

SKETCH OF THE
LIFE OF CAPTAIN JOSEPH BRANT.

(THAYENDANAGEA)

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

(Continued.)

The widow of the late old Captain died at Brantford, on the Grand River, the 24th November, 1837, thirty years to a day from the death of her husband. Her age was 78. Dignified and stately in manners, tall and handsome in person, she well merited the title of "the Indian Princess."

BRANT'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

General P. B. Porter describes Brant as distinguished alike for his address, his activity, and his courage, possessing in point of stature and symmetry of person, the advantage of most men, even among his own well formed race,—tall, erect and majestic, with the air and mien of one born to command. Having, as it were, been a man of war from his boyhood, his name was a tower of strength among the warriors of the wilderness."

HIS MANNERS

were affable and dignified, avoiding frivolity as one extreme, or stiffness on the other. Not noted for eloquence, his power lay in his strong, practical good sense, and his deep and ready insight into character.

AS A MAN OF RULE,

the Rev. John Stewart represents "his influence to have been acquired by his uncommon talents and address as a councillor and politician, by which means he subdued all opposition and jealousy, and at length acquired such an ascendancy that, even in the hour of danger, he was enabled to rule and direct his warriors as absolutely as if he had been born their general.

AS A WARRIOR

he is represented as brave, cautious and sagacious. His constitution was hardy, and his capability of endurance great, his energy untiring, and his firmness indomitable. In his business relations he was prompt, honorable, and a pattern for integrity.

HIS SENSE OF JUSTICE.

Justice was a distinguishing feature in the character of this noble man. When on long and fatiguing marches, with scanty supplies of food, every prisoner was allowed a full share with himself. The same love of justice marked his conduct during the Indian wars of 1789—'95, as also his correspondence with the British Government regarding the subsequent difficulties touching the Grand River land title. When he thought the Indians claimed too much, he opposed them; when too little, he fought for them. In a letter to General Chapin, he says: As to politics, I study them not. My principle is founded on justice, and justice is all I wish for. Never shall I exert myself for any nation or nations—let their opinions of me be what they will—unless I plainly see that they are sincere and just in what they may aim at. When I perceive that these are the sentiments of a people, no endeavors shall be wanting on my part to bring nations to a good understanding."

HIS TEMPERANCE PRINCIPLES.

Brant ever evinced a deep solicitude to adopt

some system to prevent this worst of all vices—intemperance. Experience has long proved that neither Brant's nor any other man's importunity can avail so long as the Indian comes in contact with the moral contagion of unprincipled white men and strong drink. Will not the blood of the Red man be required at his hands who, for paltry gain, has been an agent of Satan in the ruin and extermination of the original proprietors of the American soil?

BRANT A FREEMASON.

When Captain McKinstry was taken prisoner by the British, and marked as a victim by the Indians to be put to death by fire, Brant recognizing him as a member of the brotherhood, exerted himself for his rescue, and in connection with some humane English officers, subscribed to purchase an ox, which they gave to the Indians for their carousal instead of the gallant prisoner. An intimacy and friendship continued between these two parties until the Chief's death. After the Revolution, Brant never visited the Hudson without spending a few days at the Manor with his friend McKinstry. At the time of his last visit in 1805, he attended the Freemason's Lodge in the City of Hudson, where his presence attracted great attention.

The life of the late Jonathan Maynard, Esq., formerly a member of the Senate of Massachusetts was saved by Brant, by his discovering on the prisoner's arms the symbols of Freemasonry, when the Indians had partly stripped him to put him to death. Mr. M. lived to an advanced age, universally respected, an upright and faithful magistrate. Surely such a character is neither savage nor cruel. Brant was no less humane than he was brave.

BRANT'S SHREWDNESS AND SAGACITY

are illustrated by the following anecdote. When Jemima Wilkinson (who professed to be the Savior of the World in his second appearance on the earth) was residing in western New York She attracted the attention of Captain Brant. His celebrity being known to her, an interview was obtained. She addressed him a few words of salutation, to which the chief replied in his own language, when she informed him she did not understand him. He then addressed her in another Indian dialect, to which in like manner she objected. After a pause he commenced a third speech in a still different tongue. She then interrupted him by expressing her dissatisfaction in his persisting to speak in terms she could not understand. Brant arose with dignity, and with a significant motion of the hand, said,—"Madame you are not the person you pretend to be. Jesus Christ can understand one language as well as another," and abruptly took his leave.

BRANT'S VIEWS ON IMPRISONMENT FOR DEBT.

Extracts from the following letter to the late Thos. Eddy on the subject of "imprisonment for debt" will exhibit his views as a philanthropist. Mr. Eddy was directing his attention to the subject of prison discipline, and, it appears, the views of the Mohawk Chieftain coincided with his own.

**** "You ask me whether in my opinion civilization is favorable to human happiness? **** You will allow me in some respects to

have had the advantage of you in forming my sentiments. I was, Sir, born of Melian parents, and lived while a child among those whom you are pleased to call *savages*. I was afterwards sent to live among the white people, and educated at one of your schools; since which I have been honored, much beyond my deserts, by an acquaintance with a number of principal characters both in Europe and America.

"After all this experience, and after every exertion to divest myself of prejudice, I am obliged to give my opinion in favor of my own people. I will now, as much as I am able, collect together and set before you some of the reasons that have influenced my judgement on the subject now before us.

"In the government you call civilized, the happiness of the people is constantly sacrificed to the splendor of empire. Hence your codes of criminal and civil laws have had their origin; hence your dungeons and prisons. I will not enlarge on an idea so singular in civilized life, and perhaps disagreeable to you, and will only observe that amongst us we have no prisons; we have no pompous parade of courts; we have no written laws; and yet judges are as highly revered amongst us as amongst you, and their decisions as much regarded. Property, to say the least, is as well guarded, and crimes are as impartially punished. We have among us no splendid villains above the control of our laws. Daring wickedness is here never suffered to triumph over helpless innocence.

"The estates of widows and orphans are never devoured by enterprising sharpers. In a word we have no robbery under the color of law.

"No person among us desires any other reward for performing a brave action but the consciousness of having served his nation. Our wise men are called Fathers; they are always accessible—I will not say to the meanest of our people, for we have none mean but such as render themselves so by their vices.

"The palaces and prisons among you form a dreadful contrast. Go to the former places, and you will see perhaps a *deformed piece of earth* assuming airs that become none but the Great Spirit above. Go to one of your prisons; here description utterly fails! Kill them, if you please; kill them, too, by tortures; but let the torture last no longer than a day. Those you call savages relent; the most furious of our tormentors exhausts his rage in a few hours, dispatches his unhappy victim by a sudden stroke.

"But for what are many of your prisoners confined? For debt!—astonishing!—and will you ever again call the Indian nations cruel? Liberty, to a rational creature, as much succeeds property, as the light of the sun does the most twinkling star. I solemnly declare, I had rather die by the most severe tortures ever inflicted on this continent than languish in one of your prisons for a single year. Great Spirit of the Universe!—and do you call yourselves Christians? Does then the religion of Him whom you call your Saviour inspire this spirit, and lead to these practices? Surely no. It is recorded of him that a bruised reed he never broke. Cease then to call yourselves Christians, lest you publish to the world your hypocrisy. Cease, too, to call other nations savage, when you are ten-fold more the children of cruelty than they."

(To be Continued.)