "heap fuel on the fire," and it was at such meetings that thousands fell in convulsive seizures to the ground. The spectacle of persons falling down in paroxysms of feeling was first exhibited at Gasper River Church, in one of McGready's congregations, in the summer of 1779. The movement proved highly contagious and spread in all directions. After rousing appeals to the feelings of the listeners, and especially during spirited singing, one and another of the audience would fall to the ground and swoon. Not only nervous women, but robust young men were overpowered. Some fell suddenly as if struck by lightning, while