

# The Military Hospital at Lititz, 1777-78.

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During the period under consideration Lititz was a Moravian settlement consisting of eighteen buildings, which included residences and several larger structures. These houses were ranged along Main Street between the eastern extremity of what is now the Linden Hall Seminary property and the Springs Hotel. The Moravian Church, as it is to-day, was not standing at the time. Services were held in the second story of the building now used as the Moravian parsonage. Immediately to the east of this was the Sisters' House—essentially the same as it is to-day as part of Linden Hall. To the westward stood the Brethren's House, built in 1759. This building was the military hospital of revolutionary days. It is three stories in height with a frontage of sixty and a depth of thirty-seven feet. Subsequently to its use by Washington's army surgeons and their charges, it was used by John Beck as the main building of his academy; and later, up to the present time, it has been used for various offices of the Moravian Church. To the south of the Brethren's House was a quadrangle of small shops harboring the industries in which the brethren were employed. These included quarters for the accommodation of weaver, baker, nailsmith, hatter, butcher, carpenter and chandler.

At the western end of the village, occupying a site now covered by the eastern half of the Springs Hotel, stood the Zunn Anker Inn. This building is described by those now living who remember it, as being a two-story frame structure, with a high, peaked roof. A great stone door step at its entrance on the north, a town pump on the edge of its sidewalk, and a conspicuous board—pendant from a cross arm, and bearing the sign of the anchor—were notable features of this historic hostelry.

The village and the Moravian congregation were one in all matters—though Lititz was not a religious community in the same sense as were Bethlehem and Nazareth, in which there was absolute merging of individual effort and gain to the common good. The business and social life of Lititz was organized about the Church. Individuals owned property and conducted business as they do to-day, though under the general oversight of a board known as the Aufseher Collegium, or Committee on Temporal Affairs. This was a powerful body made up of some of the wiser and more practical members of the congregation. It acted as referee in matters requiring adjustment, and frequently gave advice or correction, where it obviously was needed, in business or social affairs. It also had the ordinary duties of a town council. One extract from the diary of the Collegium illustrates its powers and at the same time sketches in a few strokes the primitive structure of the village life.

Entry: "Joseph Sturgis (watchman) wants to have a horn wherewith to announce the hours, because he says the frequency of calling them out

is too hard on him. Collegium thought that before midnight he could go about quietly and unnoticed; and after that time continue as loud and as often as formerly; or instead of that sing a scriptural verse. A horn might be unpleasant to some of the neighbors. When there is a body in the corpse-house he should look in frequently."

The Moravian Church, as a corporation, conducted several lines of business, notably two or more farms, a butcher shop, a general store, a saw and grist mill, and the Zum Anker Inn. The finances of these were under the supervision of an aufseher or warden of the Church.

The single sisters and brothers of the congregation were segregated for purposes of instruction and employment in the two large houses erected on either side of the Church.

Records of the times, in the German language, were kept in a congregation diary, in the minutes of the Collegium, and in the separate diaries of the Brethren's and Sisters' Houses. This paper is largely a presentation of the translations made from these four sources by Abraham R. Beck. In order to preserve, as far as possible, the attitude of mind of the writers of these records, the translations were made with as much literalism as was justified by good English context.

The main facts of the paper, outside of the excerpts from early diaries, were furnished by Abraham R. Beck, and the writer is also indebted to John W. Jordan and Judge Charles I. Landis for data on several of the persons mentioned herein.

The first entry referring to the momentous events of the times reads:

"1775. February 27th. Congress having adopted a measure regarding the use of tea, which is now strictly obeyed everywhere, it was resolved to sell none of it in our store.

"April 29th. To our consternation, we received news of the bloody action between the king's troops and the Americans at Bunker Hill and Charlestown, near Boston.

"June 2d. Bishop Seidel wrote us, from Bethlehem, that a declaration of our principles had been presented to Congress by Mr. Franklin, and favorably received.

"1776. July 13th. From the newspapers we learn that on the 4th inst. in Philadelphia, Independence was actually declared by Congress and all provinces made free States.

"Dec. 13th. There is much alarm felt, and great excitement, in Philadelphia, Lancaster and indeed throughout the whole country because of the progress of the British army. The Committee of Safety has ordered all militia to march against it.

"1777. February 28th. A party of Marylanders, on their return from the Army, arrived and staid here overnight. Being half-starved they went into the houses to get something to eat, and were given loaves of bread and a quantity of meat, which they accepted with the heartiest thanks, saying that in all their weary march they had been nowhere treated so well as here.

"May 15th. By order of the Committee, blankets, linen and clothing were collected in our township for the Army. We, too, must contribute what we can spare, and future payment is promised.

"Sept. 28th. The three French officers, among them a German baron, who had been stopping at our tavern for some days, left in haste for York; because Congress secretly left Lancaster last evening and crossed the Susquehanna.

"Oct. 3d. The French Chevalier La Colombe brought us a letter from our friend and Congressman Laurens regretting the necessity for his departure so soon from our neighborhood, Congress having been suddenly transferred to York."

The French officer somewhat inaccurately referred to was Chevalier de la Colombe who had enlisted as a volunteer in the American service. He left France with Lafayette, to whom he was aide-de-camp. He was breveted captain by Congress, November, 1777. In January, 1779, Lafayette, about to start for France, wrote to General Washington, recommending de la Colombe for a major's brevet. At the end of the war de la Colombe returned to France and was employed by the French republic. He was made a prisoner, with Lafayette, in 1792, by the Prince of Coburg and shut up in the citadel of Olmutz. Upon his release he returned to Philadelphia.

"Oct. 7th. Just as after the battle of Brandywine Creek [Sept. 11th], so to-day, after the engagement at Germantown [Oct. 4th] many soldiers passed through Lititz."

The looseness of military discipline, during this period, is shown in the next entry:

"Oct. 21st. During the evening meeting six armed soldiers entered the Sisters' House—dreadfully frightening, with their brutal swearing, the house-watcher and the few sisters who were at home. Their intent was forcibly to enter the dormitory and press, for their own use, the blankets off the beds. However they had the goodness to let themselves be dissuaded from their purpose."

In referring to this incident the Sisters' House Diary says:

"The Brethren Schmick and Franke were fetched from the Chapel, coming promptly to our assistance, and they got the fellows away before the meeting was over. We thanked our dear Lord and House Father that he so mercifully preserved us, and that only the fright remained."

"Nov. 29th. In our neighborhood the soldiers have pressed many teams (our own, from the farm, included) to carry provisions to the army.

"December 14th. A doctor by the name of Canada (Kennedy) brought us the news that by order of General Washington, 250 sick and wounded soldiers must be quartered here. He inspected our house (the Brethren's House) which suited his purposes exactly, and ordered that it be immediately vacated, for we might expect the first of the sick in four days. We could however retain kitchen and cellar for our own use.

"Dec. 19th. At noon several soldiers arrived here to prepare for the coming of their sick and wounded comrades, who came hither in the evening in wagons. There are about 80 in all, mostly from the Jerseys.

"Dec. 20th. The brethren Franke and Becker were appointed communicators between Dr. Allison, his steward, or his commissary, and ourselves. There came 15 wagons full of sick soldiers; so that now all our rooms and halls are filled with them.

"Dec. 21st. Also, quite late, 100 more sick and wounded; but as the hospital was quite full they were taken elsewhere.

"The question arose, where shall the dead be buried if any die in the lazaret? Later, after consultation with several brethren of the Committee on Temporal Affairs, we determined to set apart a corner of our lowermost field."

The spot referred to in this entry, where about one hundred and ten men were buried unfortunately was not marked. The lines of the Moravian land were so changed in later years that the phrase "corner of our lowermost field" has lost its value in fixing the place. However, according to accurate tradition, it was several hundred yards east of the Moravian Church, and south of the road running between Lititz and the village of Rome by about a hundred yards. Thirty years ago excavations for brick clay invaded what evidently was the edge of the graveyard, several oblong masses of dark-colored earth, parallel with each other, and a few feet apart, being dug into before it was realized that they were graves. This was at a spot fifty yards south of East Main Street, and about one hundred yards southwest of the residence of Dr. Bender. At the place where the soldiers are buried the gentle hill which slopes to the westward takes an abrupt dip. This marks the limit of the old excavation and the spot where the graves were found.

That the numbers of the dead and the gravity of the health situation in the village, to which the epidemic of camp fever had spread from the hospital, made for hasty and rude burials, is shown in the next entry:

"In the event of an officer's death we should be expected to give him a more honorable burial place than that is, where all are huddled indiscriminately underground. Therefore we resolved in such a case to do as they really have done in Bethlehem; namely, to set apart, in our graveyard, a row for strangers, separated from that of the brethren by a passage."

No necessity for the carrying out of this plan arose however.

"Dec. 28th. Yesterday Bro. Schmick preached to the soldiers in the Brethren's House. [Bro. Schmick contracted camp fever and died a few weeks later.] The misery in the lazaretto cannot be described; neither can it, without being seen, be imagined. The two doctors themselves are sick, and have the attention of Bro. Adolph Meyer. Therefore the soldiers are without medicine. Such as are nearly recovered, fearing a relapse of the malady, prefer to remain out of doors as much as possible; but to-day, because of the continuous snow-storm, they were forced, much to their displeasure, to stay in the house.

"Dec. 31st. Another wagon with sick soldiers came from Reading.

"1778. Jan. 1st. As both doctors are too ill to attend to their duties, a third, a German from Saxony, came to take charge in their place. Two of the soldiers, seven of whom have died already, were buried to-day.

"Jan. 10th. Some of our little boys have been trading things with the soldiers, receiving in exchange cartridges and powder, which they set off in the barns. Bro. Schmick gave them a sharp talking on their improper and highly dangerous play, and with good result but the parents must be more watchful over their children! *No one should buy from the soldiers what are, at any rate, commonly stolen goods.*"

This is a touch of the inevitable comedy of boy nature, amidst the tragic settings of the moment, that is well worth handing down.

Another entry of the same date has lost its gravity entirely with the flight of a century, and with its touch of humor it is a fitting introduction of the quaint figure of Tobias Hirte. The diary reads:

"There is no reason why Tobias Hirte should have bought a gun; indeed on the contrary it is an unseemliness! What use has a schoolmaster for a gun? He must be ordered to dispose of it.

"Some 20 well soldiers left the hospital to rejoin the Army.

"Jan. 18th. Dr. Brown, the general superintendent of all the hospitals in this region, came from Bethlehem, bringing with him a fine letter of recommendation. He intends to bring his family hither and make Lititz his temporary home."

Dr. William Brown, son of an eminent Scotch physician, Dr. Gustavus Brown, was born in Virginia and educated in Edinburgh. He wrote a pharmacopœia—for the use of the hospital—the first of its kind published in America. This work is dated in its preface Lititz, March 12, 1778.

Dr. Brown rose to the rank of surgeon general after the revolution. He was buried at "Preston" near Alexandria, Va., in the family burying ground.

Dr. Brown was quartered, during his stay in Lititz, at the home of Tanneberger, builder of some of the first pipe organs made in America. Tanneberger's house stood nearly opposite the congregation store—now Wolle's store—on Main Street.

Dr. Allison was at Blickensderfer's—on the north side of the street, west of Cedar Street; and officers were at Geitner's—now the site of Dr. Hertz's house, and at Claus Coeln's—about where S. M. Huber's store now stands. Claus Coeln was the builder of the present Moravian Church, erected 1787. Officers were also quartered at the home of Jaspar Payne, the only villager of English birth. His house stood immediately to the west of the congregation store. The presence of a colonel at Jaspar Payne's was a sore trial to the venerable host; for the convalescing officer, in the glow of returning health, entertained his many visitors from Lancaster with a generous merriment so high that it often approached uproar.

"Because of Bro. Jaspar Payne's age and weakness," the diary reads, "it would be well, when the Colonel leaves, for the prevention of future similar occurrences, to ask Dr. Allison and his family to lodge there.

"March 1st. About 60 well soldiers are rendezvousing here. Their behavior is pretty wild and ill-mannered. Dr. Allison, who has hitherto maintained good order here, has gone to Bristol to fetch his family to Lititz.

"April 8th. We heard from Bethlehem that Lititz is to be vacated and that the general hospital is to be located here. Bishop Hehl writes: 'It was proposed that our people go to Bethlehem and Nazareth for, after all, we are all one family.' This causes us much pain and serious trouble. As this action will depend upon Dr. Shippen, Conference unanimously determined to send him a petition against the intended move. This was done on the 9th. In reply Dr. Shippen stated that he had the highest esteem for the Brethren's Society, and that he would do his utmost to protect it. Should an urgent

necessity arise to place the general hospital here—and that does not seem likely—he would first consult the brethren upon the subject.”

This matter was laid directly before General Washington by Bishop Ettwein, who was at the head of the Moravian Church in the American provinces. The answer is notable for its calm dignity and kindness. Written at a time when Freedom was a will o' the wisp in a swamp of despair, and when trials and responsibilities were crowding upon the Commander-in-Chief in a bitterly personal way, Washington's letter to the Moravians of Lititz reflects the serenity of a great soul. The communication is dated Headquarters, March 28, 1778. It reads as follows:

“*Sir*:—I have received your letter of the 25 inst. by Mr. Hasse, setting forth the injury that will be done to the Inhabitants of Letiz, by establishing a General Hospital there—it is needless to explain how essential an establishment of this kind is to the Welfare of the Army, and you must be sensible that it cannot be made anywhere without occasioning inconvenience to some set of people or other—at the same time it is ever my wish & aim that the public Good be effected with as little sacrifice as possible of individual Interests—and I would by no means sanction the imposing any burthens on the people in whose favor you remonstrate, which the public service does not require. The Arrangement and Distribution of Hospitals depends entirely on Dr. Shippen, and I am persuaded that he will not exert the authority vested in him unnecessarily to your prejudice—It would be proper however to represent to him the circumstances of the inhabitants of Letiz; and you may if you choose it. communicate the Contents of this Letter to him. I am Sir Your most obed<sup>t</sup>’.

“*Serv<sup>t</sup>*.”

“Go. WASHINGTON.”

This letter was written by Washington's secretary, to whom it was dictated by the General who, of course, signed it himself.

In the course of events it did not become necessary for Dr. Shippen to order Lititz vacated for purposes of the military hospital; so what the Moravian Brethren so much feared did not come to pass.

The man referred to in Washington's letter, Dr. William Shippen, the younger son of William and Susannah (née Harrison) Shippen, was born in Philadelphia on October 21, 1736. Graduating from Princeton in 1754, he studied with his father until 1758, when he went to England, and continued his studies under Drs. John Hunter, William Hunter and McKenzie. He returned to Philadelphia in 1762. On July 15, 1776, he was appointed Chief Physician for the Flying Camp, and on April 11, 1777, he was elected Director General of all the Military Hospitals for the Armies of the United States. On May 11, 1780, he was elected Professor of Anatomy and Surgery in the University of Pennsylvania, which position he held until 1806. He was president of the College of Physicians from 1805 until his death, which occurred in Germantown in 1808.

Dr. William Shippen was a nephew of Edward Shippen of Lancaster.

“April 21st. Arrived 9 wagons with sick and wounded from Bethlehem, Easton, Allentown and Reading.

"Apr. 22d. Day of Humiliation and Prayer. (National.)

"May 7th. Some of the young people—among them some of our musicians—are in the habit of indulging, late into the night, in merrymaking at the Big Spring, where Tobias Hirte has laid out a special place for that purpose. Soldiers go there also. This has given the congregation and ourselves great offence! Yet what is to be done—seeing that Dr. Allison was there too and that this place was planned partly for his sake? But Dr. Allison has respect for our congregation rules, and we may not hesitate to tell him why we are opposed to this rendezvous, and ask him kindly, for love of us, to absent himself from it.

"Tobias Hirte shall be summoned to appear before the Brethren of the Conference and told not to dare in the future to begin such a thing on our land—for he is given to sudden ideas of such a kind—especially not without permission; and secondly to leave the place at the spring as it now is, and do nothing more to it."

This is the first mention of the Lititz springs as a pleasure ground.

Tobias Hirte seems to have been a constant source of anxiety to the pious overseers of the town. The figure of this man had in it enough of quaintness, originality and eccentric distinction to entitle the name of Tobias Hirte to a place in the good literature of a hundred and twenty-five years later; at least, an author so skillful in his choice of characters as Rudyard Kipling seems to think so.

Hirte combined the qualities of intelligence, enterprise, originality and independence of mind, with the occupations of teacher, versatile musician, itinerant pharmacist and hermit. He lived at Lititz, Salem, N. C., Philadelphia (at which place Kipling found data about him), Lebanon and elsewhere. He was often on the road—astride a well-known mare—with his Seneca Indian Oil. Each year he made a pilgrimage to the Seneca Indians and the famous chiefs of that nation, Cornplanter and Red Jacket, thought well enough of him to return his visits. While he lived at Lititz, during revolutionary days, he was a member of the Brethren's House Community, from whence, for certain escapades, he was frequently expelled, and as often forgiven, until patience with him ceased to be a virtue and he was sent away for good.

Kipling uses the character of Hirte in two of his stories, "Brother Square Toes" and "A Priest in Spite of Himself."

"May 13th. Some of the soldiers left here for the Army.

"May 24th. To-day Lieutenant Abraham Boemper, of the American Army, came to Lititz bringing with him a packet of European Gemein Nachrichten destined for Bethlehem. It had been seized, on its way from Philadelphia, as it passed through the Continental lines; and having been broken open, read, and found to contain nothing but innocent matter, Lieut. Boemper had saved it from destruction, and kindly gave himself the trouble to come to Lititz and deliver it, safe and sound, into our hands.

"June 2d. This has been an unquiet day for us, as 130 of the sick and wounded have been brought hither. We had some hope that deliverance was at hand; but now since the main hospital has been established here we see there is more trouble in store for us.

"June 14th. [Sisters' House Diary.] In the meeting of the communicant

members we received the information not unexpected, yet painful, that the Holy Communion would be discontinued until our usual calm is restored.

"June 28th. We heard to-day, for certain, that the Americans have possession again of Philadelphia.

"July 8th. There came two wagons from Lancaster with sick for the hospital.

"August 21st. We hear that the hospital will be removed, for certain, next week.

"Aug. 28th. At last came the hour when the hospital here broke up. Some of the sick were transported to Yellow Springs, others to Lancaster.

"Aug. 29th. We certainly find it delightful to enjoy again our former peaceful life. It must be said however that Dr. Allison maintained order and discipline to the best of his ability.

"Sept. 15. [Brethren's House Diary.] Our dear sisters cheerfully volunteered to scrub our house (recently vacated as a hospital) and finished towards evening.

"Sept. 25th. Thankful and happy we moved back into our house. It had previously been cleaned of all dirt and rubbish, and the walls were newly whitewashed. All the stoves and windows needed repairs, and the woodwork everywhere was freshly painted.

"1779. May 13th. Dr. Brown and family arrived here to-day from Virginia. He was very friendly, and declared himself delighted to meet the brethren again. He wished we had a settlement in Virginia.

"June 21st. Dr. Allison and family, who remained here, by our consent, after the removal of the hospital, left for Shamokin where he will have a similar charge. He was very thankful for all the kindness they received here.

"1780. March 9th. Fifty light horsemen came here to seek quarters for the night. At the tavern they permitted Bro. Danz (who had charge of the Zum Anker) to explain that it would not be agreeable to him to take them in; but then they went into the neighborhood, where they behaved outrageously, robbing and taking from the people whatever they could lay their hands upon.

"1781. June 29th. That two English prisoners in our town were roughly and, one can say, almost inhumanly handled by some of our people, a few days ago was not only a reprehensible action, but something not to be tolerated. The guilty ones must be spoken to about it.

"Oct. 21. Bro. Simon Danz, at the tavern, has two English prisoners working for him. As we have reason to fear that their staying here any longer may give rise to evil results, Bro. Danz must be advised to consult with Bro. W<sup>m</sup>. Henry in Lancaster, in regard to them so that they may be dismissed—the sooner the better."

Then follows an entry which touches the cord of sympathy with our own happy experiences of November 11, 1918. It reads:

"1783. Dec. 11th. A day of Thanksgiving appointed by the National Government. In the evening, for joy at the return of peace, we illuminated our house; the trombonists playing meanwhile much to our delight."

With this entry ends all direct or indirect reference to the hospital in the local records of the times.

The Brethren's House had been used by Washington's men from December



19, 1777, to August 28, 1778. During this period more than five hundred, probably nearer a thousand, sick and wounded soldiers were quartered there.

Little reference to the Lititz Hospital is to be found in the records of the War Department at Washington. It is probable that most of these records were destroyed in the burning of the Department building eighty-five years ago. What remain there read as follows:

“Report of the General Hospitals, April 26, 1778. Opposite ‘Liditz Hospital.’ In what time, 1st Feby to 20 Apl 1778, men now in hospital 39; dead and deserted 83, discharged and sent to camp 142. Other occurrences and remarks: The acct of the first Doctors cannot be found. This is a convenient and pleasant place for an hospital and is so near Lancaster that the same officer and surgeons may attend both. That at Schelferstown [doubtless Schaefferstown] and Ephrata should be removed to them, both being very inconvenient.

“Signed LACH. McINTOSH.”

This officer was a Brigadier General and he signs another return as a “Visiting Officer.”

A list of names of men remaining in the General Hospital at Lititz, August 23, 1778, contains 66 names. This list is framed and now hangs in the archive room at Lititz. It is as follows:

Name.	Regiment.	Name.	Regiment.
Alex <sup>r</sup> Creighton, 1st Penna.		James Anderson, 6th Virginia.	
George Filson, 1st Penna.		Will <sup>m</sup> Knight, 10th Virginia.	
William Rule, 2nd Penna.		Joel Harlow, 14th Virginia.	
James McKenney, 8th Penna.		Stephen Remington, Col. Bradley.	
Sadler Roach, 4th Penna.		Joseph Lawrence, Col. Tupper.	
John Gregor, 3d Penna.		Henry Pencil, 5th Penna.	
Patrick Robinson, 9th Penna.		John Hargin, 5th Penna.	
Alex <sup>r</sup> Hannah, 9th Penna.		Barney Cox, 6th Penna.	
Ja <sup>s</sup> Cummins, 12th Penna.		John McSorly, 7th Penna.	
Abraham Levi, 8th Virginia.		Will <sup>m</sup> Campbell, 11th Penna.	
William Woodford, 8th Virginia.		Josh McCawley, 11th Penna.	
John Andrews, 12th Virginia.		Joshua Dutton, Col. Handley.	
Joseph West, 16th Virginia.		Gashua Bushears, Col. Hartley.	
James O. Bryan, 11th Virginia.		Hermenias Thornton, Col. Proctor.	
John Uncteau, 13th Penna.		Chas. Steward, Col. Patten.	
Chas. Shields, 15th Virginia.		Patric Turner, Col. Moilands.	
Timothy Connor, 15th Virginia.		Will <sup>m</sup> Tarbox, Col. Wessers.	
John Moore, 1st Virg <sup>a</sup> State.		David Hall, Col. Swift.	
James Martin, 13th Virginia.		John Cochlin, Col. Swift.	
Will <sup>m</sup> Gass, 13th Virginia.		Mark Wood, Col. Swift.	
Willis Smith, 6th N. Carolina.		Francis Millner, Col. Swift.	
Gerrard Craig, 6th N. Carolina.		Matthew Wingfield, Col. Swift.	
Isaac Griffin, 10th N. Carolina.		Mich <sup>l</sup> Trainer, Col. Hazen.	
John Evans, 3d N. Carolina.		John Carner, 6th Penna.	
John Frankum, 6th N. Carolina.		Aaron Oseley, 15th Virginia.	
Ambrose Hines, Col. Chandley.		James Morris, Col. Jackson.	

Name.	Regiment.
William Boswell,	Col. Angel.
Jonathan Pardee,	Col. Chandler.
John McCormac,	4th Maryland.
Mark Welch,	7th Maryland.
William Sutton,	2nd Jersey.
John Syren,	5th Jersey.
Virgil Poe,	2nd Virginia.

Name.	Regiment.
Felix Tool,	Col. Jackson.
James Winford,	Col. Jackson.
W <sup>m</sup> Manning,	Col. Prentice.
Henry Gloss,	Col. Prentice.
Henry Otto,	Prisoner of War.
Yost Needle,	Prisoner of War.
Henry Shank,	Prisoner of War.

The Brigade and Company of each man is also given in the Official List, which is a copy of that in the Adjutant-General's office in Washington. It is signed by

FRA. ALISON, Jun<sup>r</sup>.,  
*Sen<sup>r</sup> Surgeon.*

A poem, involving the subject of our theme, was written several years ago by Abraham R. Beck. It was conceived solely for the members of his family and it has not been published. With the author's consent it is presented herewith, not only because it makes an appropriate ending to a paper on the Military Hospital at Lititz, but because it is fitting that the conclusion should be furnished by the pen that made the rest of this paper possible.

#### WHILE MORTALS SLEEP.

If you have but the proper gift  
Yourself from earthly things to lift,  
And can possess your soul from fright,—  
Beholding an unusual sight,—  
Then come with me, when midnight spell  
Is broken by the village bell,  
To that green court of velvet sod  
Beside the ancient House of God,  
And see—what nightly happens still—  
The shades of Continentals drill.  
First signs of their approach are these :  
A shiver goes through all the trees ;  
The air, grown chill, as of the tomb,  
Is touched with keen phosphoric fume ;  
Then—hark ! the beat of phantom drum.  
From unknown graves they hither come !  
Corpse-candles, floating, pale and dull,  
Yet faintly light each mildewed skull  
As five score spectres shamble past,  
And, at command, are ranged at last  
By those devoted gray walls where  
The pious Brothers lived in prayer ;  
For never do these ghosts forget  
Salute to their brave lazaret !  
This grisly midnight promenade,  
These skeletons upon parade,  
You shall have privilege to see  
If you will venture there with me.

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