Livingston, who agreed, doubtless for a consideration, to help him negotiate a treaty with the Indians. But meanwhile there was a disagreement between Livingston's and Butler's companies, and when Phelps arrived at Geneva, where a council was to have been held, he learned that Butler and Brant had assembled the Indians at Buffalo creek, and had persuaded them not to meet with either Livingston or Phelps. Finding that Butler and his friends had more influence over the savages than Livingston, Phelps went to Niagara, came to a satisfactory arrangement with them, and then procured the calling of a council at Buffalo creek.

It assembled on the fifth of July. The proceedings were very quiet and harmonious, for Butler and Brant made everything move smoothly. There was little dispute, little excitement, and none of those impassioned bursts of eloquence for which Indian orators have become famous; yet the noted men present at that council make it one of the most remarkable assemblages ever convened in the county of Erie. A separate chapter will therefore be devoted to it and them.

CHAPTER IX.

THE COUNCIL.

Brant — Butler — Kirkland — Phelps — Farmer's Brother — Red Jacket — Cornplanter — The Mill seat — The Bargain — Butler's Pay.

BY far the most celebrated personage present in the council on Buffalo creek in July, 1788, was the Mohawk chieftain, called in his native tongue Thayendenegea, but denominated Joseph when he was taken under the patronage of Sir William Johnson, and known to fame throughout England and America by the name of Brant. A tall, spare, sinewy man of forty-five, with an intelligent but sinister countenance, in a gaudy apparel combining the garments of savage and civilized life, the vain but keen-witted Mohawk doubtless enjoyed himself as the observed of all observers, but at the same time kept a sharp lookout for the main chance; having acquired a decidedly civilized relish for land and money.*

* The "Narrative of Captain Snyder by C. H. Dewitt," quoted by Ketchum, thus describes Brant as he appeared at Fort Niagara about five years before the council at Buffalo creek:—

"He was a likely fellow of a fierce aspect, tall and rather spare, well spoken, and apparently about thirty [nearly about forty] years of age. He wore moccasins elegantly trimmed with beads, leggins and breech cloth of superfine blue, short, green coat with two epauletts, and a small laced round hat. By his side hung an elegant silver mounted cutlass, and his blanket of blue cloth, purposely dropped on the chair on which he sat to display his epauletts, was gorgeously decorated with a border of red."

Miss Powell, whose visit to Buffalo creek in 1785 is described in the last chapter, saw Brant at Fort Niagara, and said of him: "I was by no means pleased with his looks." As the lady's letter shows that she was extremely well pleased with most of the Indians, I have ventured to describe Brant as having a sinister countenance.

Brant has acquired a terrible reputation as a bold and blood-thirsty leader of savages, but it would appear as if both his vices and his virtues were of the civilized—or semi-civilized— stamp. He had a mind which took easily to the instruction of the white man—though his education was only mediocre—and before the Revolution he had become a kind of private secretary to Colonel Guy Johnson; a position that to a thorough-going Indian would have been irksome in the extreme. Even the Mohawks did not then look up to him as a great warrior, and on the outbreak of hostilities chose as their chief his nephew, Peter Johnson, son of Sir William by Brant's sister Molly.

But the British found Brant the most intelligent of the Indians, and by using him they could most easily insure co-operation in their own plans. They therefore intrusted him with numerous expeditions, and the Mohawks readily yielded to his authority. So, too, perhaps, did some of the Cayugas and Onondagas, but the evidence is strong that the Senecas never obeyed him. After the war, however, he was looked up to by all the Indians, on account of his influence with the British officials.

In the matter of cruelty, too, though perhaps not a very humane man according to our standard, he was much less savage than most of his countrymen, and there is abundant evidence of his having many times saved unfortunate prisoners from torture or death. Albeit there is also evidence of his having taken some lives needlessly, but never of his inflicting torture.

As he grew older he affected more and more the style of an English country gentleman at his hospitable residences at Brantford and Burlington Bay, and finally died, in 1807, in the odor of sanctity, a member of the Episcopal church and a translator of the scriptures in the Mohawk dialect.

Another active participant in the council, with a reputation scarcely less extensive or less sinister, was Colonel John Butler, the leader of "Butler's Rangers," the commander at the far-famed "Massacre of Wyoming," the terror of ten thousand families, the loyal gentleman of British records, the "infamous Butler" of border history.

In this case, as in many others, probably the subject of partisan hatred was not as black as he has been painted, but his record was still a very dark one. The "Massacre of Wyoming," is perhaps hardly entitled to that name. But Colonel Butler was the most active agent in sending and leading the savages against the frontier, knowing that it was impossible at times to restrain them from the most horrible outrages. Again and again they murdered individuals and families in cold blood; again and again they dragged women and children from their homes hundreds of miles through the snows of winter, often slaughtering those too feeble to travel; and again and again John Butler, the great military authority of all this region, sent or led them to a repetition of similar scenes—and

they were good for little else—easily satisfying his conscience by sometimes procuring the release of a prisoner.

A native of Connecticut, a man of education and intelligence, in his youth an officer in the "French and Indian" war, afterwards a judge of the county of Tryon, then a bold, active and relentless partisan commander, cheering on his rangers and Senecas at Wyoming, sword in hand, without his uniform and with a red 'kerchief tied around his head. Butler was in 1788, an agreeable appearing gentlemen of fifty-five or sixty, stout and red-faced, in cocked hat and laced coat, with unbounded influence over the Indians, and determined to use it so as to make a good thing for himself out of the lands of Western New York.

There, too, was the Rev. Samuel Kirkland, the agent of Massachusetts, a man of noble character and varied experience. Twenty-three years before, then a young man just graduated from college, he had devoted himself to the missionary cause among the Indians, going at first among these same Senecas, and making many friends, though meeting with some very disheartening adventures. Then he had taken up his home with the Oneidas and labored among them with some intermissions nearly forty years, ever receiving their most earnest affection and respect. It had been largely owing to his influence that that tribe had remained neutral during the Revolution. Congress had employed him in various patriotic services throughout that struggle, and during Sullivan's campaign he had served as brigade chaplain. Fourteen years after the events we are now relating, he gained a new title to public gratitude by becoming the founder of Hamilton College, (though it then received only the modest title of Hamilton Oneida Academy,) giving it a liberal endowment out of lands granted him by the State for his services.

On this occasion he acted not only as agent for Massachusetts but as one of the interpreters, there being three others, one of whom was William Johnston. This is the first positive appearance of one who was afterwards to exercise a powerful influence over the future of Buffalo—who in fact was almost able to decide whether there should be any city of Buffalo or not. There is, however, little doubt that he was identical with the "Lieutenant Johnson," heretofore mentioned, who visited the Senecas in 1780, and also with the Lieutenant Johnson whom Mrs. Jemison mentions as taking part in the Cherry Valley raid.

Shrewd, persistent, enterprising, a typical business man of the day, was Oliver Phelps, a Connecticut Yankee by birth, a son of the Bay State by adoption, a New Yorker by subsequent residence. He had been an active and influential participant in the Revolution, and was now, as the agent of an association of Massachusetts speculators, negotiating for the purchase of a principality. Removing soon after to Canandaigua and superintending there the sale of the vast domain which he and his associates had purchased, he was to the day of his death looked up to

with profound respect by the residents of "Phelps and Gorham's Purchase." But his keenness in a bargain is well illustrated by a transaction at this very council, narrated a little further on.

Among the Indian owners of the land the most eminent was Honayewus, who had for several years been recognized as principal war-chief of the Senecas, and who had lately received the name of "Farmer's Brother" from the lips of Washington. The latter, anxious to make agriculture respectable among the Indians, declared himself a farmer in conversation with Honayewus, and also saluted him as his brother. The chieftain, proud of the attention paid him by the great hero of the pale-faces, readily accepted the title of "Farmer's Brother," and ere long was universally known by that name among the whites.

A strong, stalwart warrior, of gigantic frame and magnificent proportions, straight as an arrow, though nearly sixty years old, plainly attired in full Indian costume, with eagle eye, frank, open countenance, commanding port and dignified demeanor, Honayewus was, more than Brant, or Red Jacket, or Cornplanter, the *beau ideal* of an Iroquois chief. Though an eloquent orator, second only to Red Jacket in all the Six Nations, he was pre-eminently a warrior, and as such had been followed by the Senecas through many a carnival of blood. It is to be presumed, too, that he had had his share in scenes of cruelty, for, though a peaceable man in peace, he was a savage like his brethren, and, like a savage, he waged war to the knife.

Thirty years before he had been one of the leaders in the terrible tragedy of the Devil's Hole, when nearly a hundred English soldiers were ambushed and slain, and flung down into the darksome gorge. He had borne his part in many a border foray throughout the Revolution, had led the fierce charge of the Senecas when they turned the scale of battle at Wyoming, and had perhaps been an actor in the more dreadful scenes of Cherry Valley. Now he had become the friend of peace, the foe of intemperance, the conservator of order; and wherever a Seneca village was found, on the banks of the Buffalo or the Cattaraugus, of the Genesee or the Alleghany, the presence of Farmer's Brother was greeted, the name of Honayewus was heard, with the respect due to valor, wisdom and integrity.

There, too, was the more celebrated but less respected leader, who had lately been made a chief by the honorable name of Sagoyewatha, "The Keeper Awake," (literally, "he keeps them awake"—a tribute to his oratorical powers which many a Congressman might envy,) but who was generally known among the whites by the ridiculous appellation which he transmitted to his descendants, the far-famed Red Jacket.

He, too, had been an actor in the border wars, but had gained no laurels in them. Brant and Cornplanter both hated him, declaring him to be both a coward and a traitor. They were accustomed to tell of the

time when he made a glowing speech, urging the Senecas to battle, but, while the conflict was going on, was discovered cutting up the cow of another Indian, which he had killed. He was at that time frequently called "The Cow-Killer," and that name was inserted in two or three public documents, being afterwards crossed out and "Red Jacket" substituted.

The treason with which he was charged seems to have consisted in making various efforts for peace, during Sullivan's campaign, without the sanction of the war-chiefs. At one time he is said to have clandestinely sent a runner to the American camp, inviting a flag of truce. Brant heard of the proceeding, and had the unlucky messenger intercepted and killed. Probably some of the stories regarding his timidity and treachery are false, but there are a good many of them, and they all point the same way.

Notwithstanding all this, such was the charm of his eloquence, of which the Iroquois were always great admirers, and such the clearness of his intellect, that he was rapidly gaining in influence, and had been made a chief; that is, as we understand it, a civil chief, or counselor of the sachems.

At the beginning of the Revolution he was a youth of about twenty. The British officers had been attracted by his intelligence, and had frequently employed him as a messenger, for which he was as well qualified by his fleetness of foot as by his shrewdness of mind. They had compensated him by a succession of red jackets, in which he took great pride, and from which he derived his name.

Slender of form and subtle of face, clad in the most gorgeous of Indian raiment, Sagoyewatha doubtless attracted the attention of the whites, but he had little opportunity to display his powers, for Brant and the omnipotent Butler had got everything arranged in the most satisfactory manner.

There, too, was Captain John O'Bail, or Abeel, more widely known as Cornplanter. Half white by blood, but thoroughly Indian by nature, he had been one of the bravest and most successful chiefs of the Senecas during the war, but was now under a cloud among his people, because of his assent to the treaty of Fort Stanwix. He is said by Mrs. Jemison to have captured his own father, the old white trader, John Abeel, in one of his raids, but to have released him after taking him a few miles.

Farmer's Brother and Red Jacket both lived on Buffalo creek, but Cornplanter's residence was on the Allegany in Pennsylvania, where a band of Senecas looked up to him as their leader.

Sayengeraghta, "Old King," or "Old Smoke," as he was variously termed, was, if living, still the principal civil sachem of the Senecas, but his mildness and modesty prevented his taking a prominent part among so many great warriors and orators.

Besides all these there was a host of inferior chiefs, whose rank gave them a right to take part in the council, while close by were the other warriors of the tribes, painted and plumed, who had no vote in the proceedings, but who, in the democratic system of the Six Nations, might have a potent influence if they chose to exercise it.

A number of British officers from Forts Niagara and Erie added splendor to the scene, and last, not least, was a row of old squaws, mothers in Israel, seated in modest silence behind the chiefs, but prepared if need be to express an authoritative opinion on the merits of the case—a right which would have been recognized by all.

Such was the varied scene, and such the actors in it, on the banks of Buffalo creek, a little over eighty-seven years ago.

The council, as we have said, was very harmonious. The Indians were willing to sell a part of their land, and apparently were not very particular about the price. The only dispute was whether the west line of the territory sold should be along the Genesee river or, as Phelps desired, some distance this side. The Indians insisted that the Great Spirit had fixed on that stream as the boundary between them and the whites.

After several days' discussion, Phelps suggested that he wanted to build some mills at the falls of the Genesee, (now Rochester,) which would be very convenient for Indians as well as whites. Would his red brethren let him have a mill-seat, and land enough for convenience around it?

Oh, yes, certainly, mills would be a fine thing, and the white brother should have a mill-seat. How much land did he want for that purpose?

After due deliberation Phelps replied that he thought a strip about twelves miles wide, extending from Avon to the mouth of the river, twenty-eight miles, would be about right.

The Indians thought that would be a pretty large mill-seat, but as they supposed the Yankees knew best what was necessary for the purpose, they let him have the land. As it contained something over 200,000 acres it was probably the largest mill-seat ever known.

From Avon south, the west line of the purchase was to run along the Genesee to the mouth of the Canaseraga, and thence due south to the Pennsylvania line. This was "Phelps and Gorham's Purchase." It included about 2,600,000 acres, and the price was left by the complaisant aborigines to Colonel Butler, Joseph Brant and Elisha Lee, Mr. Kirkland's assistant. They fixed the price at five thousand dollars in hand, and five hundred dollars annually, forever. This was about equal to twelve thousand dollars in cash, or half a cent an acre.

Two weeks later we find Colonel Butler calling on Mr. Phelps by letter for a conveyance of twenty thousand acres of the land, in accordance with a previous arrangement. Phelps duly transferred the land to

the persons designated by Butler. Considering that the Colonel had been one of the referees to fix the price, this transfer looks as if some of the Indian operations of that era would not bear investigating any better than those of later date.

CHAPTER X.

FROM 1788 TO 1797.

"Skendyoughwatti" — First White Resident — A Son of Africa — The Holland Purchase — Proctor's Visit — British Influence — Woman's Rights — Final Failure — The Indians Insolent — Wayne's Victory — Johnston, Middaugh and Lane — The Forts Surrendered — Asa Ransom — The Mother's Strategy — First White Child — The Indians Sell Out — Reservations.

MR. KIRKLAND made another journey to Buffalo creek the next fall, seeking to pacify those Indians who were discontented regarding the sale just made by the Senecas, and also those made by other tribes to the State, of lands farther east. He mentions seeking the aid of the second man of influence among the Senecas on Buffalo creek, "Skendyoughwatti." This fearful-looking name we understand to be the same as that called "Conjockety" by the early settlers, and which their descendants have transmuted into Scajaquada.

In returning, Kirkland says he lodged at "the Governor's village," on the Genesee, and adds: "The Governess had set out for Niagara near a week before. I had not her aid in the council." This "Governess" is mentioned in other accounts, and seems to have been a very important personage, but whether she was the wife of some head chief, (or "Governor,") or was invested with power in her own right, is one of the mysteries of local history.

In 1789 the county of Ontario was erected from Montgomery, (to which name that of Tryon county has been changed,) including the whole of the Massachusetts land, or substantially all west of Seneca lake; a territory now comprising thirteen counties and two parts of counties.

About this time, certainly before 1791, and probably in 1789, the first white man took up his permanent residence in Erie county. This was Cornelius Winne, or Winney, a Hudson river Dutchman, who established a little log store for trading with the Indians on the site of Buffalo, at the foot of the hill which old residents still remember as existing at the Mansion House. This was four miles from the main Seneca village, but there were scattered huts all the way down the creek from that