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STUDIES IN TOMPKINS COUNTY HISTORY NO. 1

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A  
Romance  
Come to  
Danby

By  
William Heidt, Jr.

1967

DeWitt Historical Society of  
Tompkins County, Inc.  
Ithaca, New York

THIS MODEST PAMPHLET

*is*

*DEDICATED*

*to*

LOIS BRYSON O'CONNOR

*in recognition of her many years devoted to  
research and recording  
in the field of local history*

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## Preface

When in 1797 Dr. Lewis Beers transferred his romance from his native Stratford, Connecticut, to a wilderness location in the Town of Danby, he was 29 and his wife just past 27. His resources included four years of successful medical practice, unspecified funds and other personal property, and a professional and business rating with the Bank of Derby that was helpful in a later enterprises. He came not to practice "physic and surgery" he thought, but fate decided otherwise.

Two of his Stratford contemporaries were Robert C. and Samuel W. Johnson, sons of the second and grandsons of the first president of Columbia College, now University. They were speculators in western lands owned by Connecticut, including the towns of Caroline, Danby and Newfield in Tompkins County. It was a natural consequence of the Johnson propinquity that when the Beers decided to "become farmers rather than spend a life in rivalry in the profession of physic," they purchased land from their neighbors.

Characteristically, the doctor planned carefully, then acted decisively. What he accomplished as farmer, pioneer physician after resuming practice, community leader, and exponent of Swedenboeg's New Jerusalem Church movement are told in a forthcoming study. The one in hand is confined to the wooing and winning of "the apple of his eye." Data for both come from his manuscript Memoir and memorabilia in the DeWitt collection.

WILLIAM HEIDT, JR.

*DeWitt Historical Museum, Ithaca, N. Y.*

*November 30, 1966.*



## A Romance Come to Danby

This is the story of Lewis Beers, a poor boy who through devoted application achieved the goal he set for himself, that of becoming a successful physician and surgeon during the early days of our country. Its attainment was in the pattern of the American success story that later filled so many pages of history. At the same time he won his dream girl!

But it has special significance for us because in 1797 he removed from his native Stratford, Connecticut, into the wilderness that was to become Danby, and began clearing the farm that until recently was the property of Erie J. Miller. The intriguing phase of this story, however, is his wooing and winning of the neighborhood girl who was the "apple of his eye" from his early schooldays to the time he wrote his memoirs when he was in his 79th year. In achieving this victory, he employed a tenacious but gentle pursuit to overcome parental objection and the annoying competition a sophisticated seminary had interposed.

We may imagine the warm sunshine of spring 1846 stirred the good doctor to set quill to paper, for he launched himself confidently: "The following is a narrative containing the biographical history of Dr. Lewis Beers." His hand was surprisingly firm, but spelling was unsure and punctuation followed impulse rather than rules. Nevertheless, he persevered until he had written eight chapters that cover 145 pages of his notebook now in the DeWitt museum.

Dr. Beers next dutifully paid filial respects to his parents.

“His father was a mechanic, a carpenter and house joiner, one who stood at the head of these branches of his business; and of unending integrity, strict economy, but especially of untiring industry.” He added: “The mother was most affectionate and kind to all neighbors, but especially to her own family. Her domestic virtues correspond to those of her husband’s.”

After telling of his tragic experience with rheumatic fever at 14, which left him with a physical weakness that lasted throughout his long life, he recounts his theological and teaching experiences. Then early in his narrative he introduces us to the girl of his aspirations.

“At the age of 11, 12 and 14 I was permitted to attend school each year for three months, or the winter term. Phebe Curtis, the subject of the following narrative, was eighteen months younger than myself. She was there the terms that I spent, always at the same school. It was out of our district but they had an excellent instructor; I was sent there on that account.

“I would look at her and think how superior she was to the rest of the little girls, but she never seemed to act as if she felt at all superior to the rest; but she was. There were none of her age that could read and spell so well. The last season that we were at the school together there were about eight of us that made up a Bible class for reading. The last verse of the fourth chapter of the prophecy of Jeremiah fell to her lot to read. The words are the following: ‘Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?’

“The sound of her voice was so soft and melodious, her accent at the close of the interrogation so perfect that it surprised me. For a long time it was passing through my mind, and it has not been forgotten to the present day. I have introduced



the anecdote to illustrate the order of Providence, operating to cause to come to pass events which are to us wrapped in deep obscurity.’’

We may view this manifestation as puppy love, but must keep in mind that the youthful Lewis Beers persisted for years and attained his objective. He asserts in his narrative that he possessed an indomitable mind; by overcoming many obstacles in his path, he demonstrated the truth of the statement.

First of these obstacles to be overcome was the disparity in worldly goods of the two families, and this was compounded by his frail physical condition following the rheumatic fever in a day when physical prowess meant the possibility of a poor boy’s attaining a convincing degree of financial and social standing to flaunt before his love. Its lack in Lewis was a handicap. But he possessed a good mind, so he substituted mental for physical vigor, and won the hand of the maiden he adored.

While the Phebe of his heart never dismissed him, there was always a degree of uncertainty that kept him doubly alert. He knew of the objections her parents raised against him, but accepted them as valid and persevered, originating stratagems to offset them and constantly keep Phebe in his focus.

His device for accomplishing this was to send her ‘‘compositions.’’ During the years of his withdrawal from strenuous activities because of the frailness of his body, he had devoted his time to reading the Bible and theological works of the day. ‘‘To improve my style in composition and conversation’’ he pored over the *Rambler*, *Spectator*, Swift, Sterne and Pope,

At one time, when he was 19, he began studies to become a minister of the Gospel. Brought up a Presbyterian, particularly a Calvinist, he had no thoughts other than of becoming a Presbyterian ‘‘priest,’’ as he expressed it. He studied Latin

and Greek and read theological works of the day, but when he found there was such a wide divergence in interpretations of the dogma, he gave up. His mind was indomitable at this time, too.

Despite this vacillation, Phebe Curtis remained his lode-star. He remarked, "I call her mine, but only prospectively." Theirs was an affectionate friendship, but he notes, "Scenes of severe trials began to open on me." How severe they appeared is indicated by further excerpts from his narrative.

"In the winter of 1793 I ventured to tell the secret of my love. As I had just reasons to apprehend, it produced a new state of things in our friendly intercourse. It gave no offense but a judicious investigation of attending circumstances. She told me she should never marry without the approbation of her parents and, 'although I can say you are my real and affectionate friend, yet appearances forbid any rational expectation that I can ever be yours.'"

"I felt a conviction of the justness of her remarks," the prospective swain recorded. "I was not disappointed, for I knew our circumstances were so different that I had no reason to expect consent for a union with me could be attained. It was plain to see that, in their estimation, they looked forward to seeing that Phebe, so good and accomplished a young woman, could choose herself a man of wealth, which was their idol. My heart sank within me, notwithstanding the just sentence she pronounced. I had loved her with sincere affection for a long time, and I was conscious that she felt for me dearer than friendship though she durst not let herself show it.

"I had for a long time sent her my compositions, for which she always expressed great pleasure. That her mind leaned to-

ward me was plain to be seen," was his summation of the inconclusive situation of the moment. Just how this episode culminated, just what young Lewis Beers of the indomitable mind salvaged from this interview is best left to his own pen.

"Phebe, what will become of me? What shall I do separated from your society? I rest on you for counsel, I rest on you alone for directions."

"Lewis," she said, "the task you set for me is a hard one. You must leave me and forget me."

"But how can that be? I can leave, but how forget? The years of friendly intercourse can never pass from memory."

"Try to find some virtuous female and try to transfer your affections from me to her," was Phebe's enigmatic advice.

"But where can one like thee be found?" persisted Lewis.

"In Esther Benjamin, a friend of mine, well educated and handsome of form and face." Was she offering succor to a losing suitor or was it a test of his fidelity? Lewis did not weigh the alternatives but sought a device to maintain communications while the alchemy of time wrought its solution.

"Oh, Phebe! I can leave thee but I shall remain a solitary anchorite through life. Will you receive, as usual, and read my compositions?"

"I will, with pleasure," was her reassuring reply.

"Then I shall not be altogether unhappy," Lewis gratuitously commented, knowing hope was his ally.

Following this "interview," the Yankee swain copied a stanza on "Innocence," which he remarked, "has been presented before, I presume." No doubt the quotation had been used in more gentle times to assuage bruised hearts and keep love's faint flames from flickering out.

Another scene in Lewis Beers' "severe trials" evolved: a tri-

angle entered his world and offered a new challenge at a time when his usual emotional stability was under great strain. It is fairest to him if we permit the sorely beset swain to lead us to its denouement. For he did well, with an assist by Phebe.

“The latter part of this winter [that of 1768] Phebe was addressed by a new lover, “a young Presbyterian priest just from the seminary,” is the mannsr in which Lewis recounts the episode. One will be excused for sensing a bite of asperity in the word “priest.” Lewis is fully aware of the rivalry a young seminarian can offer a country boy, even though the latter is blessed with a full share of native wit that is guided by an indomitable mind. Here we must let the country suitor resume his account of what happened and how Phebe came to his aid when the chips were down.

As we might expect, the intruder in young Beers’ emotional life is due for some verbal bumps. It wasn’t long before the local competitor recorded some comments on the newcomer.

“He avowed his love at once; he was all aflame. A week or two before he had seen her at a party at his mother’s. There Phebe was taken with such a headache that she was unable to return home for a day or two, so he had an opportunity of forming a slight acquaintance with her. Soon after he had another interview with her and poured forth his soul as if his new affection would overcome his body. He wept, and prayed for the privilege of repeating his visist.”

Perhaps we should pause briefly to imagine the emphasis Lewis must have put on that word “slight,” and imagine his sardonic smile as he wrote of the young priest’s agonies. For the intruder to hang himself, Lewis liberally supplied rope.

“It was not Lewis; no, but she thought of him, although retired from her. She saw in him that chaste, that unassum-

ing tenderness, that gentle affection and social sweetness which sought to give and asked no more than mental pleasure.”

If we have got the notion Lewis had a good opinion of himself, we need not distrust him or our judgment. Phebe knew him better than we do, and time has proved she was not in disagreement with him.

Remembering he had a persistent adversary and one not denied access to the Curtis home, we return to Lewis’ narrative to learn how he fared in his contested claim to Phebe’s hand.

“The new lover struck her with dread but after the storm was over and he appeared somewhat rational, she consented to his wishes. If I remember rightly, he made four or five visits, but only at intervals of three or four weeks, after which there was a long pause in visiting. She has, I thought, dismissed him, which was the case; her parents seemed pleased with it or thought he would keep me away.”

At this stage of the contest it is clear Lewis was keeping up never-ending surveillance on developments and keeping out of the way of priest and parents. However, he kept his observation post manned; nor was his propaganda activity permitted to lag. Prospects were brightening, yes, but victory was not in hand.

“My pen was not altogether idle,” the stout young contender would have us know as he explains: “In the meantime, religion, poetry and literary subjects were presented to her. Ever solicitous, the following piece was written on hearing she was sick at the home of her new lover, which was four miles distant from her home. Some of the company had come home, and I heard that Phebe had been left on account of her sickness.”

This turn of events caused Lewis anxiety that we share. But he fought back with a poem that help blunt the temporary advantage which fell unearned to the young priest. Here is the "composition" as he preserved it for us to peruse nearly two centuries after Phebe's understanding eyes first fell upon it.

Whence all these tender sympathies  
That move my feeling breast  
And swell my heart with painful sight  
To hear my friend's distress.  
When'er you sicken, I'm in pain,  
Your anguish makes me smart,  
What is this mysterious chain  
That binds you to my heart?  
Your happiness with ardent joys  
My soul forever fills;  
Your sorrow all my peace annoys;  
My tears, they flow like rills.  
Your absence oft, I like the dove  
In tender accents mourn;  
And in soft strains lament my love,  
This from my bosom torn.  
Severed from thee I think in vain,  
The world no joy can give;  
Empty the riches of the main  
Without my love to live;  
Permit me thus to sing my grief,  
My Phebe, kindly hear;  
Thou only fountain of relief,  
What can my bosom cheer?

Here we have homemade poetry by a country boy, and cleverly used. What chance remains for his priestly rival! But Lewis' ingenuity fashioned still another stratagem, no doubt on the old adage that all is fair in love and war. Listen!

“My time passed without pleasure except when writing to Amanda. We thought it best each of us to assume a new name: Aurelius, the god of love or gold; Amanda, the loving or the love of good. It was so done that if by accident or by any other cause my letters should fall into other hands they could not be used to injure her by presenting them to her parents.”

While Lewis fails to inform us of the manner in which Aurelius and Amanda exchanged their communications, it is obvious the plan succeeded, for Lewis makes no reference to any mishaps. The epistles they exchanged were extant when he compiled his memoirs, and specimens are conserved in the DeWitt Museum even today.

During the period when Lewis was contending with the priest for Phebe’s favor, he writes: “I think I addressed several letters to her on subjects of deep importance, and some of a sportive and humorous sort, so that Amanda could know what Aurelius was meditating on. Though from the first of January, 1790, I had little personal intercourse with her until the following summer. January 16, 1790, I find a few verses addressed to Amanda, plaintive and sad in consequence of our separation.”

Still the priestly contestant was maintaining his quest, and Lewis comments: “Her loving priest being occasionally there, I must confess, gave me some uneasiness. I had agreed on a friendly separation, and Amanda would still permit me to write to her as usual. This seemed in a small measure to mitigate the painful idea of retiring from her company. I could not transfer my affections, according to her advice; and indeed I could not admit one such thought.

“I mourned in secret and withdrew myself from all company for some weeks when nothing but writing to Amanda

gave even momentary pleasure. After passing a few weeks in solitude, I ventured to call on her. She was in a room by herself, and her parents taken with the idea all was going right with the priest, were not disturbed by my call.

“Amanda met me with a smile. Our hands seemed drawn together; soft and long was the mutual press as if they could not part. Neither could we speak. She pointed me to a chair, and her gesture said plainly ‘sit here, near the one I arose from.’ We sat down. We wept like two infants that had been chided for imaginary wrongs, yet guiltless. Such were our feelings, unless it was guilt to love. Our tears were mutual; we wiped them. Soon they eased our agitated feelings and opened the way for words.”

The priest was still a source of much uneasiness on the part of Lewis, but it is clear Amanda was supporting Aurelius.

“Dear Amanda, can you forgive my improvidence in venturing into your presence contrary to your friendly directions?”

“Oh, Aurelius, my advice to you was not from the seat of affection but dictated by prudence.”

“But love, Amanda, forced me into your presence contrary to my better judgment, and I expected to be reproached. But I will retire and try not to offend again.”

“Aurelius, you have not offended. I am free of all entanglements and rejoice at this friendly interview.”

“Dear Amanda, may I repeat them?”

“You may, at intervals, and fill the spaces with your esteemed compositions. More I durst not say; a watchful eye is steadily cast on me. A few repeated visits in quick succession would open new scenes of trouble. They would soon see that the hopes entertained for the address of the young priest were supplanted by those from the schoolmaster, and I shall again



have my feelings harrowed up by maternal tenderness presented, clothed in reproaches. And this I know not how to bear.”

Amanda’s reaction and her guarded handling of a sensitive situation gives reason to believe that Aurelius’ compositions, epistles, poetry and all else are winning the battle over the powers marshalled by the priest and abetted by her parents. But his troubles were not over, as the narrative makes clear.

“After three or four visits, as above stated, jealousy was aroused, and Aurelius was forbidden admittance to see his affectionate friend, Amanda. This took place in February, 1790. We now concluded to bear our hard fortune with becoming gratitude. We could occasionally get an interview in mixed company and exchange a look, if not a word; even this was consoling, and sometimes an opportunity for a few words. How consoling!

“Amanda has not yet said that I was even her beloved Aurelius; no, but her affectionate friend. But never once did she forbid me to call her my beloved Amanda, and she always seemed pleased to hear it.”

Amanda was certainly steadfast and as co-operative as she could be under such stern circumstances. Winter passed, and spring returned, Lewis noted, without any external change in affairs. They met occasionally but without appointment. He observes, while writing his memoirs, that there is a loss of letters until August 1, but does not indicate whether they disappeared on the way to Amanda or from her collection.

“Here I must again introduce the young priest. As Amanda was walking out at dusk of an evening, she met him in the road, and he requested her to stop a moment as he desired an interview, if she could consistently grant it. She told him that

on such a day of the week she would be at her sister's and he could come there, if he chose, at that time.

“She had not ever given him a formal dismissal; she had only desired him to discontinue his visits, which admonition she thought sufficient for a man of his sense. He came to the sister's, had the interview he wished, and met his fate. He was almost frantic, and would know the reason for her hardness toward him. She frankly told him that another possessed her heart, and if Providence permitted he wanted in time to have her hand. So, says Amanda: ‘You see I have neither heart nor hand to give you. Is there anything more you want?’

“There was nothing else; he took his leave. Amanda now felt she had a good tale to relate to Aurelius when we should meet.”

Wonderful girl, that Amanda, we generously conclude, and praise her unremittingly for her steadfastness in devotion to the hometown youth. But all was not yet clear sailing for them. Elimination of the young priest did not soften parental attitude since it was a blow to cherished dreams.

“She returned home, told her mother the whole story and acknowledged to this parent that her heart was Aurelius' with all her affections. The mother smiled; Amanda read it an approval. She thought it wrong to hide from her mother any longer our mutual love that had been of long standing, and as she supposed from circumstances, plainly seen by the parents. She rejoiced at the opportunity to place the matter in its true light before them.

“The mother made no untoward observation. Amanda was left to her own thoughts with the pleasing anticipation of seeing soon her beloved Aurelius. Now released from restraint, she could speak her mind.

“I called next evening, about sunset, August 1, 1790. I had

never seen Amanda in her real beauty; her eyes and every motion of her countenance were brilliant with all the pleasurable activities of life. I looked on her with unspeakable emotions. Compared with almost all of our former meetings, which were that of sad yet pleasing melancholy, my first thought was, what means this happy change?"

"Be seated, Aurelius. I have delightful things to communicate to you that will revive your drooping spirits, dissipate your sorrows and fill your bosom with delight?"

"She repeated her interview with the priest and related, as stated above, how she had given him a formal dismissal. I smiled at the history of the last scene of the drama and rejoiced that she now had escaped from that source of laughable and romantic trouble. But the secret of the happy development, which struck me with so much pleasing surprise, was yet to come.

"Mother," says Amanda, "approves of our love! Now, Aurelius, I may say I love you, and for years I have, but durst not acknowledge it, but tried to cover it under the pleasing robe of affectionate friendship."

Was this a signal that their summer of torment was to blend into a season of joy? We hesitate to lift our doubts, noting Aurelius did not disclose their means of communication as if reserving it for some contingency. And he must have pondered the smile which creased Mother Curtis' face after Amanda's forthright revelation. In her ecstasy the dutiful daughter may not have read a sinister connotation in a smile that went unilaterally interpreted. Regardless of what suspicions we may raise, Lewis is permitted to describe his reaction to his first major thwarting of forces persistently allied against him in his quest for the maiden's hand. He'll be jubilant no doubt.

“I embraced her to my bosom. Our lips met, our kisses were mutual, our souls mingled. Ideal purity and innocence imbued our very life. If angels could have seen, they would have smiled approval. But until this happy moment Amanda had never returned me a kiss, though oft lately I had ventured to snatch that pleasure. Such was her prudence lest too much indulgence should weaken her resolution not to give herself to me without parental approbation.”

This, of course, is not overstressing the accomplishments of Aurelius, aided and abetted by Amanda as opportunity offered. Nor did he think differently after a long lifetime they spent in the Town of Danby. Aurelius faithfully resumes his narrative.

“Thus it was! Though the phlegmatic and dull may think that our first meeting was too vivid and enthusiastic as painted above, yet it is not. For even now, in my seventy-ninth year while narrating the circumstances and retrospecting on that scene of rapture, my whole soul is absorbed in the same emotions.”

In this state of blissfulness, Lewis now informs us how he decided on a medical career and why he did so.

“Our plan for the future was that I should commence the study of physic and surgery which presented a more hopeful prospect for the comforts of future life than any others. Accordingly, I commenced to study the first of November following.” [That is 1790, with Dr. Joshua Poor of Stratford].

“I had now concluded that for my loved Amanda’s sake I could feel competent to any undertaking that a professional education would require. With a mind strong to apply, quick to discern and create ideas, and ‘a memory retentive of whatsoever flowed into it, I soon found that the knowledge of the practice of physic and surgery was easy to attain and that the

theory could in a few months be obtained. A hopeful project cheered me, but Amanda's home was cheerless."

Before we permit the young medical student to elaborate on this situation in the Curtis family and, after we recall the mother's smile, it is only fair to say he was successful in his pursuit of medical knowledge, such as it was in his day. In fact so successful was he that he became a certified practitioner at the end of nine months!

Good fortune continued to share its beneficence in a test at a time when he was establishing himself professionally. In an epidemic of scarlet fever and another of dysentery early in his practice he developed such renown that he was called to treat not only Amanda but her obstinate father as well! Rather wryly he notes that his success in both cases did not improve his stature as a prospective son-in-law.

As to Amanda's worsening home situation, he recounts her heart-to-heart talk with her mother late in the preceding November. "The mother took her alone one evening and recapitulated to her the painful anxieties she had given them for the partialities she had always shown Lewis Beers. They had lived in hope that when she came to riper years she would see the impropriety of connecting herself with one whose circumstances were so different from her own. But since August last their hopes were gone, and a new system must be adopted.

"And what is that, dear mother?"

"Your father and I have concluded (Father Curtis being hard of hearing, took no part in the catechizing of their daughter). You must discard Beers totally and have no more connection with him!"

"How can that be, mother? Can you separate hearts that have become one by holy mutual love? If you demand the sac-

rifice of bodily separation, you can effect that, for I shall obey your command, if that is what you now require.”

“I do, and you must look for some other connection.”

“No, mother! My heart and hand are devoted to my Lewis and he alone can possess them. But for your sake, it will be so done, for I know Lewis will consent to my wishes; and we will establish to the views and perhaps the convictions of all that the separation is real. But I must admit two or three visits to form our minds on this sad result.”

Back into the clouds after a brief sojourn in sunshine, Lewis remained undaunted and applied his creative mind to thwart the mother’s objections to him on the grounds of social rank. Permitted the two or three visits Amanda had insisted on in her surrender to her mother’s stern dictate, he notes results.

“They were pleasing, sorrowful visits; I could find a kind of solace in my studies, but what could console Amanda’s heartfelt pain? We finally concluded on letting her know my thoughts and feelings weekly, and she to return the same favor when she could get a safe opportunity. Thus our old system of correspondence was adopted, and on December 9, 1790, we agreed on a temporary separation.”

Lewis was not surrendering; hadn’t he outlasted the seminarian, and wasn’t time on his side! He planned accordingly. He had asked Amanda to provide him dates and themes of his letters to her, and under date of December 12, 1790, she replied.

“Agreeable to your request, and as I promised, I have been looking over Aurelius’ letters to give the dates and themes you desired. I could not open them without exploring their contents, which ever communicate secret delight and fill my breast with undissembled gratitude.

“When I sat down to write, ten thousand images disturbed

my calmer thoughts and all the tender, sympathetic grief our separation caused is present in my view. Ah! My Aurelius, will you allow me to dwell one moment on the pleasing sad idea? Tears must need be so officious as to offer them, for I already feel their assuasive influence. My friend, too, I trust will pardon them, since they afford relief, and pity rather than blame.

“I have now summoned my fortitude and my mind is restored to its natural composure and resignation. Not one complaint nor even a tear shall escape my tenderness against my better judgment. I will rely entirely on Him who oversees the affairs of men and orders all things to work for our good. I should be totally inexcusable while enjoying so many blessings if I should repine at our present (though pathetic and poignant) misfortunes.

“I am placed in a position that precludes the want of the necessities of life. My parents live and are tolerably happy in each other and in their daughter whose grateful heart glows with every filial sentiment, and who by her affectionate and dutiful behavior endeavors to mitigate their sorrow for the loss of their other children and in some measure repay their kindnesses and caresses. And may I add to these your inestimable friendship.

“I find it will be very difficult for me to write you; they are all more impertinent and inquisitive than I could wish. I shall not attempt it again without they are hushed in the peaceful embrace of sleep. Then I shall perhaps be questioned, so you must not expect much from my pen. Goodnight, Aurelius.”

This letter presents a graphic picture of Amanda and the difficult position in which she found herself in the Curtis family. If she is uncertain in this setting, her forthright attitude

toward Aurelius is sure and steadfast; this loyalty was demonstrated again in another approach to a solution of their problem. When he raised the possibility of leaving the community after being certified to practice, her response was prompt and positive: "Yes, Aurelius, I will, with real pleasure, accompany you wherever fortune calls you." Four years later Amanda ventured with him into the Dark Forest of the Cayuga Indians.

Commenting on this letter, Aurelius wrote: "What words of complying love! With delight I heard them, such were our mutual feelings, although our present enjoyments were crushed by a parental veto."

The years passed slowly—too slowly for Aurelius and Amanda. He kept up his flow of compositions to her, and she answered as limited opportunities permitted. As the year 1792 closed, Dr. Beers briefly summed up their situation.

"Although I was well settled in business, the parents never jointly looked on me with that pleasure we thought they might; but compared with what it had been, it was quite tolerable. We could now cheer each other, and hope so long deferred brightened on us.

"In 1793 our course was steady and prosperous. Most of my friends thought we ought to be married and by so doing I should extend my business. I had not confidence to propose the subject to her parents, though we both thought it expedient." It may be noted that hustling Dr. Beers always refers to his practice as "business." Whatever the classification, he gave it close attention, and it prospered him pleasingly.

The young doctor, so long thwarted by Amanda's unyielding parents, was yet to know what a later poet meant by "October's bright blue weather." "Thus time passed," he records, "until October. On a certain day Phebe and her father



were sitting alone when he said to Phebe, 'I think you and the doctor better be married.'

"I was soon made acquainted with the fact, and soon after that I had the boldness to ask his consent to our union. He consented, together with the mother, with a decent grace and without any reflections on the troubles I had made them."

Intentions of marriage were published in the church on the second Sunday after and, at 4 p.m. November 11, 1793, they were married. Writing of the event, Dr. Beers comments: "We were now in a new relation before society and took the pleasing title of husband and wife, that state which we had, through toil and affection, so long looked to. And we were happy!"