

CHAPTER II.

LIEUTENANT DANIEL KETELHUYN OF SCHAGHTICOKE.

1674-1754.

IN the years 1696 and 1697, the frequent forays of bands of Canadian Indians and the shocking character of their bloody barbarities in the vicinity of Albany, made the inhabitants of the city and other parts of the county extremely apprehensive of falling victims to their treachery and hatred. At that time the only fortified outpost north of the city was a block-house, surrounded by a stockade, on the Flats, near the first mouth of the Mohawk River, opposite the site of Troy. The River Indians had five wigwams within the circle of its palisades, where also were several houses for the twenty-four soldiers garrisoning it.

Lieutenant-Governor Benjamin Fletcher, having ordered a return to be made him of the number of persons who had quitted Albany County since 1689, and of those who had been killed and taken prisoners, learned, on April 19, 1698, that the inhabitants of the county then numbered 1,459, showing a decrease of 557 souls. The tribes of savages, which embraced those known as Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas, and River Indians, aggregated 1,320 people, presenting a loss of 1,500 in the space of nine years. By massacres and in conflicts with the French and the Canadian Indians, eighty-four men had been killed and sixteen taken prisoners.

The fort which the English government had built at the western end of Jonkers Street was not a stronghold in any sense of that word. Everywhere about it were visible signs of its structural weakness. The lieutenant-governor, Lord Viscount Cornbury, at the beginning of his administration in 1702, in the first year of Queen Anne's reign, reported it to the Lords of Trade as being "in a miserable condition. It is a stockadoed fort about one hundred and twenty foot long and seventy foot wide, the stockadoes are almost all rotten to that degree that I can with ease push them down. There is but three and twenty guns in the fort, most of them unserviceable, the carryages * * * * so honey-combed that they cannot be fired without danger."