

Villages, cities, institutions of religion and learning, are upon sites where you have seen the dark shades of the forest rest with a profound stillness, that you could hardly have expected to see disturbed by the hand of improvement. But more than all this, you have lived to see an extended region of wilderness converted into fruitful fields; a landscape every where interspersed with comfortable, often luxurious, farm buildings; surrounded by all the evidences of substantial, unsurpassed prosperity. Who else that have planted colonies, founded settlements, have lived to see such consummations? Peaceful, bloodless, and yet glorious! The conquerors upon battle fields have been destroyers; you, creators; they, have made fields desolate; you, have clothed them with smiling promise and full fruition. They, have brought mourning; you, rejoicing. Theirs, was the physical courage of a day, perhaps of a fortunate hour; yours, was the higher and nobler attribute — the moral courage — the spirit of endurance and perseverance, that held out through long years of suffering and privation; that looked dangers and difficulties in the face, till they became familiar associates. In the retrospect of well-spent lives — in view of the consummation of the great work of civilization and improvement, you have helped to commence and carry on — now that the shades of evening are gathering around you — now that you are admonished that your work upon earth is done — well may you say: — “*Now Lord lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.*”

To the second, — as the inheritors of a rich legacy, the fruits of the achievements, of the long years of enterprise, toil, fortitude and perseverance, of those Pioneer Fathers; the conservators of their memories. Honors, titles, stars and garters, such as kings may bestow, are baubles compared with what they have bequeathed! Far most of them breaking out from their quiet New England homes, in youth, and strength, went first to the battle field, where it was the strong against the weak, the oppressor against the oppressed, and helped to win a glorious national inheritance; then, after a short respite, came to this primitive region, and won a local inheritance for you, fair and fertile, as rich in all the elements of prosperity and happiness, as any that the sun of Heaven shines upon! Guard the trust in a spirit of gratitude; cherish the memories of the Pioneers; imitate their stern virtues; preserve and carry on the work they have so well begun!

And both will accept this tribute, from the son of a Pioneer — one “who was to the manor born,” — who has essayed to snatch from fading memories, gather from imperfect records, and preserve these local Reminiscences; — and who, most of all regrets, that in the execution of the task, he has not been able to recognize more of the names and the deeds of the FOUNDERS OF SETTLEMENTS IN THE GENESEE COUNTRY.

THE AUTHOR.