

(<sup>18</sup>Watkins)  
 He material from  
 the executive offices  
 in this book were  
 furnished by Daniel  
 Green Thompson - (a  
 grandson of yours, being  
 descended from William  
 Thompson - just as you  
 are). He was a  
 noted historian of this  
 area.

Daniel

THE WOMEN

OF THE

AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

BY ELIZABETH F. ELLET.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

NEW YORK:  
 BAKER AND SCRIBNER,  
 145 NASSAU STREET AND 30 PARK ROW.  
 1850

might have a proper effect upon that nest of Covenanters ! He pleased himself with imagining the surprise of Isabella when she should see how much better he looked in a splendid uniform than in tow trowsers and hunting-shirt. In the afternoon of the first day's march, the cavalcade of New York regulars and South Carolina loyalists approached the house of old Barber. A messenger was despatched to say that Col. Ferguson of His Majesty's army wished to speak with Samuel. Samuel presently made his appearance, looking rather awkward, and his brother, in a formal address, invited him to join him, saying he had come for that special purpose. "It may be,"—he urged, "that I shall be made a lord ; how then should I feel in hearing it said my brother was a rebel ?"

Isabella was within hearing while the Colonel was endeavoring to persuade her husband, and came forward at the last word. "I am a rebel!" she said proudly—as glorying in the name:—"my brothers are rebels, and the dog Trip is a rebel too ! Now, James, I would rather see you with a sheep on your back, than tricked out in all those fine clothes ! Above all, I am told you have our minister chained by the foot like a felon ! Rebel and be free ! that is my creed !" Then turning to her husband, "we have often talked it over, Samuel," she said, "and you could never justify their unhallowed practices—coming here to make slaves of us who would die first, and plundering, stealing cows, and the like. Now, in the presence of the British army I tell you, if you go with

them you may stay with them—for I am no longer your wife ! You know well if Joe or Jemmy should happen to see you in such company, they would pick you out as a mark not to be missed."

Samuel was unable to withstand this determination of his bonny Isabel, whom he loved the better for her spirit. He requested his brother to excuse his going at this time ; he might report him a true subject of the King, but his wife being rather on the wrong side, he would content himself with doing what he could at home to serve His Majesty and bring back the rebels. Could Isabel but be convinced, he might be able to turn the whole clan of Covenanters ; "for she is never afraid to speak her mind." Thus he spoke while in his heart he felt sure that his wife would stand firm, and doubted if after all she were not in the right. His brothers shook hands with him, and the Colonel bade him be faithful and have courage, and he would no doubt obtain a commission for him.

The party scoured the country round about, punishing rebel men and women, sending prisoners to Rocky Mount, enlisting loyalists, and thrashing out wheat at different farms, to be sent to White's Mills for grinding. After Huck was slain in the action at Williamson's, another of the officers, mounted his horse, which became resive, the new rider's legs being much longer than the Dutch Captain's, and threw him against a stump. He died afterwards of the injuries received in the fall. Col. Ferguson was to be seen every where

endeavoring to rally the scattered force. A fatal shot brought him from his horse—his head striking the ground, and one of his brothers had his hand torn to pieces. The brothers scattered with the rest of the men and were hid for weeks in the woods—their wives bringing them food in the dead hours of night. It was particularly observed that the brothers Barber and William Anderson, who were excellent shots, fought that morning more like wild beasts than conscientious Covenanters. Henry, a red-headed Irishman of Huck's party, had insulted Mrs. Bratton with opprobrious epithets, striking her with his sword, and driving her before him into the house. He was wounded when taken prisoner by the whigs, and fortunately not recognised by Col. Bratton, who would have killed him for his outrage to his wife. Her generosity saved him, while her husband was searching every where for the offender. Adamson, who had treated her and her children with respect and kindness, driving the rude soldiers from her room, and seeing that nothing was taken from her, was nursed by her with the tenderness of a sister, and her cheeks were bathed in tears when she saw his sufferings.

This victory proved of advantage to the wives and widows of the patriots of Rocky Creek. Samuel Ferguson, on his part, when he heard of the result of the expedition, the Colonel's death and the miserable situation of his remaining brothers, never looked on the bonny face of Isabella without a feeling of thankfulness that he had escaped a similar fate. Her words

that day, respecting Joe's and Jenny's shooting, he had thought sounded like a prediction. When the prospect seemed darkest, other movements were working out for the widows and orphans made by this unnatural strife, a deliverance from starvation. Isabella was earnest in schemes for the alleviation of the misery around them, while her husband, whose confidence in her judgment and good sense was stronger than ever, listened to her plans with approval, and sought her counsel as to the manner of assisting his unfortunate brothers. She exhorted him to gain the confidence of their neighbors by deeds of kindness to the defenceless and destitute, and thus deserve their good offices in turn. "Your brothers," she would say, "went to their undoing, leaving their own people to join themselves to the alien; but if they repent, there is forgiveness for the greatest transgressor. You and they too might have work to do in helping those who have lost all by the war, and then the whigs would call you friends."

About three quarters of a mile north of Rossville, at the bend of Rocky Creek, is a deep ravine, the sides of which are precipitous, but may be descended by grasping the bushes along the path. In the depths of this ravine was a cave, excavated by human labor, about ten feet deep and as many in width. This place, at the present day is a marvel to the country people, who are unable to conjecture at what period, or for what purpose, the cave was originally constructed. It was here that Samuel Ferguson deposited the articles

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entrusted to his care by the benevolent Isabella, she receiving the goods from the women, for fear of involving her husband, should the royalists discover that whig property had been secreted. The corn brought to him for safe keeping Ferguson put into his own crib, and assisted the poor women by milking for them, and by various needful services. It was understood, for prudence' sake, that he leaned to the loyalist side of the controversy, while his wife was a firm whig; though in reality he had been won over, in heart, to her opinions. By their joint exertions the distresses of the neighborhood were much relieved, and his brothers found advantage in adopting the same course, deserving the good offices of the women by the kindly assistance thus rendered them. All this was brought about by the efforts of a woman, who well merited to be called, as she was by all who knew her, "the good Isabella Ferguson." Her prudence so restored good feeling between the people and the Ferguson family, that they came to be regarded rather as benefactors than enemies, and at the close of the war were almost the only loyalists permitted to remain in that part of the country. Their descendants are among the most worthy citizens of Chester District.

Isabella had her full share of trial and suffering. Her father's grey hairs were brought to the grave by the untimely death of her brothers, and the horrors enacted around them from time to time, with the blame thrown upon her husband's family, often wrung her kind heart. She was a blessing to her family and

her neighbors, both in adverse and prosperous circumstances; but few knew the energy of character concealed under her quiet and unassuming manner. Sarnuel was for many years a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church to which he belonged, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Robert McCulloch, the last classical teacher of Gen. Andrew Jackson.

Mrs. Ferguson ended her days in 1820, upon the plantation on which her father settled when he first came to the country in 1773. The graves of her household are in Catholic burial ground.