

HISTORY
OF THE
COUNTY OF WESTMORELAND,
PENNSYLVANIA,
WITH
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES
OF MANY OF ITS
PIONEERS AND PROMINENT MEN.

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CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WILLIAM FINDLEY.

William Findley, the First Member of Congress from Westmoreland—His Colleague in the Commission to the President of the United States at the Time of the Whiskey Insurrection, David Redick—His Account of his Early Life and his Motives in settling in Pennsylvania—His Settlement in the Octorara Settlement and his Efforts to remove the Obligations of the Scotch Covenanters in Matters Civil—His Early Advantages—His Opinions on Slavery—Elected Member of the Assembly, of the Council of Censors, Member of the Constitutional Convention of 1790, and Member of Congress—"Modern Chivalry" and Findley Caricatured—His Views on the Federal Constitution—His Answer to Rev. Samuel B. Wylie's Strictures on the American Constitutions—His Account of the Publication and Statements of his "History of the Insurrection"—Antagonism of Brackenridge and Findley—Their Political Opposition and Personal Dislikes of each other—Findley's Contributions to the Register—His Shrewdness and Sagacity as a Politician—Debasement of the Politics of that Day—Instances of Personal and Party Abuse—Other work of Findley—His Industry—His Residence—Its Location—His Death and Grave—His Appearance and Dress—His Neighbors—His Family—His identification with the Whiskey Insurrection, and the important part he acted in it.

OF the Westmorelanders who were identified with the insurrection, William Findley is the most conspicuous. He was at that time the member of Congress from this district, and his influence and standing are evident from the fact that he with Redick was sent after the meeting at Parkinson's to explain to the President the state of affairs in the western counties, and to arrange a plan by which, if possible, there could be a mutual understanding without the intervention of the army. David Redick, the colleague of Findley, was a native of Ireland, and was by profession a lawyer. He was admitted to the Washington County bar in 1782. In 1786 he was elected a member of the Supreme Executive Council, and in 1788 was chosen vice-president of Pennsylvania. He held other offices of trust, and at the time of the insurrection took an active and prominent part in defense of law, order, and the constitution.

William Findley was born in the north of Ireland in 1741 or 1742, and came to Pennsylvania in 1763. He was a descendant of one of the old signers of the Solemn League and Covenant in Scotland, and another

of his ancestors bore a prominent part in the memorable siege of Derry in Ireland. The family was thus Scotch-Irish, and sprang from among those whom the persecutions in Scotland under James the Second impelled to seek shelter elsewhere. It was his first intention to go to Carolina, whither many of his father's countrymen had gone, but he changed his mind, and coming to Pennsylvania a mere lad, made one of that famous Octorara settlement, whose history appears to be the pride of all those who in any way are connected with it. He here early brought himself to notice among these "new American covenanters." He says that the motives which impelled him to come to Pennsylvania in preference to going to Carolina were those which arose out of the question of slavery. He had some scruples of the conscience about this matter, and even at that young age considered both the moral and political effects of slavery on the country. He therefore chose to hold his own plow and reap his own grain here rather than raise a family where slavery prevailed. He determined to have no slaves, and never had any; but he protests that he ever once thought of consigning to perdition, on moral or political grounds, those patriarchs and patriots who held slaves. He defended the course the government of the United States took with regard to the evil, and was apprehensive, as late as 1812, that total abolition in this country would lead to the same results which manumission had led to in Santo Domingo.¹ In this religious community he

¹ Findley's views on slavery appear to be paradoxical, but they may be reconciled. In his remarkable essay, "Observations, etc.," he says, "Before I had a house of my own, I resided in some families, and very pious families too, who held a number of slaves, and was very intimate in others; and I was myself then opposed to slavery, as I have been ever since; but I did not, like the author [Dr. Wylie], oppose it with slander and declamation, but with such views as I had of expediency, and of the moral law and the gospel. I was, however, powerfully combated with the judicial law, the examples of the patriarchs, and of the ancient civilized nations; nor was the curse on Cain forgotten" (p. 236). This whole chapter from which we have taken the above extract is an apology for the institution of slavery as it existed in Pennsylvania. One other extract is pertinent: "But the author [Dr. Wylie] mentions a certain 'portion of them [slaves] being doomed to hopeless bondage.' I deny the charge; at least, as far as it relates to Pennsylvania, it is an infamous slander. No law of the State has doomed any man or class of men to hopeless bondage. There were, indeed, slaves in Pennsylvania under the English government. Those being already by law the property of their owners, the Legislature could not interfere more than they could do with real estates. Such interference would have been an *ex post facto* law,—a law made after the act was done. The principle is abhorrent both to the laws of God and man."

Mr. Findley's notions, however, would seem to have undergone a change if the record is any evidence thereof:

"August Sessions, 1817.

"ANN FINDLEY.—On the petition of Matthew Jack, of the County of Westmoreland, stating that by Indenture duly executed and bearing date the 9th day of March, A.D. 1799, Ann Findley, a female negro, was in due form bound as a servant to William Findley, Esquire, to serve the said William Findley, his executors, or assigns from the date of the said Indenture for and during the term of nineteen years then next ensuing. And the said William Findley by assignment executed the 2nd day of April, A.D. 1816, did assign and transfer all his right, title, and claim to the said Ann Findley unto the petitioner agreeably to the said Indenture. That the said Ann Findley being a single woman during the time of her servitude did commit fornication, and was pregnant

advanced more liberal ideas than had been advanced or even entertained before, and he refused to answer in public, questions of a secular and temporal nature which were interspersed with questions of a religious or spiritual nature, and which he, as a lay officer of the church, was necessitated to answer and to propound. He helped by this and other reasonable innovations to break the traditional obligations which some wanted to make as binding in America as in Scotland.

While he was under his father's roof, he had the advantage of a larger library of books on church history and divinity than was possessed by most of his neighbors. He says that he had also been taught to read the Bible, and that he had inclined to some books on ancient history.¹ The evidence of his application and taste is seen in his subsequent productions, because it was not possible for him, for a length of time after he came to America, to devote himself studiously to literary pursuits.

When the Revolution commenced he took sides with his adopted country and served in the army. He rose to the rank of captain, and he is so designated in some of the old records. About the close of the war, 1782, he came into Westmoreland, and bought the farm upon which he resided until his death. He could not pay for his farm at once, but he was strong-armed, young, and willing to work. His farm, now a beautiful and valuable tract between Latrobe and St. Vincent's, through which the Pennsylvania Railroad passes, had then been just opened out, and more than four-fifths of it was covered with bushes, briars, and swamp-growth. He was a weaver by trade, and he set up his loom in one of the low rooms of his first log cabin, and it remained there till the house was demolished. The community around him was, in religious preference, Presbyterian, and in no long time he was one of the chief members of the church body, a prominent layman, and for many years an elder. Nor was he less prominent in political affairs. He was a born leader, and had from the first not only the confidence of the most substantial citizens of his district, but obtained and held an ascendancy over the common people which was relaxed only with his death. He was, before he had been here any length of time, elected to the Assembly, and was a colleague of Brackenridge there. He was one of the Council of Censors during all the sittings of the board. In this body he voted invariably against

with and delivered of three bastard children within the time of her said servitude, one of whom within the period of her servitude with the said petitioner. By reason whereof he has sustained great loss and damage, and praying the Court to order and direct that the said Ann Findley serve the said petitioner such further time beyond the term in the aforesaid Indenture mentioned as the Court might think fit and sufficient to compensate the petitioner for the loss and damage which he sustained as aforesaid. The Court upon due proof and consideration of the premises do adjudge and order that the said Ann Findley do serve the said petitioner, Matthew Jack, for the term of eighteen months from and after the expiration of the term of nineteen years in the said petition mentioned."

¹ "Observations, etc.," p. 234.

the party which professed Federalism, and his vote at all times is found upon the opposite list from St. Clair's, who sat as a censor from Philadelphia. This board sat from November the 10th, 1783, until the Constitution of 1790 was adopted. Findley, with William Todd as his colleague, represented Westmoreland in the Constitutional Convention of 1789-90. In the Convention he introduced a resolution, which he hoped to become a law under the Constitution, to educate the poor gratis.

In 1791 he was elected to Congress from the Westmoreland district, and he sat in the House until 1799, and then, after an interval of two terms, from 1803 to 1817. Some of his old friends say that he would have been returned to this time had he lived. In Congress his political enemies said he was inconsistent, but such was his tact that his constituents never forsook him. He always managed to come out on the side of the people, not only in the matter of his opposition to the adoption of the Federal Constitution, but in the far more serious matter to him and to them of the Whiskey Insurrection, and in the handling of the causes which brought about the war of 1812. He was something of a fluent talker, but not much of a public speaker; his strength lay in the power with which he controlled the people, by going to them while they were at work in the field, treating them to a glass of grog, and giving a push at a house-raising. He seldom, indeed, spoke at public meetings, but none could plan a public meeting or control the ends of one better than he, whence Brackenridge fails not to call him a demagogue, one who temporized with the populace, and who would descend to anything for the sake of the "sweet voices of the people." Party lines were not drawn so finely then as they were somewhat later, and although after the adoption of the Constitution he and Brackenridge were of the same political cast in all essentials, yet neither of them was of the material to follow the other; each of them must be a leader. We can coolly appreciate the feeling with which a man of the temperament, the learning, and the aspiration of Brackenridge, who lately adorned the Supreme Bench with his legal acumen and his philosophy, could look upon a man like Findley, who was self-educated, and used all his life to associate with the commonest kind of common people. In the volubility of his language and the keenness of his wit Brackenridge had the advantage. He has told us in "Modern Chivalry" the kind of popularity Findley longed for and sought after. The character of "Mr. Traddle" at the cross-roads, where the people were collected to fill an occasional vacancy, is intended for Findley. He has a sling at him all through the book. Among the reasons which Capt. Farrago gives for not voting for Traddle, the popular candidate, is this, that he does not object to him "because he is a weaver, but because he is nothing else but a weaver."²

² As a curiosity in literature, and lest no other opportunity should offer to give an extract from this rare book, "Modern Chivalry," to con-

The use of the word demagogue is in our day used interchangeably with the word politician. It is thus that it is sometimes hard to discriminate, and admitting the distinction we cannot sometimes see the difference. Findley was a consummate politician, and something more than a mere puller of threads and a disentangler of skeins. He helped to shape political opinion here as much possibly as any other man in Western Pennsylvania in his day, and as a politician was more effective out of Congress than in it. He had a large personal acquaintance, and his manners were such as to make him a favorite in a democracy. Besides this, he had the sympathy and the influence of the strongest church organization in the country at that day. The Scotch-Irish swore by Findley.

The parties of Federal and anti-Federal, strictly speaking, ended with the adoption of the Federal Constitution, although the name itself which distinguished them was used long after there was any necessity for the distinction which brought it into use, and when in truth the distinction was on account of different causes altogether from those which gave rise to that party appellation. The original elements

vey an idea of the satire therein to those to whom it is not accessible, we give the following, which is near the close of the book, the character of "Traddle" itself being introduced very early therein:

"On the third day, renewing their journey, the conversation between the captain and his servant turned on the character and history of the present revenue officer, the late Teague O'Reagan. The captain gave Duncan a relation of what had happened in the case of the attempt to draw him off to the Philosophical Society, to induce him to preach, and even to take a seat in the Legislature of the United States; that had it not been for a certain Traddle, a weaver, whom they had been fortunate enough to substitute for him, the people would most undoubtedly have elected Teague and sent him to Congress.

"'Guid deliver us!' said Duncan; 'do they make Parliament men o' weavers?' this kintra? In Scotland it maun be a duke or a laird that can hae a seat there.'

"'This is a republic, Duncan,' said the captain, 'and the rights of man are understood and exercised by the people.'

"'And if he could be i' the Congress, why did you let him be a gauger?' said Duncan.

"'This is all the prejudice of education, Duncan,' said the captain. 'An appointment in the revenue, or any other under the executive of the United States, ought not to have disgrace attached to it in the popular opinion, not even in the case of the hangman, for it is a necessary, and ought to be held a sacred, duty.'

"'I dinna ken how it is,' said Duncan, 'but I see they hae everything tail foremost in this kintra to what they hae in Scotland,—a gauger a gentleman, weavers in the Legislature, and even the hangman respectit.'

"'Just at this instant was heard by the wayside the ginging of a loom in a small cabin with a window towards the road. It entered the head of Duncan rather indiscreetly to expostulate with the weaver, and to know why it was that he also did not attain a seat in some public body. Advancing to the orifice, as it might be called, he applied his mouth and bespoke him as he sat upon the loom thus: 'Traddle,' said he, giving him the same name that the captain had given the other, 'why is it that ye sit here, treading these twa stecks, and playing wi' your elbows as ye throw the thread, when there is one o' your occupation not far off that is now a member of the house o' lords, or commons, in America, and is gane to the Congress o' the United States? Canna ye get yoursel elected? or is it because ye dinna offer that ye are left behind in this manner? Ye should be striving, man, while guid posts are gaeing, and no be sitting there wi' your hurdies on a beam. Dinna your neighbours gie ye a vote? Ye should get a chapin o' whiskey, man, and drink till them, and gar them vote, or, ye should gae out and talk politics and mak speeches.'"

of these parties became commingled after having been disturbed, and some of the most violent opponents of the Constitution before it was adopted took their stand in support of it when it was adopted, while such as Madison and Brackenridge united with Gallatin and Findley in condemning some of the most prominent measures of the first administration. The feelings which actuated this opposition (which appears to have been the strongest from those who were born outside of America), was the fear that that instrument was too republican in its nature; that the people would have so much liberty that in a little time through anarchy they would have none, and that a constitution less democratic, and modeled closer after that of England, would be more durable and less liable to be broken. Findley even published a work in which he vindicated the American constitutions. This work, called "Observations on the Two Sons of Oil," was an answer to the illiberal strictures of the Rev. Samuel B. Wylie, who, in his holy zeal in a work under that title, took occasion to propagate the false doctrine that the written constitutions of these States did not prohibit the violation of the laws of God, and who asserted that because the Church and the State were not united the people were not answerable to the moral law, and that the nation was a nation of infidels, in which, in short, he grossly misrepresented the government of the State and of the United States, while professing his "slippery titled" book to be a commentary on the symbolical vision of the prophecy of Zechariah. Findley, being a prominent churchman, was picked upon as the person to answer the charges of the reverend gentleman. He applied himself laboriously to the task, and brought to bear all his polemical as well as his political knowledge. He took the position that the Church and the State were separate institutions; the one divine and the other human. His answer swelled out to a volume of nearly four hundred pages. He is somewhat prolix, and at times a little stupid, but he goes through a wide range, and supports his assertions and statements by numerous quotations from, and references to, the writers of church history, both modern and patristic, and by texts from the Scriptures.

Findley's "History of the Insurrection" has been quoted by nearly every general and local historian who has written upon that subject. But his treatise, on the whole, was written but to give a partial view of the matter, and as an apology for his own share in it, as was Brackenridge's account, who thought it worth while to recount the affair at large to illustrate and explain his own peculiar course. Findley's account was not in all particulars correct, so his contemporaries said, and he himself afterwards acknowledged that in some matters he had been misinformed, and in others he had relied on vague reports. In writing that history he delayed the work for a year after he had commenced it, in order, as he says, to

obtain correct information, and having in the mean time consulted Addison, Hamilton, Redick, Irvine, and others, yet after it was published he found that it was in detail not correct as he intended it should be. A new editor was proposed for a new and corrected edition. Hamilton Rowan, a respectable Irish refugee, while in this country proposed to have it printed in Ireland, where it could be done cheaper at that time than in this country.¹ The author, in revising it, found that his informers had been mistaken or misinformed in some things, and that he must make considerable alteration respecting the conduct of particular persons, such as Addison and Ross. The corrections were sent with the copy, but the ship was taken at sea and both lost, and he himself lost the notes of revision. There was only one edition of the "History" printed, and copies are now scarce, the few extant being in the possession of various historical societies, of biblioplists, or in the State library.

This work is undoubtedly the most substantial and important one he wrote, and treating as it did of a political subject, and giving the views of one of the most active participants in that great civil disturbance, it could not but be a work to which the attention of many should be directed. It has been quoted and drawn upon by eminent legal and historical writers, such as Wharton and Hildreth; while, on the other hand, it has been assailed with virulence by the political opponents of the author, and ridiculed by the New England Federalists. "Shall we match Joel Barlow," exclaimed Fisher Ames, indignantly, "against Homer and Hesiod? Can Thomas Paine contend against Plato? or could Findley's history of his own (Whiskey) insurrection vie with Sallust's narrative of Catiline?"

Touching the criticisms and the attacks his book received, all of his adversaries are free to admit that in the statement of facts he would not knowingly deviate from truth, but they assert that his prejudices were strong, and that his personal enmity biased his judgment.²

Findley and Brackenridge were very bitterly opposed to each other. In the matter of substantial gain and advantage, Findley probably had the best of Brackenridge; but now that they and their gen-

eration have passed, Brackenridge still gets the ear of the people in his inimitable satire in which Findley is caricatured.

These two politicians first came into contact in the Assembly. Brackenridge was elected at the instance of the inhabitants of Pittsburgh and that region about, for the avowed object of securing the erection of a new county. Findley then was a member for Westmoreland. Here they came into collision frequently, and especially on the subject of a loan-office, a measure for which the people of the West were clamorous. Findley supported the bill; Brackenridge opposed it. Brackenridge cared little for the opinion of the people on questions upon which he regarded them unable to judge intelligently, and he frequently gave expression to his contempt for them. "What do they know about such things," said he, indignantly. These expressions and the speech on this occasion were reported against him, and much use was made of them. A long paper war then followed between him and Findley, and from the recrimination which passed between them, aggravated by their personal dislikes, was laid the foundation of their personal and political enmity.

In a five-column letter in the *Farmer's Register* for Nov. 18, 1808, Findley acknowledges himself to be the author of many articles which had been published in that paper for more than three years past under the *nom de plume* of "Sidney."

He had indeed, from the establishing of the *Register* in 1798, furnished circular letters from time to time during the whole term of his official career. The paper was pledged to the support of the Democratic-Republican ticket, and it was a powerful instrument in his hands and in the hands of his friends. It was the only paper within the county, and the source of all public news and information. The mildness of its editorial articles did not make it offensive to the general reader, and its political course and preferences were to be gathered from the department of news, from the resolutions of the local meetings, and from the leaders which were disguised under the signature of professedly disinterested correspondents.

Of Findley's articles many appeared between 1805 and 1808. Some of these articles were lengthy and prolix, extending to two numbers of the paper, and filling as many as ten closely printed columns of matter. While there undoubtedly was a censorship exercised over the paper by the editors, there appeared to be a show of fairness in the offer that its columns were open to any one who felt disposed to take exceptions at anything that appeared in it. Probably there was nothing Findley so much counted on as on an outspoken adversary. This offer, it is true, was sometimes taken advantage of, but never without the controversial article being answered, and repaid with full interest in kind. The result in every event was that Findley always carried the election, and this notwith-

¹ The authority for this is Findley himself, in a letter in the *Register*.

Archibald Hamilton Rowan was a noted Irish patriot who had been imprisoned in his own country on account of his efforts as an agitator. In 1797 he established himself as a calico-printer and dyer on the banks of the Brandywine. Subsequent to this he went to Ireland. (See Harper's Monthly Magazine, January, 1881, article on "Calico-Printing.")

Rowan is mentioned in "The Irish Bar," chap. ix. He there figures as a friend of Simon Butler, a barrister, who, for publishing a libel against the House of Lords (Ireland), was sentenced and fined by the Lord Chancellor. In the course of the sentence words were used which were construed as a personal insult, and Rowan for his friend waited on the Lord Chancellor, John Fitzgibbon, Earl of Clare, who had been something of a duelist. Mr. Rowan is here called "a well-known Irish gentleman."

² Even the editor of Brackenridge's "Whiskey Insurrection" allows the above admission.

standing open charges of time-serving and of apparent changes of principles and measures.¹

The most noted of these changes was from his opposition to his support of James Ross, one of the foremost leaders of the Republican-Democratic party in the West, in his candidacy for Governor. Throughout this region Ross was very popular, and was early acknowledged as a representative man. Findley was charged for supporting McKean for the Governorship as against Ross in 1799, and then for supporting Ross in 1808. In 1799, Findley had been one of a committee which was made up of politicians over all the State to select one who would be the most acceptable candidate for that office. He says that, finding McKean to be without doubt the one, he gave him his support. This change in 1808 opened out many batteries. If the speeches, the resolutions, the publications which passed in that campaign in Western Pennsylvania were before us we should be amused, and then astonished. There has probably been none other like it since that day. Politics had then one element in it which is now, so far as an element that makes results is concerned, totally absent. It was the day when the infidelity of the French encyclopædists and politicians had taken possession of those Americans who professed deism, or downright atheism. We have seen attacks and replies as glibly arranged and far more scurrilous than those of the popular haranguers and writers of the "Free Thought School" of our own day. To repeat these would be to shock the moral sensibilities of any free-thinker or rationalist with whom we are acquainted, and who carries the memory of a Christian father or mother. But in such a controversy, and in such a conflict, it could not be otherwise than that Findley should be the gainer. In the *Register*, one writer who styles himself the "Friend of Truth," attacked Findley for opposing Ross on religious grounds, ostensibly because Ross had not subscribed to the religious test, and because he, on a current report, had somewhere in Westmoreland County given the sacrament to his dog, in contempt and derision of the most sacred ordinance of Christians. Then Findley gathering his arrows, shot them in showers at Tom Paine and the infidels who attempted to overthrow the Christian religion and to change the Constitution. What argument could resist the political defense that covered itself behind texts from the Scriptures?

In 1812, Findley was opposed in the election for congressman by Thomas Pollock. The announcement of Pollock was in the form of an advertisement, which said that Pollock "was descended from a family well known on the frontiers in times of danger." He had been county commissioner, a justice of the peace,

and a member of the Assembly three successive times. Pollock made a strong run, but as the result in the thirteen election districts which made up the congressional district of Westmoreland, Indiana, Jefferson, and Armstrong, Findley had 1260 votes, and Pollock, 1116.

It was indeed a time of vituperation and abuse in politics, and this vituperation and abuse was not confined to the hustings. The evidence of most of this being made public in political speeches and in the common newspapers, is not at present accessible to us. That which found its way into more permanent literature has been in part preserved. The individual and political character of no public man of his day was more bitterly and acrimoniously attacked than that of Findley.

In addition to his "History of the Insurrection of Western Pennsylvania," published in 1796, and "Observations," vindicating religious liberty, published in 1812, he had published previously (1794) "A Review of the Funding System." Upon the question of the Federal Constitution, Findley took sides with Gallatin, and Gallatin was to Jefferson what Hamilton was to Washington. He attacked Hamilton severely in his "History of the Insurrection," and their respective statements sometimes do not coincide. He did not agree with some of the acts of the first Federal administration, but this disagreement was more on the construction of powers than in opposition to their ends. When the vote on Jay's treaty was taken in the House, to avoid giving his vote he left the House, and was brought up by the sergeant-at-arms.

But from the records it is very apparent that Findley was no idler. Besides these productions which we have mentioned there were other contributions of his which appeared in the papers printed in the East. These would indicate that he was a very assiduous and a laborious worker. He was present at every session of Congress. When at home he superintended his farm and overlooked the interests of his children, who were married and who lived near him. He took a very active interest in the affairs of his church, Unity, of which he was for many years an active elder. In the councils of the congregation his voice was all potent.

Findley's residence was in Unity township, and the site of his first house is very nearly indicated by the location of the ovens of the "Monastery Coke-Works" along the line of the Pennsylvania Railroad. That house was lately burnt down. It was built of hewed logs, was two stories in height, and for its day must have been a very credible building. In this house he lived till he became old and infirm, when he took up his abode in the house of his daughter, Mrs. Carothers, which was on a farm taken off the original tract, and was located on the left side of the road going from the monastery to Latrobe, and nearly opposite the residence of John George, Esq. In this house he died. His body was buried in the grave-

¹ A writer in the *Gazette* so late as 1823 (August 15th) has this to say: "In 1817 we were required to vote, but were denied the right of choice; we had freedom of thought, speech, and action, but were forbidden to 'favour opposition to William Findley.'"

yard of Unity Church, and over it is a plain gray tombstone with the following inscription :

The
Venerable
William Findley
DEPARTED THIS LIFE
April 5, 1821
In the 80th year
Of His Age

In size Mr. Findley was a large man; his complexion was florid; he wore no beard, and was very tidy and tasteful in his dress. When at home he dressed in homespun, but on going out in fair weather wore a complete suit of white, with white hat having a broad rim, silk stockings, and cue. In the cold season his dress was the conventional shad-belly coat, long waistcoat, dark knee-breeches, long boots, but always the broad-rimmed white beaver hat. His manners, as one would infer, were agreeable and plain, although when he was busied at work writing upon a subject that kept his attention for days at a time he did not like it when he was disturbed, and when one came even on business he soon dismissed him. He had many visitors. Of his neighbors those who were near and who had taken a more or less active part in public concerns were William Todd, his colleague in the Constitutional Convention of 1789-90; Gen. St. Clair, who usually met Findley at the village of Youngstown, which was intermediate between the two; George Smith, Esq., a noticeable man in the Whiskey Insurrection on the side of law, and afterwards an officer in the War of Eighteen-Twelve; the Sloans and the Craigs, who lived farther down the Loyalhanna; and the Proctors and Lochrys, who lived towards St. Xavier's Convent from his place.

An old lady who passed her childhood in the family of Findley, and to whom we acknowledge indebtedness for items of a personal nature, has said that the periodical occasion of his going to Congress was one of the greatest magnitude not only in the family but in the neighborhood. He went of course on horseback, and on a horse which he used for that purpose only. For weeks before he started arrangements were making, his horse was well housed and well cared for, and none was allowed to use him, and an abundance of the finest white linen was prepared for the use of the congressman until he should get home. On the day which had been fixed for his departure all the neighbors round came to see him off, to lift their hats and say good-by. The women part of the household would always be in commotion, for the journey at that day was great, the distance long, and the goodman would be away so long.

Findley was twice married. His second wife was a widow Carothers, a very beautiful woman, and much younger than he. By his first wife he had three children,—David, an officer in the regular army; Nellie, who married a Carothers, a son of Findley's second wife by her former husband; and Mary, who was

married to John Black. If he has any descendants within our own county it is not generally known.

Findley's identification with the Whiskey Insurrection is such that he must ever be regarded one of the principal characters figuring in it. That he accredited himself with honor and as a patriot none at this day would deny. That he was indiscreet, and at first inactive, something of a time-server, and gave the seditious some occasion to think he was for open rebellion and resistance, will likewise not be denied. But in this he went not so far as either Brackenridge, Gallatin, or Cook. From his local habitation and from the situation of his district he was at the outer edge of that whirlpool. He came to his senses quicker than most of the rest, and when he did he, with the greatest tact and with a display of knowledge of human nature rarely exceeded, used all his influence for the establishing of "law, order, and the constitution." In this he was eminently successful, for he had the confidence of Washington probably to almost as great an extent as any man of his day in Western Pennsylvania, and certainly more of the confidence of his constituents than any other man in it. In his plan of settlement he displayed what Macaulay says is the highest statesmanship, the statesmanship that uses every available means for a successful compromise.¹

One extract from his correspondence extending throughout this period will probably give his views on the subject quite as well as the whole of his correspondence together. In a letter written to Governor Mifflin as early as Nov. 21, 1792,² he says,—

"Though Congress is fully vested with the Power of levying Exeises, yet the necessity, the time, the subjects of excise, and the People's prejudices respecting it are questions of serious importance to government. For my part, from a consideration of those things, I thought that power was about to be exercised prematurely, and with an honest zeal for the success of the government, exerted myself in my station to prevent it; but being once made and its effects not experienced I did not move last session for a repeal, but endeavoured to procure such alterations as I conceived would have had a tendency to give it effect. The industry and zeal with which, in all my correspondence, I have endeavoured to promote a regular line of conduct among the people has been such as will never occasion me to blush; but that I should, in the present situation of things, undertake to advise the people to go on with distilling and pay the excise would be lost labour. Thus far, however, I freely declare that I shall certainly continue to use what influence I have to direct the opposition into a regular and orderly channel. And this, I presume, is all that is contemplated by the mass of the People."

¹ Since this sketch of William Findley was written, an autobiographical sketch has appeared in the "Pennsylvania Magazine of History." From this article we give these additional details:

Purposing to go to the frontier of Pennsylvania as early as Bouquet's time, he was prevented by the Indian wars, and taught school in the Octorara settlement for several years, until the office was opened for the sale of western lands. In 1760 he married, and purchased land in now Franklin County. Was elected County Commissioner for two terms of three years each. Came to Westmoreland County about 1781. Shortly after his arrival here refused to be sent to the Assembly, but was sent as one of the Council of Censors. From that time until 1812 (so he writes), he had never been but one whole winter with his family, and that was when he declined serving in Congress. He was then successively elected a member of the Convention that ratified the Federal Constitution; a member of the Supreme Executive Council; a member of the first State Legislature under the Constitution of 1790; a member of the Second Congress; and a member of the State Senate.

² Papers relating to the Whiskey Insurrection, "Penn. Arch.," New Series, vol. iv., 49.