



"Ours are the plans of fair, delightful Peace,
"Unwarp'd by party rage, to live like Brothers."

From Johnson's Memoirs.

PARENTAGE AND EARLY LIFE OF GENERAL GREENE.

The order of the commander in chief, which assigned Gen. Nathaniel Greene to the command of the Southern department, bears date the 14th of October, 1780. Until that period, his standing in the army was of the first order in respectability; he enjoyed the confidence of Washington and of the country, and had ever discharged the duties of the man and the soldier with fidelity and ability. But no opportunities had yet been afforded him of displaying those eminent talents which then broke upon the American people, and exhibited a splendour of military character excelled only by him whom none can equal.

The subject of these memoirs was at that time in the thirty-ninth year of his age. His stature about five feet ten or eleven inches; his frame vigorous and well proportioned; his port erect and commanding; nor was his martial appearance diminished by a slight obstruction in the motion of his right leg, contracted in early life. The general character of his face was that of manly beauty. His fair and florid complexion had not entirely yielded to the exposure of five campaigns; nor was a slight blemish in the right eye observed, but to excite regret that it did not equal the benevolent expression and brilliancy of the left. Such is the portrait of the man whom we are to follow through these pages. His manners were uniformly consonant to the gravity of his character and dignity of his station. Yet he could be cheerful even to playfulness, and his intercourse with the world was marked with that unaffected urbanity of manners which flows from the politeness of the heart. Whether grave or gay, he could accommodate himself to society, with a grace and facility which may be acquired from long and general intercourse with polite circles, but which in him is to be attributed to rapid observation, a quick perception of propriety, and a mind well stored with sound and useful information.

Advantages, in early life, he had none; born and raised in obscurity, without education and without society, he exhibited a striking instance of what good examples, sound principles, native genius, and above all, industrious habits and a careful improvement of time, can accomplish.

His first appearance on the arena of the revolution, was at the siege of Boston. He then commanded the Rhode-Island contingent of troops, raised under the recommendation of the Congress of 1774. Until that time, he had scarcely emerged from the narrow limits of his native state. Yet, although in the contingents of the states, there were many men of polite and liberal education, he appeared inferior to no one. He conversed with ease and elegance; though not forward in eliciting conversation, he shrank not under a consciousness of deficiency; and in soundness of judgment; knowledge of his profession, and neatness of diction in his correspondence, he was inferior to very few. Yet all knew that his connections were of the religious sect of Quakers, and that his early days had been sedulously devoted to the most laborious occupations. But until then, they did not know, that his vigorous mind had risen superior to early prejudice; that from his sleep or his meals he had stolen time to acquire a considerable share of polite learning; and by denying himself the most ordinary indulgences, he had acquired a respectable library, and with its contents had stored an herculean memory, which never was known to relinquish its acquisitions.

His stern integrity and devotedness to religious and political liberty he had acquired in a country planted by the victims or the exiles of persecution; or had inherited from an ancestry proverbially devoted to the assertion of equal rights, who had also cruelly felt and traditionally commemorated, the evils of oppression.

The protosire of our Hero (who, in the family, is emphatically styled the General,) was John Greene, one of the followers of the persecuted Gorton, who, in the year 1640, fled from the fanatics of Boston, and sought an asylum on the west side of the Narraganset (then called Nanhynganset) Bay. The land, originally purchased by him of the Indians, is still in the family; for it is consecrated by the tombs of the fathers. And the original conveyance from the headmen of the Narraganset Nation is still shown, as the indisputable evidence of the fairness of the acquirement. It is situated in the tract of country now known by the epithet of Warwick Neck, originally called Shaw-omit. It is in the township of Warwick, and near the town of that name. But the place of the General's nativity, is some miles distant from it, and on the opposite side of an arm of the Narraganset Bay. In all the biographical notices of Gen. Greene, the town of Warwick is said to have been the place of his nativity. This is correct in the language of the Eastern States, in which "town" means a district, or municipal division of country, synonymous with "township." The place of his nativity is, in fact, included within the township of Warwick, because the western line crosses the basin of East-Greenwich, and comprises the opposite fauces of the bay or harbor. But the town of Warwick, properly so called, is some miles distant to the north of the Potowome Mills.

To the west of this bay, and a beautiful little basin, stands the town of East-Greenwich. This basin is formed by two small streams, the principal of which still retains the Indian name of Potowome, or Potow-omit; the former being probably an abbreviation of the latter. On this stream, and near to where it empties itself into the basin, at the distance of about two miles south-east of East-Greenwich, stand the Potowome Mills, and this is the place of the nativity of the General. The house is a comfortable

stone building, of one story, and is still occupied by his respectable and hospitable brothers. And the forge, at which for many a year he cheerfully toiled as an anchor-smith, together with the mill, which, with a book in his hand, he attended as a respite from labor, although exhibiting strong symptoms of remote antiquity, are still in active operation. Here, the curious traveller will be shown the humble spot where labor strung the nerves and the mind of a Cincinnatus; and here, too, he will behold the rude forge at which, when a mere boy, he consumed the hours in which industry may rest, in making an axe, or repairing some implement of husbandry, to acquire a pittance for purchasing some book that he had heard of, and sighed to possess.

He who views these objects without a deep sense of humiliation, must be well assured, that he has not enjoyed superior opportunities, or has not abused them. Among the most instructive and useful lessons in life, is that of a superior mind, guided by sound principles, struggling against the united disadvantages of poverty, obscurity and prejudice, rising superior to every difficulty, and emerging to fame and to utility.

There are some incidents respecting the early history of the settlement of this family in Rhode-Island, which merit attention, not only from their singularity, but from their probable effect in giving a bent to the genius, and origin to the sentiments and principles which governed the conduct of our Hero. It is true, the hereditary transmission of talents or principles is exploded every where, except when necessary to console family pride, or perpetuate political delusion; but, place a family in a situation remote from active intercourse with the world, and the examples and opinions of an ancestor may be transmitted through many generations, and give a tone and character to his posterity.

Such was the situation to which this family was consigned, and to this day there remains, at least among the elder branches, something of primeval simplicity in principles and manners which is seldom to be met with.

The State of Rhode-Island was originally settled by religious sectarians, who sought in the wilderness, for that freedom of conscience, or of speculation, which was denied them in the parent colony of Massachusetts. Although the settlers of the latter colony had fled from the persecutions which disgraced England in the commencement of the seventeenth century, yet scarcely had they effected a settlement in their place of refuge, before they exhibited an additional proof that fanaticism, whether in a city or a wilderness, is still cruel, selfish, and tyrannical; or that the corrupting influence of power may taint even the purity of the Christian religion.

Roger Williams was the first who fled, and led off with him a colony to found the city of Providence. Next Mrs. Hutchinson and her followers acquired and settled the Island of Aquinet, or Rhode-Island proper, and built the town of Newport. And lastly, Samuel Gorton, and his eleven followers, descending the Narraganset Bay on the west side, settled on Warwick Neck.

This flourishing little abode of heresy and toleration soon inflamed the religious or official zeal of Governor Winthrop. And a Captain Cook, with an armed party of twelve Gorton's number, was dispatched with strict orders "to bring the heretics to Boston, dead or alive." At the head of this crusade in miniature, marched a holy man, with strict injunctions to keep his soldiers regularly to their prayers, and to explain to Gorton and his deluded followers, the whole enormity of their errors—before they were put to death. What those errors were it is immaterial to relate. Suffice it to say, they had reference to the most abstruse and speculative doctrines, and were wholly immaterial to Christian piety or a good life.

Gorton persisted sturdily in the argument against the nuncio of Winthrop; and thinking he had the best of it, refused to acknowledge himself convinced. Cook accordingly gave the word for the onset, and that Greene, the protosire of our Hero, was not then a Quaker, is proved by their having made a brave resistance against the Massachusetts men, until resistance was hopeless. They were made prisoners and conveyed to Boston. The women and children were dispersed in the woods, and as it was at a time when the ground was covered with snow, several of them actually perished—the rest of these helpless fugitives, after sustaining incredible hardships, were protected, clothed and hospitably entertained—by Savages. But the effect of these kind offices of the Aborigines of the country is seen at this day. The Narraganset tribe of Indians, still about five hundred strong, is the only nation, which, from Maine to Georgia, can boast of a national existence, and the least advancement to civilization. They owe their preservation to Gorton and his followers; & there is good reason to believe, more particularly to Greene.

Gorton was actually condemned to die; and his followers, after many ineffectual attempts to make them renounce their errors, were ultimately, *ex mero motu*, pardoned on condition that they should never again settle on the Narraganset Bay.

But, much to the credit of the people of Boston, popular sentiment appears to have been excited in favor of Gorton, and

their fanatical Governor was at length obliged to release his victim.
(To be continued.)

AN ACCOUNT

Of the late intended Insurrection among a portion of the Blacks of Charleston, South-Carolina.

On Thursday the 30th of May last, about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the Intendant of Charleston was informed by a gentleman of great respectability, (who, that morning, had returned from the country) that a favorite and confidential slave of his had communicated to him, on his arrival in town, a conversation which had taken place at the market on the Saturday preceding, between himself and a black man; which afforded strong reasons for believing that a revolt and insurrection were in contemplation among a proportion at least of our black population. The Corporation was forthwith summoned to meet at 5 o'clock, for the purpose of hearing the narrative of the slave who had given this information to his master, to which meeting the attendance of His Excellency the Governor was solicited; with which invitation he promptly complied. Between, however, the hours of 3 and 5 o'clock, the gentleman who had conveyed the information to the Intendant, having again examined his slave, was induced to believe, that the negro fellow who had communicated the intelligence of the intended revolt to the slave in question, belonged to Messrs. J. & D. Paul, Broad Street, and resided in their premises. Accordingly, with a promptitude worthy of all praise, without waiting for the interposition of the civil authority, he applied to the Messrs. Paul's and had the whole of their male servants committed to the Guard-House, until the individual who had accosted the slave of this gentleman, on the occasion previously mentioned, could be identified from among them.

On the assembling of the Corporation at five, the slave of this gentleman was bro't before them, having previously identified Mr. Paul's William as the man who had accosted him in the market, he then related the following circumstances:

"On Saturday afternoon last, (my master being out of town) I went to market; after finishing my business I strolled down the wharf below the fish market, from which I observed a small vessel in the stream with a singular flag; whilst looking at this object, a black man, (Mr. Paul's William) came up to me and remarking the subject which engaged my attention, said, I have often seen a flag with the number 76 on it, but never with 96 before. After some trifling conversation on this point, he remarked with considerable earnestness to me. Do you know that something serious is about to take place? To which I replied no. Well, said he, there is, and many of us are determined to fight ourselves! I asked him to explain himself—when he remarked, why, we are determined to shake off our bondage, and for this purpose we stand on a good foundation, many have joined, and if you will go with me, I will show you the man who has the list of names, who will take you down.—I was so much astonished and horror struck at this information, that it was a moment or two before I could collect myself sufficiently to tell him I would have nothing to do with this business, that I was satisfied with my condition, that I was grateful to my master for his kindness, and wished no change. I left him instantly, lest, if this fellow afterwards got into trouble, and I had been seen conversing with him, in so public a place, I might be suspected and thrown into difficulty. I did not, however, remain easy under the burden of such a secret, and consequently determined to consult a free man of color named — and to ask his advice. On conferring with this friend, he urged me with great earnestness to communicate what had passed between Mr. Paul's man and myself to my master, and not to lose a moment in so doing. I took his advice, and not waiting, even for the return of my master to town, I mentioned it to my mistress and young master. On the arrival of my master, he examined me as to what had passed, and I stated to him what I have mentioned to yourselves."

On this witness being dismissed from the presence of Council, the prisoner (William) was examined. The mode resorted to in his examination was to afford him no intimation of the subject of the information which had been lodged against him, as it was extremely desirable in the first place, to have the testimony of the other witness corroborated as to time and place, that, from the confessions of the prisoner himself, it might appear that he was at the fish market at the period stated, and that a singular flag, flying on board of a schooner, had formed the subject of his observation. After a vast deal of equivocation, he admitted all these facts, but when the rest of his conversation was put home to him, he flatly denied it, but with so many obvious indications of guilt,

* It would be a libel on the liberality and gratitude of this community to suppose that this man can be overlooked among those who are to be rewarded for their fidelity and principle.

that it was deemed unwise to discharge him. He was remanded, for the night, to the Guard-House, it having been decided to subject him to solitary confinement in the black-hole of the Work-House, where, on the succeeding morning, he was to be conveyed.

On the morning of the 31st he was again examined by the attending Warden at the Guard-House (having, during the night, made some disclosures to Capt. Dove) on which occasion he admitted all the conversation which he had held at the fish-market, with the witness before mentioned, and stated that he had received his information from Mingo Harth, who was in possession of the muster-roll of the insurgents.

With the hope of still further disclosures William was conveyed to the Work-House and placed in solitary confinement. The individuals (Mingo Harth and Peter Poyas) against whom he gave information, as those who had communicated to him the intelligence of the plot for raising an insurrection, were forthwith taken up by the Wardens and their trunks examined. These fellows behaved with so much composure and coolness, and treated the charge alleged against them, with so much levity—(no writings being found in their chests, containing the smallest suspicion, excepting an enigmatical letter,* which was then too obscure for explanation, and to which subsequent events only afforded a clue)—that the Wardens (Messrs. Wesner & Condy) were completely deceived, and had these men discharged. One of these (Peter Poyas) proved afterwards, as will appear in the sequel, to be one of the principal ringleaders in the conspiracy, on whose courage and sagacity great reliance was placed.

Council being still under conviction that William Paul was in possession of more information than he had thought proper to disclose, a Committee was appointed to examine him from time to time, with the hope of obtaining further intelligence.—Although Peter and Mingo had been discharged, yet it was deemed advisable to have them watched, consequently spies were employed of their own color for this purpose, in such a manner as to give advice of all their movements.

Things remained in this state for six or seven days, until about the 8th of June, when William, who had been a week in solitary confinement, beginning to fear that he would soon be led forth to the scaffold, for summary execution, in an interview with Mr. Napier, (one of the Committee appointed to examine him) confessed, that he had for some time known of the plot; that it was very extensive, embracing an indiscriminate massacre of the whites, and that the blacks were to be headed by an individual, who carried about him a charm which rendered him invulnerable. He stated, that the period fixed for the rising, was on the second Sunday in June. This information was without delay conveyed to his Excellency & the Governor & Council forthwith convened. Whatever faith we might have been disposed to place in the unsupported and equivocal testimony of William, it was not conceived to be a case in which our doubts should influence our efforts for preparation and defence. Measures were consequently promptly taken, to place the City Guard in a state of the utmost efficiency. Sixteen hundred rounds of ball cartridges were provided, and the sentinels and patrols ordered on duty with loaded arms. Such had been our fancied security, that the guard had previously gone on duty without muskets, with sheathed bayonets and bludgeons.

Three or four days now elapsed, and notwithstanding all our efforts, we could obtain no confirmation of the disclosures of William, on the contrary, they seemed to have sustained some invalidation, from the circumstance, of one of the individuals (Ned Bennett) whom he named as a person who had information in relation to the insurrection, coming voluntarily to the Intendant, and soliciting an examination, if he was an object of suspicion. In this stage of the business, it was not deemed advisable prematurely to press these examinations, as it might have a tendency to arrest any further developments.

On the night, however, of Friday the 14th, the information of William was amply confirmed, and details infinitely more abundant and interesting afforded. At 8 o'clock on this evening, the Intendant received a visit from a gentleman, who is advantageously known in this community for his worth and respectability.

This gentleman, with an anxiety, which the occasion was well calculated to beget, stated to the Intendant, that, having the most unbounded confidence in a faithful slave belonging to his family, who was distinguished alike for his uncommon intelligence and integrity, he was induced to inform him, that rumours were abroad of an intended insurrection of the blacks, and it was said, that this movement had been traced to some of the colored members of Dr. Palmer's Church, in which he was known to be a class leader. On being strongly enjoined to conceal nothing, he, the next day, Friday the 14th, came to his master, and informed him, that the fact was really so, that a public distur-

* The purport of this letter will be seen by reference to the trial of Abraham Poyas.

bance was contemplated by the blacks, and not a moment should be lost in informing the constituted authorities, as the succeeding Sunday, the 16th, at 12 o'clock at night, was the period fixed for the rising, which, if not prevented, would inevitably occur at that hour. This slave, it appears, was in no degree connected with the plot, but he had an intimate friend, A— (one of his class) who had been trusted by the conspirators with the secret, and had been solicited by them to join their association; to this A— first appeared to consent, but, at no period absolutely sent in his adhesion. According to the statement which he afterwards made himself to the Court, it would seem that it was a subject of great regret and contrition with him, that he had ever appeared to lend his approbation to a scheme so wicked and atrocious, and that he sought occasion to make atonement, by divulging the plot, which on the 14th he did, to the slave of the gentleman in question, his class leader.

This gentleman, therefore, mentioned, that this servant had informed him, that A— had stated, that about 3 months ago, Rolla, belonging to Governor Bennett, had communicated to him the intelligence of the intended insurrection, and had asked him to join—"That he remarked, in the event of their rising, they would not be without help, as the people from San Domingo and Africa would assist them in obtaining their liberty, if they only made the motion first themselves.—That if A— wished to know more, he had better attend their meetings, where all would be disclosed." After this, at another interview, Rolla informed A—, that "the plan was matured, and that on Sunday night, the 16th June, a force would cross from James Island and land on South Bay, march up and seize the Arsenal and Guard-House, that another body at the same time would seize the Arsenal on the Neck, and a third would rendezvous in the vicinity of his master's mills. They would then sweep the town with fire and sword, not permitting a single white soul to escape."

As this account was remarkably coincident with the one given by William (Mr. Paul's slave) as the witnesses could have had no possible communication, or the story had been the result of preconcert and combination, the sum of this intelligence was laid before the Governor by 9 o'clock; and by 10 o'clock the commanding officers of the regiments of the city militia, convened at His Excellency's order, at the residence of the Intendant. On this and the succeeding afternoon, at another meeting of the same individuals, such measures were determined on by his Excellency, as were deemed best adapted to the approaching exigency of Sunday night.

On Sunday the 16th, at 10 o'clock at night, the following corps were ordered to rendezvous for guard:

Capt. Cattel's corps of Hussars, Capt. Miller's Light Infantry, Capt. Marindale's Neck Rangers, Charleston Riflemen, and City Guard.

The whole were organized as a detachment, and placed under the command of Col. R. Y. Hayne. Although there was necessarily great excitement, and among the female part of our community much alarm, yet the night passed off without any thing like commotion or disturbance, and it is peculiarly honorable to the corps on service, that in a populous town, the streets filled until a late hour with persons, uncertain whether it was safe to go to rest or not, not a single case of false alarm was excited. A steadiness altogether praiseworthy, in troops unaccustomed to guard duty, at least on an occasion involving such deep interest and distressing anxiety.

The conspirators finding the whole town encompassed at 10 o'clock, by the most vigilant patrols, did not dare to show themselves, whatever might have been their plans. In the progress of the subsequent investigation, it was distinctly in proof, that but for these military demonstrations, the effort would unquestionably have been made; that a meeting took place on Sunday afternoon, the 16th, at 4 o'clock, of several of the ringleaders, at Denmark Vesey's, for the purpose of making their preliminary arrangements, and that early in the morning of Sunday, Denmark despatched a courier, to order down some country negroes from Goose Creek, which courier had endeavored in vain to get out of town.

No development of the plot having been made on Sunday night, and the period having passed, which was fixed on for its explosion, it now became the duty of the civil authority to take immediate steps for the apprehension, commitment, and trial of those against whom they were in possession of information. Council was accordingly convened, and as a preliminary measure, it was deemed expedient, that a Court of the highest respectability, for the talents and integrity of its members, should be assembled, and that, whilst the requisitions of the act of Assembly of 1740, should be strictly complied with, in

* Most of the black religious communities in this place, are divided into classes, over which a Leader is placed, having the confidence of the Pastor of the Church.

† This witness gave the information under a pledge, that his name should not be divulged.