

# THE INDIAN.

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Where are our Chiefs of old? Where our Heroes of mighty name?  
The fields of their battles are silent—scarce their mossy tombs remain!—OSSEAN.

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## SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF CAPTAIN JOSEPH BRANT.

(THAYENDANAGEA)

BY KE-CHE-AH-GAH-ME-QUA.

(Continued.)

About this time Brant was made Principal War Chief of the Confederacy. It is not quite clear how he arrived at this dignity. Hendric was the last of the Mohawk chiefs who bore the title of king. He fell under Sir W. Johnson twenty years before, and was succeeded by "Little Abraham," a supposed brother of Hendric, of whom no further mention is made, excepting that he refused to accompany Brant and Guy Johnson in their flight from the Mohawk Valley. It is likely that force of circumstances facilitated Brant's advancement, such as his military distinctions, his descent from a family of chiefs and his official connection with the Johnson family. As our Indian hero has now become a principal personage in these troublesome times, the title of Captain was conferred upon him in the army of the Crown.

In the autumn of 1775, Brant embarked with Captain Tice on his first visit to England. The precise object of this visit does not appear. It is probable the sagacious chieftain deemed it prudent, before committing himself too far by actually taking the field, to ponder well the cause of "the Great King," lest, by an overscrupulous observance of the ancient covenants of his people, he should be leading them to certain destruction. On his first arrival in London, he was conducted to the inn called "The Swan with the two Necks." Lodgings more suitable to his rank were provided; but he said, "I am treated so kindly I prefer staying where I am." During this visit he figured at a grand masquerade ball, dressed in the brilliant costume of his nation. His novel and striking appearance drew towards him much observation from the ladies. An amusing incident here happened. In the midst of the festivities, the Mohawk Chief, flourishing his war-club and raising the war-whoop, so frightened his admirers that they rushed wildly out of the room, tumbling down stairs in the greatest confusion. This visit confirmed him in his attachment to the British Crown. In the spring of 1776, he returned to America, landing secretly near New York. The disturbed state of the country rendered this precaution necessary. While in England Brant procured a gold finger-ring, with his name engraved thereon, stating he intended that the same should provide evidence of his identity in case he fell in any of the battles he anticipated. This ring he wore until his death. It was kept as a precious relic by his widow for four years, when it was lost. Strange as it may seem, during the summer of 1836, the identical

ring was found by a little girl in a ploughed field near Wellington Square, while the venerable Indian Queen was on a visit to her daughter, Elizabeth, the accomplished wife of Col. Kerr.

Many efforts were used, and arguments urged, to secure Brant's neutrality, or prevent his joining the Royal standard. His old tutor, President Wheelock, sent him a long epistle on this subject, to which Brant ingenuously replied:—"I recall to mind, with pleasure, the happy hours I spent under your roof, and especially the prayers and family devotions to which I listened. One passage in particular was so often repeated it could never be effaced from my memory—viz., 'That they might be able to live as good subjects, to fear God, and honor the king!'" This letter was sufficient to convince anyone that Brant was firm in his attachment to the British cause. In June of 1776, Brant



CAPTAIN JOSEPH BRANT.

(THAYENDANAGEA.)

visited Unadilla for the purpose of procuring provisions, which were perforce furnished him. In a conference held at this time, he again expressed himself decidedly in favor of the Royal cause, alluding to old covenants and treaties entered into between the King and his people, and complaining of ill-treatment from the hands of the colonists. Shortly after this, Gen. Herkimer, of the American militia, started with a strong force for Brant's headquarters, upon what terms does not appear. Before the troubles between Great Britain and America, these two men were great friends. The troops that Gen. Herkimer thought proper to bring to this conference, accordingly, were viewed with suspicion by Brant. The chieftain concealed himself for a week, and when the conference was entered into, had a body guard of five hundred warriors with him. The respective parties met

unarmed, and every precaution was taken to prevent treachery. The parley terminated unsatisfactorily, and another appointment was made for the coming morning. Afterwards it was discovered that the General had engaged one Joseph Waggoner, with three associates, to shoot Brant and his three principal men. Whether the chieftain entertained any suspicion of foul play is not certain; but, as he entered the circle, he drew himself up with dignity, addressing Gen. Herkimer as follows:—"I have five hundred warriors with me, armed and ready for battle. You are in my power. As we have been neighbors and friends, I will not take the advantage of you." Saying which, at a signal, a host of armed warriors darted from the forest, painted, and ready for the onslaught, as their war-whoops too plainly proclaimed. The Chief then thanked the General for his civility in coming so far to see him, and trusted some day he might return the compliment. The late Colonel Robert Neiles, was a volunteer with the Indians and present on this occasion, Brant next marched to the British place of rendezvous at Oswego. Here a great council was held with the representatives of Great Britain. The result of this conference was a treaty of alliance between the Indians and the British. In August of 1777, the bloody battle of Oriskany was fought. The destruction on both sides was very great. The veteran officer Herkimer here received his death-wound. Although the Indians were worsted on this occasion the Six Nations, with the exception of the Tuscaroras and the Oneidas, remained faithful to the king. Brant, aided by Johnson and Butler, used strenuous exertions to win over the Indians of the Far West to the royal cause. Failing in all these efforts, the chieftain returned to his old quarters at Oghkwaga, where he continued to harass and plunder the colonists. In this guerilla warfare Brant always stove to stay the hand uplifted against the feeble and helpless. In his attack on Springfield, for instance, he drove off or took prisoners all the men, but concealed in safety the women and children. Early in November, 1778, Brant was reluctantly prevailed upon to leave his winter quarters at Niagara, and accompany Walter Butler, a man whom he greatly disliked, in an attack on the beautiful and prosperous settlement of Cherry Valley, a village defended by fortification and garrisoned by troops under Col. Alden. The motive that impelled Butler to this expedition was a desire to avenge an imprisonment he had suffered on the charge of treason. The wholesale slaughter of the inhabitants of this settlement is said to have been fearful. The ferocious Senecas spared neither old nor young in their indiscriminate attack. The terrible scenes in the carnage of Cherry Valley cannot be shouldered upon Brant.