To show that the bravest men sometimes act instinctively in a way that, to a superficial observer, might indicate a sense of fear, Col. Dabney was in the habit of relating a circumstance which he witnessed on the morning after the capture of Stoneypoint. A British ship of war was lying off in the North River, and fired at intervals a gun at the fort. The American soldiers were amusing themselves by watching the flash of the cannon, and the instant they observed it would jum down behind the parapet. General Wayne, in passing, with his usual impetuosity upbraided them, telling them to stand up like men, and not skulk behind a breast-work. While he was in the act of speaking a gun went off, and the General involuntarily ducked his head as if to shun the ball. Now if ever there was a man born insensible to fear, it was "Mad Anthony" Wayne, and therefore it would be the height of absurdity to attribute the unconscious movement to an apprehension of danger. . . .

The Northern army suffered great privations and hardships; and among many things of that kind related by Col. Dabney, I remember one instance of discomfort which these brave men were subjected to, that exhibits forcibly how much was endured by our forefathers in the achievement of their independence, and demonstrates at the same time the military incapacity of General Putnam....That portion of the American troops to which my uncle was attached, had commenced their march at the close of one of our Northern campaigns to the place selected for their winter encampment under the direction of Major General Putnam. One evening when a cold soaking rain was falling, the troops were halted by their leader in a long lane, where they were ordered to take up their encampment, and especially enjoined to abstain from burning the rails from the adjacent fences. Fire was absolutely necessary to comfort, if not to health; and General Muhlenburg, who was second in command, gave out the unreasonable mandate according to military rule, but significantly added: "Gentlemen, if I catch (laying a peculiar emphasis on catch) any of you burning rails, I shall have you punished severely." The hint was sufficient, and matters were so managed that Muhlenburg detected no one in the act of transgressing his injunction. The camp-fires, as might have been anticipated, were all fed with rails. . . . . .

According to Col. Dabney, General Putnam was extremely illiterate, committing whenever he wrote, the most egregious blunders both in grammar and orthography. He was also exceedingly mercenary, and disposed to make his military authority subservient to his private gains, as will appear from the following story. . . . . A detachment under Putnam's command was quartered on an extensive farm, where there was a large apple orchard. The fruit was not gathered when the troops arrived, and their leader, doubtless to keep the soldiers out of mischief, contracted with the owner of the farm to have the apples beaten and pressed by his men, upon a stipulation that he was to share, according to a certain proportion, in the proceeds of the cider. . . . . The operation was conducted with great bustle and energy under the supervision of this thrifty Major General. One day while this military (?) process was in full blast, General Washington came to the camp and not finding Putnam in his tent, inquired of Col. Grayson, an officer from Virginia, where he could be found. That gentleman with some spice of malice, conducted the Commander-in-chief to an eminence from which he had a full view of Putnam, fussing, scolding, sweating, and directing the soldiers in the business of gathering and beating the fruit, while the men instead of being drilled in the use of arms and military manoeuvres, were throwing apples at each other like a parcel of school boys. At this ridiculous spectacle General Washington laughed and retired quietly without intruding on the occupation of his subordinate. In consequence of these facts, Col. Dabney entertained no very exalted opinion of the military character of General Putnam; nor was this the result of prejudice, for he always admitted the General's courage to be unquestionable. . . . . .

Col. Dabney had an inflexible love of justice, and was the last man in the world to allow any one having a claim to his protection to be oppressed. This feature of his character was prominently displayed in a controversy with General Morgan, the hero of the Cowpens. While