DANIEL MORGAN,

BRIGADIER-GENERAL IN THE AMERICAN ARMY.

GENERAL MORGAN was the creator of his own fortune. Born of poor, though honest parents, he enjoyed none of the advantages which result from wealth and early education. But his was a spirit that would not tamely yield to difficulties.

"He was born in New Jersey, where, from his poverty and low condition, he had been a day-labourer. To early education and breeding, therefore, he owed nothing. But for this deficiency his native sagacity and sound judgment, and his intercourse with the best society, made much amends in after life.

"Enterprising in his disposition, even now he removed to Virginia, in 1755, with a hope and expectation of improving his fortune. Here he continued, at first, his original business of day-labour; but exchanged it afterward for the employment of a wagoner.

"His military novitiate he served in the campaign under the unfortunate Braddock. The rank he bore is not precisely known. It

must, however, have been humble; for, in consequence of imputed contumely towards a British officer, he was brought to the halbert, and received the inhuman punishment of five hundred lashes; or, according to his own statement, of four hundred and ninety-nine; for he always asserted that the drummer charged with the execution of the sentence, miscounted and jocularly added, 'That George the Third was still indebted to him one lash.' To the honour of Morgan he never practically remembered this savage treatment during the revolutionary war. Towards the British officers whom the fortune of battle placed within his power, his conduct was humane, mild, and gentlemanly.

"After his return from this campaign, so inordinately was he addicted to quarrels and boxing matches, that the village of Berrystown, in the county of Frederick, which constituted the chief theatre of his pugilistic exploits, received, from this circumstance, the name of Battletown.

"In these combats, although frequently overmatched in personal strength, he manifested the same unyielding spirit which characterized him afterward in his military career. When worsted by his antagonist, he would pause for

a time, to recruit his strength, and then return to the contest, again and again, until he rarely failed to prove victorious.

"Equally marked was his invincibility of spirit in maturer age, when raised, by fortune and his own merit, to a higher and more honourable field of action. Defeat in battle he rarely experienced; but when he did, his retreat was sullen, stern, and dangerous.

"The commencement of the American revolution found Mr. Morgan married and cultivating a farm, which, by industry and economy, he had been enabled to purchase, in the county of Frederick.

"Placed at the head of a rifle company, raised in his neighbourhood in 1775, he marched immediately to the American head-quarters in Cambridge, near Boston.

"By order of the commander-in-chief, he soon afterward joined in the expedition against Quebec, and was made prisoner in the attempt on that fortress, where Arnold was wounded, and Montgomery fell.

"During the assault, his daring valour and persevering gallantry attracted the notice and admiration of the enemy.

"The assailing column to which he belonged

was led by Major Arnold. When that officer was wounded, and carried from the ground, Morgan threw himself into the lead, and, rushing forward, passed the first and second barriers. For a moment, victory appeared certain. But the fall of Montgomery closing the prospect, the assailants were repulsed, and the enterprise abandoned. During his captivity, Captain Morgan was treated with great kindness, and not a little distinction. He was repeatedly visited in confinement by a British officer of rank, who at length made an attempt on his patriotism and virtue, by offering him the commission and emoluments of colonel in the British army, on condition that he would desert the American and join the royal standard.

"Morgan rejected the proposal with scorn, and requested the courtly and corrupt negotiator 'never again to insult him in his misfortunes by an offer which plainly implied that he thought him a villian.' The officer withdrew, and did not again recur to the subject.

"On being exchanged, Morgan immediately rejoined the American army, and received, by the recommendation of General Washington, the command of a regiment.

"In the year 1777, he was placed at the

head of a select rifle corps, with which, in various instances, he acted on the enemy with terrible effect. His troops were considered the most dangerous in the American service. To confront them in the field was almost certain death to the British officers.

"On the occasion of the capture of Burgoyne, the exertions and services of Colonel Morgan and his riflemen were beyond all praise. Much of the glory of the achievement belonged to them. Yet so gross was the injustice of General Gates, that he did not even mention them in his official despatches. His reason for this was secret and dishonourable. Shortly after the surrender of Burgoyne, General Gates took occasion to hold with Morgan a private conversation. In the course of this he told him confidentially, that the main army was exceedingly dissatisfied with the conduct of General Washington; that the reputation of the commander-in-chief was rapidly declining; and that several officers of great worth threatened to resign, unless a change were produced in that department.

"Colonel Morgan fathoming in an instant the views of his commanding officer, sternly, and with honest indignation, replied, 'Sir, I

have one favour to ask. Never again mention to me this hateful subject; under no other man but General Washington, as commander-in-chief, will I ever serve.'

"From that moment ceased the intimacy that had previously subsisted between him and General Gates.

"A few days afterward the general gave a dinner to the principal officers of the British, and some of those of the American army. Morgan was not invited. In the course of the evening, that officer found it necessary to call on General Gates, on official business. Being introduced into the dining-room, he spoke to the general, received his orders, and immediately withdrew, his name unannounced. Perceiving, from his dress, that he was of high rank, the British officers inquired his name. Being told that it was Colonel Morgan, commanding the rifle corps, they rose from the table, followed him into the yard, and introduced themselves to him, with many complimentary and flattering expressions, declaring that, on the day of action, they had very severely felt him in the field.

"In 1780, having obtained leave of absence from the army on account of the shattered

condition of his health, he retired to his estate in the county of Frederick, and remained there until the appointment of General Gates to the command of the southern army.

"Being waited on by the latter, and requested to accompany him, he reminded him, in expressions marked by resentment, of the unworthy treatment he had formerly experienced from him, in return for the important services which, he did not hesitate to assert, he had rendered him in his operations against the army of General Burgoyne.

"Having received no acknowledgement, nor even civility, for aiding to decorate him with laurels in the north, he frankly declared that there were no considerations, except of a public nature, that could induce him to cooperate in his campaigns to the south. 'Motives of public good might influence him; because his country had a claim on him, in any quarter where he could promote her interest; but personal attachment must not be expected to exist where he had experienced nothing but neglect and injustice.'

"The two officers parted, mutually dissatisfied; the one, on account of past treatment; the other, of the recent interview.

"In the course of a few weeks afterward, Congress having promoted Colonel Morgan to the rank of brigadier-general by brevet, with a view to avail themselves of his services in the south, he proceeded without delay to join the army of General Gates. But he was prevented from serving any length of time under that officer, by his defeat near Camden, before his arrival, and his being soon afterward superseded in command by General Greene.

"Soon after taking command of the southern army, General Greene despatched General Morgan with four hundred continentals under Colonel Howard, Colonel Washington's corps of dragoons, and a few militia, amounting in all to about six hundred, to take position on the left of the British army, then lying at Winnsborough, under Lord Cornwallis, while he took post about seventy miles to his right. This judicious disposition excited his lordship's apprehensions for the safety of Ninety-Six and Augusta, British posts, which he considered as menaced by the movements of Morgan.

"Colonel Tarleton, with a strong detachment, amounting, in horse and foot, to near a thousand men, was immediately despatched by Cornwallis to the protection of Ninety-Six, with

orders to bring General Morgan, if possible, to battle. To the ardent temper and chivalrous disposition of the British colonel this direction was perfectly congenial. Greatly superior in numbers, he advanced on Morgan with a menacing aspect, and compelled him, at first, to fall back rapidly. But the retreat of the American commander was not long continued. Irritated by pursuit, reinforced by a body of militia, and reposing great confidence in the spirit and firmness of his regular troops, he halted at the Cowpens, and determined to gratify his adversary in his eagerness for combat. This was on the night of the 16th of January, 1781. Early in the morning of the succeeding day Tarleton, being apprised of the situation of Morgan, pressed towards him with a redoubled rapidity, lest, by renewing his retreat, he should again elude him.

"But Morgan now had other thoughts than those of flight. Already had he, for several days, been at war with himself in relation to his conduct. Glorying in action, his spirit recoiled from the humilation of retreat, and his resentment was roused by the insolence of pursuit. This mental conflict becoming more intolerable to him than disaster or death, his

courage triumphed, perhaps, over his prudence, and he resolved on putting every thing to the hazard of the sword.

"By military men who have studied the subject, his disposition for battle is said to have been masterly. Two light parties of militia were advanced in front, with order to feel the enemy as they approached; and preserving a desultory, well aimed fire, as they fell back to the front line, to range with it, and renew the conflict. The main body of the militia composed this line, with General Pickens at its head. At a suitable distance in the rear of the first line, a second was stationed, composed of the continental infantry and two companies of Virginia militia, commanded by Colonel Howard. Washington's cavalry, reinforced with a company of mounted militia, armed with sabres, was held in reserve.

"Posting himself then in the line of the regulars, he waited in silence the advance of the enemy.

"Tarleton coming in sight, hastily formed his disposition for battle, and commenced the assault. Of this conflict, the following picture is from the pen of General Lee:

'The American light parties quickly yielded,

fell back, and arrayed with Pickens. The enemy shouting, rushed forward upon the front line, which retained its station, and poured in a close fire; but continuing to advance with the bayonet on our militia, they retired, and gained with haste the second line. Here, with part of the corps, Pickens took post on Howard's right, and the rest fled to their horses, probably with orders to remove them to a further distance. Tarleton pushed forward, and was received by his adversary with unshaken firmness. The contest became obstinate; and each party, animated by the example of its leader, nobly contended for victory. Our line maintained itself so firmly as to oblige the enemy to order up his reserve. The advance of M' Arthur reanimated the British line, which again moved forward, and outstretching our front, endangered Colonel Howard's right. This officer instantly took measures to defend his flank, by directing his right company to change its front; but, mistaking this order, the company fell back; upon which the line began to retire, and General Morgan directed it to retreat to the cavalry. This manœuvre being performed with precision, our flank became relieved, and the new position was

assumed with promptitude. Considering this retrograde movement the precursor of flight, the British line rushed on with impetuosity and disorder; but as it drew near, Howard faced about, and gave it a close and murderous fire. Stunned by this unexpected shock, the most advanced of the enemy recoiled in confusion. Howard seized the happy moment, and followed his advantage with the bayonet. This decisive step gave us the day. The reserve having been brought near the line, shared in the destruction of our fire, and presented no rallying point to the fugitives. A part of the enemy's cavalry having gained our rear, fell on that portion of the militia who had retired to their horses. Washington struck at them with his dragoons, and drove them before him. Thus, by a simultaneous effort, the infantry and cavalry of the enemy were routed. Morgan pressed home his success, and the pursuit became vigorous and general.'

"In this decisive battle we lost about seventy men, of whom twelve only were killed. The British infantry, with the exception of the baggage guard, were nearly all killed or taken. One hundred, including ten officers, were killed; twenty-three officers and five hundred privates

were taken. The artillery, eight hundred muskets, two standards, thirty-five baggage wagons, and one hundred dragoon horses, fell into our possession."

In this battle, so glorious to the American arms, Tarleton had every advantage in point of ground, cavalry, and numbers, aided by two pieces of artillery.

Soon after this brilliant exploit, frequent attacks of the rheumatism compelled General Morgan to retire from the army, and he returned to his seat in Frederick, Virginia, where he continued in retirement until the insurrection in the western part of Pennsylvania, in 1794, when he was detached by the executive of Virginia, at the head of the militia quota of that state, to suppress it. This done, he returned into the bosom of his family, where he remained until death closed his earthly career, in 1799.

"There existed in the character of General Morgan a singular contradiction, which is worthy of notice.

"Although in battle no man was ever more prodigal of the exposure of his person to danger, or manifested a more deliberate disregard of death; yet, so strong was his love of

life at other times, that he has been frequently heard to declare, 'he would agree to pass half his time as a galley-slave, rather than quit this world for another.'

"The following outline of his person and character is from the pen of a military friend, who knew him intimately:

'Brigadier-General Morgan was stout and active, six feet in height, strong, not too much encumbered with flesh, and was exactly fitted for the toils and pomp of war. His mind was discriminating and solid, but not comprehensive and combining. His manners plain and decorous, neither insinuating nor repulsive. His conversation grave, sententious, and considerate, unadorned, and uncaptivating. He reflected deeply, spoke little, and executed, with keen perseverance, whatever he undertook.

"A considerable time before his death, when the pressure of infirmity began to be heavy, he became seriously concerned about his future welfare. From that period, his chief solace lay in the study of the Scriptures, and in devotional exercises. He died in the belief of the truths of Christianity, and in full communion with the Presbyterian Church."