

were determined, unless they got possession of the fort, to go down the Mohawk River valley and fall upon its inhabitants."

The answer given the bearer of the message was an assurance that the commandant of the fort intended to retain possession of it as long as the garrison could defend it, and that if the blood of any of the unarmed people living along the Mohawk River should be shed by the ruthless savages employed by Great Britain, their murderous work would justly be regarded thereafter as instigated by the commander of the forces at that time besieging the fort.

Still hopeful that his promises and threats might obtain the surrender of Fort Schuyler, Brigadier-General St. Leger, on Saturday, August 9, sent a lengthy communication to Colonel Gansevoort reciting the dire evils that would befall the defenders of the fort and the exposed people of the frontier farms should it not speedily capitulate, and that if an immediate surrender of it were made, what magnanimous concessions the officers and men should receive, and saying:

"I now repeat what has been told you by my adjutant-general, 'that, provided you will deliver up your garrison with everything as it stood at the moment the first message was sent,' your people shall be treated with every attention that a humane and generous enemy can give."

A curt and conclusive answer was returned him:

"FORT SCHUYLER, August 9, 1777.

"SIR:

"Your letter of this day's date I have received, in answer to which I say that it is my determined resolution, with the forces under my command, to defend this fort to the last extremity in behalf of the United States, who have placed me here to defend it against all their enemies.

"I have the honor to be, sir,

"Your most obedient, humble servant,

"PETER GANSEVOORT,

"colonel commanding Fort Schuyler."

"GENERAL BARRY ST. LEGER."

The speedy relief of the fort having been considered at a conference of the officers of the garrison, Lieutenant-Colonel Willett signified his willingness to make an attempt to reach Fort Dayton at the German Flatts, about twenty-eight miles distant, where it was assumed he could obtain the needed succor of an adequate body of militia or continental troops. He and Lieutenant Levi Stockwell, on the following Sunday night, quitted the fort and cautiously passed the sentinels and camps of the enemy. By a long and roundabout course,