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**BIOGRAPHY.**

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SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF THE LATE  
BARON STEUBEN.

(CONCLUDED.)

General Greene said well, that the fate of Virginia, depended on the success of our arms in the Carolinas. That success was very near the Baron's heart; he had a personal attachment to Gen. Greene, and the highest respect for his talents: and certainly he exerted himself to the utmost to fulfil his engagements with him; though he soon felt that he did his duty at the expense of his popularity. It could not be pleasant to the Virginians to see, in such a time of danger, their defences lessening every day. Nor did the Baron's zeal permit him, on every occasion, to act with that mildness and caution, so necessary to be observed by military commanders, in a republic, and among free citizens. Men sufficient to form a regiment had, with much pains, been collected together at Chesterfield court-house. The corps was paraded, and on the point of marching, when a well looking man, on horseback, and as it appeared, his servant, on another, rode up and introducing himself, informed the Baron that he had brought him a recruit. I thank you, sir, said the Baron, with all my heart; you have arrived in a happy moment! Where is your man, Colonel? for he was a colonel in the militia—Here, sir, ordering his boy to dismount. The Baron's countenance altered;—we saw, and feared the approaching storm. A sergeant was ordered to measure the lad, whose shoes, when off, discovered something by which his stature had been increased. The Baron patting the child's head, with his hand trembling with rage, asked him how old he was? He was very young, quite a child. Sir, said he, to the man, you must have supposed me to be a rascal! Oh! no, Baron, I did not. Then, sir, I suppose you to be a rascal, an infamous rascal thus to attempt to cheat your country. Take off this fellow's spurs—place him in the ranks;—and tell Gen. Greene, from me, Col. Gaskins, that I have sent him a man, able to serve, instead of an infant, whom he would basely have made his substitute! Go, my boy, take the Colonel's spurs and horses to his wife;—make my compliments, and say her husband has gone to fight for the freedom of his country, as an honest man should do. By platoons! to the right wheel! forward march! Colonel Gaskins, fearing the consequence, let the man escape, on the arrival of the corps at the river Roanoke; nor was he tardy in returning, and making application to the civil authority for redress. But Governor Jefferson, Mr. Madison, and other gentlemen of the council, not doubting the purity of the Baron's motive, and fully appreciating his honest zeal, prevented any disagreeable results attending this high handed exertion of military power. When Arnold landed in Virginia, there was nothing to oppose him—a few militia hastily called together, and a troop of Armand's cavalry, mutinous for want of pay, and every necessary, were the whole force. A feeble attempt was made, at a pass near James' River, to oppose his progress, but without effect. He marched on, and civil and military scattered before him. After destroying and stealing whatever there was time and opportunity to steal and destroy, he retreated towards his vessels. Phillips arrived with reinforcements, and marched towards the capital; a few more militia were collected; a show of resistance was made at Petersburg, by the Baron; some lives lost and a retreat ordered. The Legislature, with the public functionaries, had gone to Charlottesville, near the mountains. The Baron followed in their rear to the Point of Fork, many miles above Richmond, where the arsenal of the state had been placed, as in a state of perfect security. Notice was, however, soon given that Simcoe and Tarleton were advancing. One of the Baron's aids-de-camp was made prisoner. The artillery and stores were chiefly saved, by being crossed over the river. Tarleton, missing his stroke at the Baron, pushed on to Charlottesville. The Governor and Legislature fled, and it would have been the height of folly to have remained. Mr. Jefferson, has not been dealt fairly with, for his conduct on that occasion—There was nothing to protect him, or them, and it would not have been a mark, either of patriotism, or of common sense, or courage, to have thrown himself into the arms of the enemy. It is true, the Baron had, at this time, collected about 500 militia, if I recollect right, and there was another body of the same kind of troops, under a General Lawson, some 70 miles distant. The Baron's men, I know, were barefooted, badly armed, and totally ignorant of almost every thing which a soldier should know.

The enemy, after doing all the mischief in their power, retired from the upper country. Cornwallis had arrived from the southward; and the Marquis de la Fayette, with a respectable force, from the northward. The Baron had no desire to put himself under the command of this officer, whose rank, in Europe, had been that of lieutenant only, and for whom he entertained no cordial regard. With a body blotched all over, with the diseases of the country, and a mind harassed and chagrined, he retired to Albemarle county, where, fortunate in the society of two or three respectable gentlemen, he remained, until he was informed by General Washington, of his approach to Virginia. At the siege of York, (and he was, I believe, the only officer in the American army, who had ever assisted at a siege,) he had the com-

mand of a division; and was fortunate in receiving the first overtures of Lord Cornwallis, during his tour of duty, in the trenches. At the relieving hour, next morning, the Marquis approached with his division; the Baron refused to be relieved, assigning as a reason, the etiquette in Europe; that the offer to capitulate had been made during his guard, and that it was a point of honor, of which he would not deprive his troops, to remain in the trenches till the capitulation was signed, or hostilities re-commenced. The dispute was referred to the Commander in Chief—the Baron remained until the British flag was struck.—Wayne was with him—The fact is fixed in my memory by a circumstance that happened at the time—a shell, thrown from the enemy, fell near them; the Baron threw himself into the trench—Wayne, in the jeopardy and hurry of the moment, fell on him; the Baron, turning his eyes, saw it was his Brigadier—I always knew you were brave, General, said he, but I did not know that you were so perfect in every point of duty; you cover your General's retreat, in the best manner possible. The capture of Lord Cornwallis, closed the campaign. The Baron returned to the northward and remained with the army, continually employed, till the peace in perfecting its discipline;—and indeed, the army arrived at an high point of knowledge. The adroitness, and above all, the silence, with which manoeuvres were performed, was remarked with astonishment by the officers of the French army. The Marquis de la Val de Montmorency, said to the Baron, I admire the celerity, and exactitude with which your men perform; but what I cannot conceive, is, the profound silence with which they manoeuvre! I do not know, Mons. le Marquis, from whence noise should proceed, when even my Brigadiers dare not open their mouths, but to repeat the order. Ah! ha! Mons. General, vociferates the Marquis, *Je vous comprend, Je vous comprend.* The French troops were exceedingly loud in their evolutions and marches, and Mons. la Val, at all times louder than the rest.

On a subsequent occasion, designed to show the high degree of expertness at which our officers and soldiers had arrived, when an intended grand exhibition had been postponed in consequence of a violent storm, the Baron was asked by one of the French Generals, who, with others, had retired with him to his marquee, what manoeuvres he had intended to perform? The General was informed, but with a *non chalance*, calculated to induce a belief that it was the first moment the business had been thought on. Yes, said the French Chief, I have seen, particularly the last you mentioned, by the Prussians, in Silesia, but with a very complex addition, which he explained. Yes, answered the Baron, but you will recollect, General, that we are not quite Prussians. *C'est vrai, cest vrai, mais avec le temps*, said the General. After his guests had retired, the Baron muttered, *cest vrai, cest vrai, avec le temps!* I will let these Frenchmen know, that we can do, what the Prussians can, and what their army cannot do. Get the order for review, said he, to one of his aids, set down and add as I dictate—I will save those gentlemen who have not been in Silesia, the trouble of going there—They may come to Verplanck's Point, next week, for instruction, with their *avec le temps!* They came, Chiefs and Subalterns, on horseback and on foot, for their encampment was but a few miles off, and every thing was done in the finest style, to their real or pretended admiration. Alas! when I think of time past, of that day, and look to that eminence, on which General Washington's marquee was pitched, in front of which stood that great man, firm in the consciousness of virtue, surrounded by French Nobles, and the Chiefs of his own army; when I cast my eyes, then lighted up with soldierly ambition, hope and joy, along that lengthened line, my brothers all! endeared by ties made strong by full communion in many a miserable, many a joyous hour, my heart sinks at the view! Who, how few, of all that brilliant host, is left: those few now tottering on the confines of the grave! The Baron's tent, that day, was filled, and more than filled, with Frenchmen. I am glad, said he, to pay some part of the dinner debt, we owe our allies. At the siege of York, or rather immediately afterwards, he sold such part of his camp equipage, brought from Europe, as was of silver, that he might give a feast. I can stand it no longer, said he, we are continually dining with those people, and cannot give a piece of *brot wurst* in return—they shall have one grand dinner, if I eat my soup with a wooden spoon forever after.—The Baron had a full share of honorable pride—he could not receive without a wish and hope to return. In thought and act he was indeed most liberal and most kind. On the eve of returning to the northward, from Virginia, I must go, said he to a sick aid-de-camp—I must leave you, my son, but I leave you among a people where we have found the door of every house wide open: where the heart of every female is full of tenderness and virtue. Quit this deleterious spot, the instant you are able—there is my sulkey, and here is half of what I have; God bless you, I can do no more. Nor could he—the feelings of friends in such a moment, and under such circumstances, may possibly be conceived, but not expressed. A journey of three hundred miles was before him, a single piece of gold in his purse. Are other instances necessary to unfold the texture of his heart? how many have I, written on my own! There is, I trust, a book in which they, every one of them, are entered, to the credit of his account with heaven. General Washington had a high esteem for the Baron, and was fully sensible of his worth and

merits. On all proper occasions, Congress was urged in his behalf—and from time to time he received of money, good and bad, sums, which some narrow minded men, thought much too large. Elbridge Gerry, and I state it with pleasure, was always liberal in his behalf. Would to Heaven, that Mr. Gore's efforts, in favor of that revolutionary patriot's poor wife and children, had been successful. But what sums, how much, could have been enough for one, who searched around for worthy objects, whose wants might be relieved? Never did a review, or an inspection pass without rewards in money, to soldiers, whose arms were in the highest order. Never was his table unfiled with guests, if furnished with provisions. Officers of rank, men most prominent for knowledge and attention to their duty, were marked for invitation; but the gentlemen of his family were desired to complete the list with others of inferior grade;—poor fellows, said he, they have sold officers' stomachs, without their rations. In the society of ladies, the Baron appeared to great advantage. He engaged in their amusements, and by his wit and pleasantry, the delights of the evening were increased. His stern look and stentorian voice were only for the field. Ah! said an old man who had been a captain, and then, in 1786, kept a public house, near Utica, how glad I am to see you, Baron, in my house; but I used to be dreadfully afraid of you! How so, Captain? You hallooed and swore, and looked so dreadfully at me once, Baron, that I shall never forget it. O fie, fie, done Captain. It was bad to be sure, said he, but you did halloo most tremendously! Notwithstanding the bodily fear the Captain had been put in, his look and actions shewed, that there was not a man on earth whom he would have been more rejoiced to see at his table. It is true, the Baron was rough as the ocean in a storm, when great faults were committed; but if, in a sudden gust of passion, he had injured, the redress was ample. I recollect, that at a review near Morristown, a Lieutenant Gibbons, a brave and good officer, was arrested on the spot, and ordered into the rear, for a fault, which it afterwards appeared another had committed. At a proper moment, the commander of the regiment came forward and informed the Baron of Mr. Gibbons' innocence, of his worth, and of his acute feelings under this unmerited disgrace. Desire Lieutenant Gibbons to come to the front, Colonel. Sir, said the Baron, to the young gentleman, the fault which was made, by throwing the line into confusion, might, in the presence of an enemy, have been fatal. I arrested you as its supposed author, but I have reason to believe that I was mistaken, and that in this instance you were blameless: I ask your pardon; return to your command—I would not deal unjustly by any, much less by one whose character, as an officer, is so respectable. All this passed with the Baron's hat off, the rain pouring on his reverend head! Do you think there was an officer, a soldier who saw it, unmoved with affection and respect? Not one.

Though never perfectly master of our language, the Baron understood and spoke it with sufficient correctness—He would sometimes of purpose miscall names, and blend or adopt words similar in sound, dissimilar in meaning. Dining at Head Quarters, which he did frequently, Mrs. Washington asked what amusement he had recourse to now that the certainty of peace had relaxed his labours? I read, my lady, and write, and play chess, and yesterday, for the first time, I went a fishing. My gentlemen told me it was a very fine business to catch fish, and I did not know but that this new trade might, by and by, be useful to me—but I fear I never can succeed—I sat in the boat three hours, it was exceedingly warm, and I caught only two fish; they told me it was fine sport. What kind of fish did you take, Baron? I am not sure my lady, but I think one of them was a whale. A whale, Baron, in the North River! Yes, I assure you, a very fine whale, my Lady—it was a whale, was it not? appealing to one of his Aids. An eel, Baron. I beg your pardon, my Lady, but that Gentleman certainly told me that it was a whale. General Washington, now that his mind was comparatively at ease, enjoyed a pleasantry of this kind highly. I have seen him laugh with all his heart, at Doctor Thomas's story of the Yankee, his countryman, who had journeyed from Taunton, to see Count Rochambeau's army: "The cursed fools who called an hat a chapeau; why could't they call it hat at once and done with it."

At the house of the respectable Mrs. Livingston, mother of the late Chancellor, where virtue, talent and modest worth of every kind, met a welcome, the Baron was introduced to a Miss Sheaff, an amiable and interesting young lady. I am very happy, said he, in the honor of being presented to you, Mademoiselle, though I see—it is at an infinite risk—I have, from my youth, been cautioned to guard myself against *mischief*, but I had no idea that her attractions were so powerful.

At the disbandment of the revolutionary army, when inmates of the same tent or hut for seven long years, were separating, and probably forever; grasping each other's hand, in silent agony—I saw the Baron's strong endeavors to throw some ray of sun-shine on the gloom, to mix some drop of cordial with the painful draught. To go, they knew not whither; all recollection of the art to thrive by civil occupations lost, or to the youthful never known. Their hard earned military knowledge was then useless, and with their badge of brotherhood, a mark at which to point the finger of suspicion—ignoble, vile suspicion! to be

cast out upon a world, long since by them forgotten. Severed from friends, and all the joys and griefs which soldiers feel! Grievs, while hope remained—when shared by numbers, almost joys! To go in silence, and alone, and poor and hopeless; It was too hard! On that sad day how many hearts were wrung! I saw it all, nor will the scene be ever blurred or blotted from my view. To a stern old officer, a Lieut. Colonel Cochran, from the Green Mountains, who had met danger and difficulty almost in every step, from his youth, and on whose furrowed visage, a tear until that moment had never fallen; the good Baron said—what could be said, to lessen deep distress! For myself, said Cochran, I care not, I can stand it; but my wife and daughters are in the garret of that wretched tavern—I know not where to remove, nor have I means for their removal. Come, my friend, said the Baron, set us go—I will pay my respects to Mrs. Cochran and your daughters, if you please. I followed to the left, the lower rooms being all filled with soldiers, with drunkenness, despair and blasphemy. And when the Baron left the poor unhappy cast-aways, he left hope with them, and all he had to give. A black man, with wounds unhealed, wept on the wharf—(for it was at Newburgh where this tragedy was acting) there was a vessel in the stream, bound to the place where he once had friends. He had not a dollar with which to pay his passage, and he could not walk. Where found or borrowed I know not, but the Baron soon returned—the negro hailed the sloop, and cried God Almighty bless you, master Baron!

But why do I retail these scraps of his benevolence, when all who knew him, and were worthy, knew him as their friend. What good and honorable man, civil or military, before the accursed party-spirit, murdered friendships, did not respect and love the Baron! Who most? those who knew him best.

It is time to quit these recollections, to me most dear, to those who knew him not, perhaps, of little worth—The actors in the revolutionary war alone, can feel themselves connected with its anecdotes or story. After the peace, the Baron retired to a farm in the vicinity of New-York, where, with forming a system for the organization and discipline of the militia—books, chess, and the frequent visits of his numerous friends, he passed his time as agreeably as a frequent want of funds would permit.

The State of New-Jersey had given him a small improved farm; and the state of New-York, then under the administration of Governor Clinton, gave him a tract of sixteen thousand acres of land in the county of Oneida; and after the General Government was in full operation, under the new constitution, by the exertions of Colonel Hamilton, patronized and enforced by President Washington, and a few liberal and powerful men in Congress, a grant of two thousand five hundred dollars per annum, was made to him for life. After this, the summers were chiefly spent on his lands, and his winters in the city. His 16,000 acres, it is true, were in the wilderness; but they were his, and he was lord and master of the soil. He built a convenient log-house, cleared sixty acres, parcelled out his land on easy terms, to some twenty or thirty tenants—distributed nearly a tenth of the tract in gifts to his Aids-de-camp, and servants, and sat himself down, to a certain degree, contented, without society, except that of a young gentleman, who read to and with him. His farm and garden offered him some pleasurable moments; but his library was the chief solace of the day. This state of inaction, was undoubtedly unfriendly to health—He ate only at dinner, but he ate with strong appetite. In drinking, he was always temperate; indeed he was free from every vicious habit. His powers of mind and body were strong, and he had received, to a certain extent, a liberal education. His days were undoubtedly shortened by his sedentary mode of life. He was struck with an apoplexy, which in a few hours was fatal. Would to God! but, it is no matter—the little time that parts us from our friends will soon be passed. Agreeably to his desire, often expressed, he was "wrapped in his cloak," placed in a plain coffin, and hid in the earth, "without a stone to tell where he lies." A few neighbors, his servants, the young gentleman his late companion, and one on whom, for 15 years, his countenance never ceased to beam with kindness, followed to the grave. It was in a thick and lonely wood; but in a few years after, a public highway was laid and opened near, or over the hallowed sod! Walker snatched the poor remains of his dear friend from sacrilegious violation, and gave a bounty to protect the grave in which he laid them, from rude and impious intrusion.

Some few years previous to the Baron's death, a pious gentleman of the city of New-York, who had a great affection for him, told me, with strong marks of joy, that they had passed the evening, and a part of last night together.—That the Baron confessed his full belief in Jesus Christ, with sure and certain hope, through him, of a blessed immortality. From the life our dear friend had led, in camps and in the gay world, said the good man, I feared; and you do not know what joy I feel, in the belief that he will be well to all eternity! The Baron was a member of the Reformed German Church in New-York. He died in 1795, in the sixty-fifth year of his age.

But it is time to close—and thus, Sir, you have these recollections, hastily thrown together, with all their imperfections. I would they were in better form, and that this Sketch were more worthy the memory of my benefactor and friend.—Many years have elapsed, and left their effects