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Title: Burgoyne's Invasion of 1777

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Release Date: February 7, 2010 [EBook #31206]

Language: English

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GENL. BURGOYNE.

Decisive Events in American History

BURGOYNE'S INVASION OF 1777

**WITH AN OUTLINE SKETCH OF THE
AMERICAN INVASION OF CANADA, 1775-76**

BY

SAMUEL ADAMS DRAKE

BOSTON 1889
LEE AND SHEPARD PUBLISHERS

10 MILK STREET NEXT "OLD SOUTH MEETING HOUSE"
NEW YORK CHARLES T. DILLINGHAM
718 AND 720 BROADWAY

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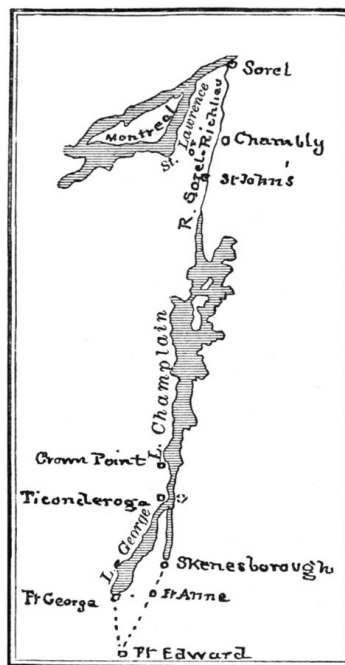
BOSTON
S. J. PARKHILL & Co., PRINTERS

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MILITARY MAP, LAKE CHAMPLAIN.

INTRODUCTION

Among the decisive events of the Revolutionary struggle, Burgoyne's campaign deservedly holds the foremost place, as well for what it led to, as for what it was in inception and execution—at once the most daring, most quixotic, and most disastrous effort of the whole war.

Burgoyne was himself, in some respects, so remarkable a man that any picture of his exploits must needs be more or less tinted with his personality. And this was unusually picturesque and imposing. He acquired prestige, at a time when other generals were losing it, through his participation in Carleton's successful campaign. But Burgoyne was something more than the professional soldier. His nature was poetic; his temperament imaginative. He did nothing in a commonplace way. Even his orders are far more scholarly than soldier-like. At one time he tells his soldiers that "occasions may occur, when nor difficulty, nor labor, nor life are to be regarded"—as if soldiers, in general, expected anything else than to be shot at!—at another, we find him preaching humanity to Indians, repentance to rebels, or better manners to his adversary, with all the superb self-consciousness that was Burgoyne's most prominent characteristic.

To the military critic, Burgoyne's campaign is instructive, because it embodies, in itself, about all the operations known to active warfare. It was destined to great things, but collapsed, like a bubble, with the first shock of an adverse fortune.

This campaign is remarkable in yet another way. It has given us the most voluminous literature extant, that treats of any single episode of the Revolutionary War. In general, it takes many more words to explain a defeat than to describe a victory. Hence this fulness is much more conspicuous upon the British than upon the American side of the history of this campaign. Not only the general, who had his reputation to defend, but high officials, whose guiding hand was seen behind the curtain, were called to the bar of public opinion. The ministers endeavored to make a scapegoat of the general; the general, to fix the responsibility for defeat upon the ministers. His demand for a court-martial was denied. His sovereign refused to hear him. It was thus meanly attempted to turn the torrent of popular indignation, arising from the ill success of the expedition, wholly upon the unlucky general's head. Burgoyne's heroic persistency at length brought the British nation face to face with the unwelcome fact, which the ministers were so desirous of concealing,—that somebody besides the general had blundered; and if the inquiry that Burgoyne obtained from Parliament failed to vindicate him as a captain, it nevertheless did good service by exposing both the shortcomings of his accusers, and the motives which had guided their conduct with respect to himself.

Besides the official examination by the House of Commons, we have several excellent

narratives, written by officers who served with Burgoyne, all of which materially contribute to an intelligent study of the campaign, from a purely military point of view. These narratives are really histories of the several corps to which the writers belonged, rather than capable surveys of the whole situation; but they give us the current gossip of the camp-fire and mess-table, spiced with anecdote, and enlivened with the daily experiences through which the writers were passing. And this is much.

In his defence, General Burgoyne vigorously addresses himself to the four principal charges brought forward by his accusers: namely, first, of encumbering himself with a needless amount of artillery; secondly, of taking the Fort Anne route, rather than the one by way of Lake George; thirdly, of sending off an expedition to Bennington, under conditions inviting defeat; and, lastly, of crossing the Hudson after the disasters of Bennington and Fort Stanwix had taken place.

The real criticism upon Burgoyne's conduct, so far as it relates to the movement of his forces only, seems to be that from the moment when the march was actually to begin, he found himself in want of everything necessary to a rapid advance. Thus, we find him scarcely arrived at Skenesborough before he is asking Sir Guy Carleton for reënforcements to garrison Ticonderoga and Fort George with, to the end that his own force might not be weakened by the detachments required to hold those fortresses against the Americans, when he should move on. It would seem that this contingency, at least, might have been foreseen before it forced itself upon Burgoyne's attention. Yet it was of so serious a nature, in this general's eyes, that he expresses a doubt whether his army would be found equal to the task before it, unless Carleton would assume the defence of the forts referred to above.

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At this time, too, the inadequacy of his transportation service became so painfully evident, that the expedition to Bennington offered the only practicable solution to Burgoyne's mind.

These circumstances stamp the purposed invasion with a certain haphazard character at the outset, which boded no good to it in the future.

Carleton having declined to use his troops in the manner suggested, Burgoyne was compelled to leave a thousand men behind him when he marched for Albany. Carleton, the saviour of Canada, was justly chagrined at finding himself superseded in the conduct of this campaign, by an officer who had served under his orders in the preceding one; and, though he seems to have acted with loyalty toward Burgoyne, this is by no means the only instance known in which one general has refused to go beyond the strict letter of his instructions for the purpose of rescuing a rival from a dilemma into which he had plunged with his eyes wide open.

The Prelude with which our narrative opens, undertakes first, to briefly outline the history of the Northern Army, which finally brought victory out of defeat; and next, to render familiar the names, location, and strategic value of the frontier fortresses, before beginning the story of the campaign itself.

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Few armies have ever suffered more, or more nobly redeemed an apparently lost cause, than the one which was defeated at Quebec and victorious at Saratoga. The train of misfortunes which brought Burgoyne's erratic course to so untimely an end was nothing by comparison. And the quickness with which raw yeomanry were formed into armies capable of fighting veteran troops, affords the strongest proof that the Americans are a nation of soldiers.

So many specific causes have been assigned for Burgoyne's failure, that it is hardly practicable to discuss all of them within reasonable limits. The simplest statement of the whole case is that he allowed himself to be beaten in detail. It seems plain enough that any plan, which exposed his forces to this result, was necessarily vicious in itself. Moreover, Burgoyne woefully misestimated the resources, spirit, and fighting capacity of his adversary. With our forces strongly posted on the Mohawk, St. Leger's advance down the valley was clearly impracticable. Yet such a combination of movements as would bring about a junction of the two invading columns, at this point, was all essential to the success of Burgoyne's campaign. To have effected this in season, Burgoyne should have made a rapid march to the Mohawk, intrenched himself there, and operated in conjunction with St. Leger. His delays, attributable first, to his unwise choice of the Fort Anne route, next, to Schuyler's activity in obstructing it, and lastly, to his defeat at Bennington, gave time to render our army so greatly superior to his own, that the conditions were wholly altered when the final trial of strength came to be made.

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What might have happened if Sir W. Howe had moved his large army and fleet up the Hudson, in due season, is quite another matter. The writer does not care to discuss futilities. In the first place, he thinks that Burgoyne's campaign should stand or fall on its own merits. In the next, such a movement by Howe would have left Washington free to act in the enemy's rear, or upon his flanks, with a fair prospect of cutting him off from his base at New York. Of the two commanders-in-chief, Washington acted most effectively in reënforcing Gates's army from his own. Howe could not and Carleton would not do this. From the moment that Burgoyne crossed the Hudson, he seems to have pinned his faith to chance; but if chance has sometimes saved poor generalship, the general who commits himself to its guidance, does so with full knowledge that he is casting his reputation on the hazard of a die. As Burgoyne did just this, he must be set down, we think, notwithstanding his chivalrous defence of himself, as the conspicuous failure of the war. And we assume that the importance which his campaign implied to Europe and America, more than any high order of ability in the general himself, has lifted Burgoyne into undeserved prominence.

PRELUDE

I.

THE INVASION OF CANADA, 1775.

England took Canada from France in 1759, and soon after annexed it to her own dominions. Twelve years later, her despotic acts drove her American colonies into open rebellion. England feared, and the colonies hoped, Canada would join in the revolt against her. But, though they did not love their new masters, prudence counselled the Canadians to stand aloof, at least till the Americans had proved their ability to make head against the might of England. Canada's attitude.

That England would be much distressed by Canada's taking sides with the Americans was plain enough to all men, for the whole continent would then be one in purpose, and the conflict more equal; but the Americans also greatly wished it because all New England and New York lay open to invasion from Canada.

Nature had created a great highway, stretching southward from the St. Lawrence to the Hudson, over which rival armies had often passed to victory or defeat in the old wars. Open water offered an easy transit for nearly the whole way. A chain of forts extended throughout its whole length. Chambly and St. John's defended the passage of the Richelieu, through which the waters of Lake Champlain flow to the St. Lawrence. Crown Point^[1] and Ticonderoga^[2] blocked the passage of this lake in its narrowest part. Ticonderoga, indeed, is placed just where the outlet of Lake George falls down a mountain gorge into Lake Champlain. Its cannon, therefore, commanded that outlet also. Fort George stood at the head of Lake George, within sixteen miles of Fort Edward, on the Hudson. These were the gates through which a hostile army might sally forth upon our naked frontier. Much, therefore, depended on whether they were to be kept by friend or foe. [Pg 16]

In natural and artificial strength, Ticonderoga was by far the most important of these fortresses. At this place the opposite shores of New York and Vermont are pushed out into the lake toward each other, thus forming two peninsulas, with the lake contracted to a width of half a mile, or point-blank cannon range, between them: one is Ticonderoga; the other, Mount Independence. Thus, together, they command the passage of the two lakes. Ticonderoga.

Ticonderoga itself is a tongue-shaped projection of quite uneven land, broad and high at the base, or where it joins the hills behind it, but growing narrower as it descends over intervening hollows or swells to its farthest point in the lake. That part next the mainland is a wooded height, having a broad plateau on the brow—large enough to encamp an army corps upon—but cut down abruptly on the sides washed by the lake. This height, therefore, commanded the whole peninsula lying before it, and underneath it, as well as the approach from Lake George, opening behind it in a rugged mountain pass, since it must be either crossed or turned before access to the peninsula could be gained. Except for the higher hills surrounding it, this one is, in every respect, an admirable military position. [Pg 17]

The French, who built the first fortress here, had covered all the low ground next the lake with batteries and intrenchments, but had left the heights rising behind it unguarded, until Abercromby attacked on that side in 1758. They then hastily threw up a rude intrenchment of logs, extending quite across the crest in its broadest part. Yet, in spite of the victory he then obtained, Montcalm was so fully convinced that Ticonderoga could not stand a siege, that he made no secret of calling it a trap, for some honest man to disgrace himself in.^[3]

Ticonderoga, however, was henceforth looked upon as a sort of Gibraltar. People, therefore, were filled with wonder when they heard how Ethan Allen had surprised and taken it on the 9th of May, 1775, with only a handful of men; how Seth Warner had also taken Crown Point; and how Skenesborough^[4] and Fort George, being thus cut off from Canada, had also fallen into our hands without firing a shot.^[5]

Thus, in the very beginning of the war for independence, and at one bold stroke, we regained possession of this gateway of the north; or in military phrase, we now held all the strategic points by which an advance from Lower Canada upon the United Colonies was possible. [Pg 18]

FOOTNOTES:

[1] CROWN POINT, built by the French in 1731, greatly strengthened by the British, who took it in 1759.

- [2] TICONDEROGA, familiarly called "Ty" because the early spelling of the name was Tyconderoga. Built 1755-56 by the French, taken 1759 by the British, under Amherst. Three weeks before the battle of Lexington, an agent of Massachusetts was sent to ascertain the feelings of the people of Canada. His first advice was that "Ty" should be seized as quickly as possible.
- [3] MONTCALM'S PROPHECY came true in St. Clair's case in 1777.
- [4] SKENESBOROUGH, now Whitehall, named for Philip Skene, a retired British officer, who settled on lands granted him after the French War. He had about fifty tenants, and a few negro slaves.
- [5] THE CAPTURED ARTILLERY was taken to Cambridge on sleds in midwinter, by Colonel Knox. It enabled Washington to bring the siege of Boston to a favorable conclusion.

II.

THE INVASION OF CANADA.

The prompt seizure of the lake fortresses had a marked effect upon the wavering Canadians.^[6] Many joined us. More stood ready to do so whenever the signal for revolt should be given. Success begets confidence. The Americans were now led to believe that by throwing an army into Canada at once, the people would no longer hesitate to free themselves from the British yoke. The time seemed the riper for it, because it was known that the strong places of Canada were but weakly guarded. Could Quebec and Montreal be taken, British power in Canada would be at an end.

Invasion of
Canada.

With such promise held out before it, Congress resolved to make the attempt. Forces were ordered to both places. One body, under General Montgomery,^[7] mustered at Ticonderoga. Ethan Allen went before it to rouse the Canadians, who were expected to receive the Americans with open arms. This army moved down the lake in October, taking St. John's and Chambly in its way, and Montreal a little later. The other, led by Colonel Arnold,^[8] ascended the Kennebec to its head, crossed over to the Chaudière, which was followed to the St. Lawrence, and came before Quebec at about the same time Montgomery entered Montreal. Montgomery hastened to Arnold with a handful of men. Together they assaulted Quebec on the morning of December 31. The attack failed, and Montgomery fell. The Americans lay before Quebec till spring, when the arrival of fresh troops, for the enemy, forced ours to retreat to Montreal. This, too, was abandoned. Our army then fell back toward Lake Champlain, setting fire to Chambly, and St. John's behind it. The enemy followed close, recapturing these places as our troops left them. Very little fighting took place, but the Americans were greatly disheartened by having constantly to retreat, and by the loss of many brave officers and men, who fell sick and died of the smallpox. July 1 the army finally reached Crown Point, ragged, sickly, and destitute of everything. Weakened by the loss of five thousand men and three commanders, it was no longer able to keep the field. Instead of conquering Canada, it had been driven out at the point of the bayonet. The great question now was, whether this army could hold its own against a victorious and advancing enemy.

Our army
retreats.

1776.

General Gates^[9] took command of the army at this critical time. Convinced that he could never hope to hold both Crown Point and Ticonderoga, and knowing Ticonderoga to be much the stronger, in a military view, he decided to remove the army to that place at once. This was promptly done.^[10] The soldiers were set to work strengthening the old, or building new, works, under the direction of skilful engineers. Of these new works the strongest, as well as most important, because they commanded Ticonderoga itself, were those raised on the peninsula opposite the fortress on the Vermont side, which was christened Mount Independence on the day the army heard that the colonies had declared themselves free and independent.

Having thrown a bridge across the strait, between Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, the Americans waited for the enemy to come and attack them, for with such leaders as Gates and Stark they felt confident of gaining the victory.

The British were equally active on their side. After driving the Americans from Canada, they next determined to make themselves masters of Lake Champlain, recover the forts they had lost, and so gain a foothold for striking a blow at our northern colonies.

For this purpose they set about building a fleet at St. John's. Vessels were sent out from England, for the purpose, which were taken to pieces below the Chambly rapids, brought across the portage, and put together again at St. John's. By working diligently, the British got their fleet ready to sail early in October.

Well knowing the importance of keeping possession of the lake, the Americans turned

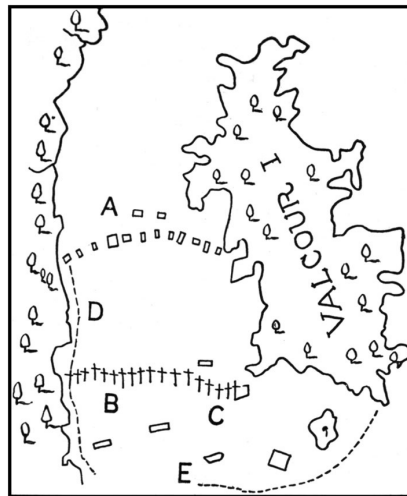
Skenesborough into a dockyard, and were straining every nerve to get ready a fleet strong enough to cope with the British. As everything needed for equipping it had to be brought from the sea-coast, the British had much the advantage in this respect, yet all labored with so much zeal, that our fleet was first ready for action. Gates gave the command of it to Arnold, who had once been a sailor, and whose courage had been tried so signally under the walls of Quebec.

By the middle of August, Ticonderoga was in fighting trim. The enemy's delays had given time to make the defences so strong that an attack was rather hoped for than feared. Ignorant of the great preparations making at St. John's, the Americans also believed themselves strongest on the lake. Our fleet, therefore, went forward with confidence to the battle.

On the 11th of October the British flotilla was seen coming up the lake. The rival forces met at Valcour Island, and the battle began. From noon till night the combatants hurled broadsides at each other without ceasing. The British then drew off to repair damages, meaning to renew the fight in the morning. This gave Arnold a chance to slip through them unperceived, for his vessels were so badly shattered that all hope of gaining the victory was given over. He was pursued and overtaken. Near Crown Point the battle began again, but the enemy's superior forces soon decided it in his favor. Rather than surrender, Arnold ran his disabled vessels on shore, set fire to them, and with his men escaped to the woods.

Naval battle, October 11.

Having thus cleared the lake, the British commander, Guy Carleton,^[11] sailed back to St. John's, leaving Ticonderoga unmolested behind him, to the great astonishment of our soldiers, who said Carleton deserved to be hanged for not following up his victory over Arnold.



NAVAL BATTLE, LAKE CHAMPLAIN.

A, American flotilla. B-C, British. D, Line of Retreat, when the British were forced back to E.

FOOTNOTES:

- [6] THE WAVERING CANADIANS. The Massachusetts revolutionary authority had been at work upon the wavering Canadians since 1774, with only partial success. (See note 2, preceding chapter.) The Americans thought the Canadians would seize the opportunity of freeing themselves, but events proved this opinion ill-grounded. A political connection between the Protestants of New England and the Catholics of Canada, except for mutual defence, could hardly be lasting, nor did the priests favor it. The military advantages were equally questionable, though great stress was laid upon them by Washington and Schuyler, even after the allegiance of the Canadians had been confirmed to the British side by the reverses our arms sustained. If we had conquered Canada, it would doubtless have been handed over to France again at the close of the war.
- [7] GENERAL RICHARD MONTGOMERY, of Irish birth, had served under Amherst at the taking of Crown Point and Ticonderoga in 1759, settled in New York, been one of eight brigadiers created by Congress in June, 1775; General Schuyler's illness threw the chief command, for which he proved himself eminently fitted, on Montgomery. His having served on this line was much in his favor.
- [8] COLONEL BENEDICT ARNOLD had once been a soldier at Ticonderoga. He went there again with a commission from Massachusetts, when the fortress was taken by Allen. He had also spent some time in Quebec. These facts had influence in procuring for him a command in the invading expedition.
- [9] GENERAL HORATIO GATES, a retired British major, settled in Virginia, was made adjutant-general of the army, June, 1775.
- [10] THE REMOVAL OF THE ARMY from Crown Point to Ticonderoga was strongly opposed by Stark and others, and disapproved by Washington.
- [11] GUY CARLETON, British governor of Canada, though driven from Montreal by Montgomery, had successfully defended Quebec against him. He reconnoitred Ticonderoga, but seems to have thought it too strong to be attacked with his force.

BURGOYNE'S INVASION

I.

THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.

After the British had gone back to Canada, it was thought they would return as soon as the lake should be frozen hard enough to bear artillery. But when it was found that they had gone into winter quarters, and the danger was past, part of the garrison of Ticonderoga was hurried off to Washington, who was then fighting against great odds in the Jerseys. This winter was the dark hour of the Revolution, upon which the victory at Trenton^[12] shed the first ray of light. So low had the American cause fallen at this time, that, but for this unlooked-for success, it is doubtful if another army could have been brought into the field.

The British were really planning to invade New York as soon as the lakes should be open again, in the spring. For this campaign great preparations were making, both in Canada and England. Quiet, therefore, reigned at Ticonderoga throughout the winter of 1776 and 1777.

General Burgoyne sailed for England in November, to lay before the king a plan for subduing the colonies in a single campaign. Burgoyne was a good soldier, popular with the army and government, brave to rashness, but vain and headstrong. He knew the Americans were not to be despised, for he had seen them fight at Bunker Hill, as well as in the campaign just closed, in which he himself had taken part; yet an easy confidence in his own abilities led Burgoyne into committing many grave errors, not the least of which was underestimating this very enemy.^[13]

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Any plan that promised to put down the Americans, was sure of gaining the king's ear. Justice was never tempered with mercy in this monarch's treatment of his rebellious subjects. His heart was hardened, his hand ever ready to strike them the fatal blow. Moreover, the Americans had just now declared themselves independent of Great Britain. They had crossed their Rubicon. To crush them with iron hand was now the king's one thought and purpose. No half measures would do for him. He told his ministers, in so many words, that every means of distressing the Americans would meet with his approval. Mercenaries, savages, refugees—all who could fire a shot, or burn a dwelling, were to be enrolled under the proud old banner of the isles. No more effectual means could have been devised to arouse the spirit of resistance to the highest pitch.

George III.
wants the
war
pushed.

Burgoyne's ambition was kindled by the hope of making himself the hero of the war. He combined the qualities of general and statesman without being great as either. He wrote and talked well, was eloquent and persuasive, had friends at court, and knew how to make the most of his opportunity. On his part, the king wanted a general badly. He had been grievously disappointed in Sir William Howe, whose victories seemed never bringing the war any nearer to an end. Burgoyne brought forward his plan at the right moment, shrewdly touched the keynote of the king's discontent by declaring for aggressive war, smoothed every obstacle away with easy assurance, and so impressed the ministers with his capacity, that they believed they had found the very man the king wanted for the work in hand.

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The plan proposed for making short work of the war was briefly this: The American colonies were to be divided in two parts, by seizing the line of the Hudson River; just as in later times, the Union armies aimed to split the Southern Confederacy in two by getting possession of the Mississippi. To effect this, two armies were to act together. With one, Burgoyne was to come down the lakes from Canada, and force his way to Albany, while the other was coming up the Hudson to join him. Once these armies were united, with full control of the Hudson in their hands, New England would be cut off from the other colonies by forts and fleets, and the way laid open to crush out rebellion in what was admitted to be its cradle and stronghold.

Ever since Sir William Howe had been driven from Boston, in the spring of 1776, the opinion prevailed among American generals that, sooner or later, New England would become the battleground.^[14] This view was sustained by the enemy's seizure of Newport, in December of the same year, so that the Americans were perplexed at finding themselves threatened from this quarter, until the enemy's plans were fully developed.

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There was yet another part to the plan concerted between Burgoyne and the British cabinet. It was seen that in proportion as Burgoyne moved down toward Albany, he would have the fertile Mohawk valley on his right. This valley was the great thoroughfare between the Hudson and Lake Ontario, Niagara, and Detroit. In it were many prosperous settlements, inhabited by a vigorous yeomanry, who were the mainstay of the patriot cause in this quarter. The passage to and fro was guarded by Fort Stanwix, which stood where Rome now is, and Fort Oswego, which was situated at the lake. Fort Stanwix was held by the Americans, and Oswego, by the British. Perceiving its value to the Americans not only as a

St. Leger's
part.

granary, but as a recruiting station, and in view of the danger of leaving it on his flank, Burgoyne decided to march a force through this valley, clear it of enemies, and so effectively bring about a timely coöperation between the two branches of the expedition. Freed of fear for himself, he could materially aid in the work intrusted to his auxiliary. It followed that the Americans, with whom Burgoyne himself might be contending, would, of necessity, be greatly distressed by their inability to draw either men or supplies from the Mohawk Valley, no less than by the appearance of this force upon their own flank. The command of it was given to Colonel St. Leger, who was ordered to proceed up the St. Lawrence to Oswego, and from thence to Fort Stanwix and Albany.

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It must be allowed that this plan was well conceived; yet its success depended so much upon all the parts working in harmony together, that to have set it in motion, without consultation or clear understanding between the generals who were to execute it, is inconceivable. At a distance of three thousand miles from the scene of war, the British cabinet undertook to direct complicated military operations, in which widely separated armies were to take part. General Burgoyne received his orders on the spot. General Howe did not receive his until the 16th of August; his army was then entering Chesapeake Bay. Burgoyne was being defeated at Bennington, at the time Howe was reading his despatch, and learning from it what he had not known before; namely, that he was expected to coöperate with the army of Burgoyne. These facts will so sufficiently illustrate the course that events were taking, as to foreshadow their conclusion to the feeblest understanding.

In order to make the war more terrible to the Americans, the British cabinet decided to use the Indians of Canada, and the Great Lakes, against them. Not even the plea of military necessity could reconcile some Englishmen to letting loose these barbarians upon the colonists. Though enemies, they were men. Lord Chatham, the noblest Englishman of them all, cried out against it in Parliament. "Who is the man," he indignantly asked, "who has dared to associate to our arms the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the savage?" All knew he meant the prime minister, and, behind him, the king himself. Had not King George just said that any means of distressing the Americans must meet with his approval?

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FOOTNOTES:

- [12] VICTORY AT TRENTON. After being driven from the Jerseys, Washington suddenly turned on his pursuers, and by the two fine combats of Trenton and Princeton, compelled much superior forces everywhere to retreat before him, thus breaking up all the enemy's plans for the ensuing campaign, saving Philadelphia, and putting new life into the American cause.
- [13] UNDERESTIMATING HIS ENEMY. Burgoyne candidly admits as much in his letter to Lord G. Germaine. *State of the Expedition*, Appendix, xcii.
- [14] NEW ENGLAND THE BATTLE-GROUND. Sir William Howe did propose, at first, operating against Boston from Rhode Island, with ten thousand men, while an equal force should effect a junction with the army of Canada, by way of the Hudson. This purpose he subsequently deferred for an advance into Pennsylvania, but Burgoyne asserts that he was not informed of the change of plan when he sailed for Canada in April; and, though Sir William Howe afterward wrote him to the same effect (July 17th) a letter which was received early in August, Burgoyne, nevertheless, persisted in his intention of passing the Hudson, notwithstanding he knew, and says (August 20th), that no operation had yet been undertaken in his favor. *State of the Expedition*, 188, 189; Appendix, xlvii.

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II.

BURGOYNE'S ARMY.

Having thus outlined the plan of invasion, let us now look at the means allotted for its execution. There were in Canada ten thousand British soldiers; in New York, thirty thousand. Burgoyne was to take with him seven thousand, of whom three thousand were Germans in the pay of England.^[15] In discipline, spirit, and equipment, this was by far the best little army that had yet taken the field in America.

Good judges said that England might be searched through and through before such battalions could be raised. Forty cannon, splendidly served and equipped, formed its artillery train. All the generals, and most of the soldiers, were veterans. In short, nothing that experience could suggest, or unlimited means provide, was omitted to make this army invincible. It was one with which Burgoyne felt he could do anything, and dare everything.

Besides these regular troops, we have said the government had authorized and even attempted

to justify to the world, the employment of Indians. Four hundred warriors joined the army when it marched, and as many more when it reached Lake Champlain. They were to scour the woods, hang like a storm cloud about the enemy's camps, and discover his every movement. For this service they had no equals. In the woods they could steal upon an enemy unawares, or lie in wait for his approach. In the field they were of little use. Much of the terror they inspired came from the suddenness of their onset, their hideous looks and unearthly war-cries, and their cruel practice of scalping the wounded.

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To these were added about an equal number of Canadians, and American refugees, who were designed to act as scouts, skirmishers, or foragers, as the occasion might require. Being well skilled in bush-fighting, they were mostly attached to Frazer's corps, for the purpose of clearing the woods in his front, getting information, or driving in cattle. With his Indians and irregulars, [16] Burgoyne's whole force could hardly have numbered less than ten thousand men.

Taken as a whole, this army was justly thought the equal of twice its own number of raw yeomanry, suddenly called to the field from the anvil, the workshop, or the plough. Its strongest arm was its artillery; its weakest, its Indian allies.

Burgoyne divided his force into three corps, commanded by Generals Frazer, Phillips, and Riedesel,—all excellent officers. Frazer's corps was mostly made up of picked companies, taken from other battalions and joined with the 24th regiment of the line. As its duty was of the hardest, so its material was of the best the army could afford. Next to Burgoyne, Frazer was, beyond all question, the officer most looked up to by the soldiers; in every sense of the word, he was a thorough soldier. His corps was, therefore, Burgoyne's right arm. Phillips commanded the artillery; and Riedesel, the Germans.

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In the middle of June this army embarked on Lake Champlain. Of many warlike pageants the aged mountains had looked down upon, perhaps this was the most splendid and imposing. From the general to the private soldier, all were filled with high hopes of a successful campaign. In front, the Indians, painted and decked out for war, skimmed the lake in their light canoes. Next came the barges containing Frazer's corps, marshalled in one regular line, with gunboats flanking it on each side; next, the Royal George and Inflexible frigates, with other armed vessels forming the fleet. Behind this strong escort, the main body, with the generals, followed in close order; and, last of all, came the camp followers, of whom there were far too many for the nature of the service in hand.

In the distance the American watch-boats saw this gallant array bearing down upon them, in the confidence of its power. Hastening back to Ticonderoga, the word was passed along the lines to prepare for battle.

For the Mohawk Valley expedition, St. Leger, who led it, took with him about seven hundred regular troops, two hundred loyalists, and eight guns. At Oswego, seven hundred Indians of the Six Nations joined him. With these, St. Leger started in July for Fort Stanwix, which barred his way to the Hudson, just as Ticonderoga blocked Burgoyne's advance on the side of Lake Champlain.

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FOOTNOTES:

[15] SOLDIERS WERE HIRED from the petty German princes for the American war. The Americans called them all Hessians, because some came from the principality of Hesse. George III. also tried to hire twenty thousand Russians of Empress Catharine, but she gave him to understand that her soldiers would be better employed. There was good material among the Germans, many of whom had served with credit under the Great Frederick; but the British showed them little favor as comrades, while the Americans looked upon them as paid assassins. Not one in twenty knew any English, so that misconception of orders was not unfrequent, though orders were usually transmitted from headquarters in French. A jealousy also grew up out of the belief that Burgoyne gave the Germans the hardest duty, and the British the most praise. At Hubbardton, and on the 19th of September, the Germans saved him from defeat, yet he ungenerously, we think, lays the disaster of October 7th chiefly at their door.

[16] INDIANS AND IRREGULARS. It is impossible to give the number of these accurately, as it was constantly fluctuating. Though Burgoyne started with only four hundred Indians, the number was increased by five hundred at Skenesborough, and he was later joined by some of the Mohawks from St. Leger's force. In like manner, his two hundred and fifty Canadians and Provincials had grown to more than six hundred of the latter before he left Skenesborough. Most of these recruits came from the Vermont settlements. They were put to work clearing the roads, scouting, getting forward the supplies, collecting cattle, etc. Their knowledge of the country was greatly serviceable to Burgoyne. In the returns given of Burgoyne's *regular troops*, only the rank and file are accounted for. Staff and line officers would swell the number considerably.

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III.

THE FALL OF TICONDEROGA.

(July 5, 1777.)

A hundred years ago, the shores of Lake Champlain were for the most part a wilderness. What few settlements did exist were mostly grouped about the southeast corner of the lake, into which emigration had naturally flowed from the older New England States. And even these were but feeble plantations,^[17] separated from the Connecticut valley by lofty mountains, over which one rough road led the way.

Burgoyne's companions in arms have told us of the herds of red deer seen quietly browsing on the hillsides; of the flocks of pigeons, darkening the air in their flight; and of the store of pike, bass, and maskelonge with which the waters of the lake abounded. At one encampment the soldiers lived a whole day on the pigeons they had knocked off the trees with poles. So the passage of the lake must have seemed more like a pleasure trip to them than the prelude to a warlike campaign.

In his way up the lake, Burgoyne landed at the River Bouquet, on the west shore, where for some days the army rested.

To this rendezvous, large numbers of Indians had come to join the expedition. It was indispensable to observe the customs which had always prevailed among these peoples when going to war. So Burgoyne made them a speech, gave them a feast, and witnessed the wild antics of their war dance.

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He forbade their scalping the wounded, or destroying women and children. They listened attentively to his words, and promised obedience; but these commands were so flatly opposed to all their philosophy of war, which required the extinction of every human feeling, that Burgoyne might as well have bidden the waters of the lake flow backward, as expect an Indian not to use his scalping-knife whenever an enemy lay at his mercy.

Still, it is to Burgoyne's credit that he tried to check the ferocity of these savages, and we would also charitably believe him at least half ashamed of having to employ them at all, when he saw them brandishing their tomahawks over the heads of imaginary victims; beheld them twisting their bodies about in hideous contortions, in mimicry of tortured prisoners; or heard them howling, like wild beasts, their cry of triumph when the scalp is torn from an enemy's head.

While thus drawing the sword with one hand, Burgoyne took his pen in the other. He drew up a paper which his Tory agents were directed to scatter among the people of Vermont, many of whom, he was assured, were at heart loyal to the king. These he invited to join his standard, or offered its protection to all who should remain neutral. All were warned against driving off their cattle, hiding their corn, or breaking down the bridges in his way. Should they dare disobey, he threatened to let loose his horde of savages upon them. Such a departure from the rules of honorable warfare would have justified the Americans in declaring no quarter to the invaders.

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Well aware that he would not conquer the Americans with threats, Burgoyne now gave the order to his army to go forward. His view of what lay before him might be thus expressed: The enemy will, probably, fight at Ticonderoga. Of course I shall beat them. I will give them no time to rally. When they hear St. Leger is in the valley, their panic will be completed. We shall have a little promenade of eight days, to Albany.

On June 29 the army was near Ticonderoga. This day Burgoyne made a stirring address to his soldiers, in which he gave out the memorable watchword, "*This army must not retreat.*"

The next day, Frazer's corps landed in full view of the fortress. The rest of the army was posted on both sides of the lake, which is nowhere wider than a river as the fortress is approached. The fleet kept the middle of the channel. With drums beating and bugles sounding, the different battalions took up their allotted stations in the woods bordering upon the lake. When night fell, the watch-fires of the besiegers' camps made red the waters that flowed past them. But as yet no hostile gun boomed from the ramparts of Ticonderoga.

What was going on behind those grim walls which frowned defiance upon the invaders? General Gates was no longer there to direct. General St. Clair^[18] was now in command of perhaps four thousand effective men, with whom, nevertheless, he hoped to defend his miles of intrenchments against the assaults of twice his own numbers. His real weakness lay in not knowing what point Burgoyne would choose for attack, and he had been strangely delinquent in not calling for reënforcements until the enemy was almost at the gates of the fortress itself.

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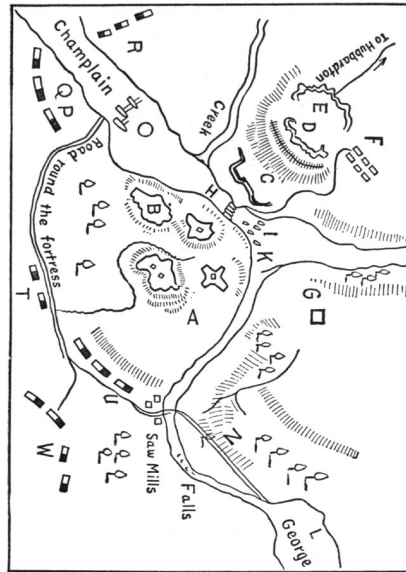
Burgoyne knew better than to heedlessly rush upon the lines that had proved Abercromby's destruction.^[19] He knew they were too strong to be carried without great bloodshed, and meant first to invest the fortress, and after cutting off access to it on all sides, then lay siege to it in regular form.

To this end, Frazer's corps was moved up to within cannon-shot of the works. His scouts soon found a way leading through old paths,^[20] quite round the rear of the fortress, to the outlet of Lake George. This was promptly seized. After a little skirmishing, the enemy planted themselves firmly, on some high ground rising behind

July 2,
Mount
Hope
seized.

the old French lines, on this side; thus making themselves masters of the communication with Lake George, and enclosing the fortress on the rear or land side. While this was going on, on the west shore, Riedesel's Germans were moved up still nearer Mount Independence, on the Vermont shore, thus investing Ticonderoga on three sides.

A more enterprising general would never have permitted his enemy to seize his communications with Lake George, without making a struggle for their possession, but St. Clair appears to have thought his forces unequal to the attempt, and it was not made. The disaster which followed was but the natural result.



THE INVESTMENT OF TICONDEROGA.
Pen and ink sketch by a British officer.

A-B, Ticonderoga. C-D-E, Mount Independence. F, Barracks. G, Mount Defiance. H, Bridge joining the fortress proper with Mount Independence. I, American Fleet. K, Outlet of Lake George. O, British Fleet. P, Three-Mile Point. Q, First Landing Place of Burgoyne. R, The Germans. T-U, Position taken on Mount Hope. W, Second Position of same Troops at U. Z, Portage to Lake George.

Just across the basin formed by the widening of the outlet of Lake George, a steep-sided mountain rises high above all the surrounding region. Its summit not only looks down upon the fortress, in every part, but over all its approaches by land or water. Not a man could march without being distinctly seen from this mountain. Yet, to-day, the eye measures its forest-shagged sides, in doubt if they can be scaled by human feet. Indeed, its ascent was so difficult that the Americans had neglected to occupy it at all. This is Mount Defiance, the most commanding object for miles around.

Mount Defiance occupied.

Burgoyne's engineers could not help seeing that if artillery could be got to the top of this mountain, Ticonderoga was doomed. They reconnoitred it. Though difficult, they said it might be done. St. Clair's timidity having given them the way to it, the British instantly began moving men and guns round the rear of the fortress, and cutting a road up the mountain-side. The work was pushed forward day and night. It took most of the oxen belonging to the army to drag two twelve-pounders up the steep ascent, but when they were once planted on the summit, Ticonderoga lay at the mercy of the besiegers.

July 5.

When St. Clair saw the enemy getting ready to cannonade him from Mount Defiance, he at once gave orders to evacuate the fortress[21] under cover of the night. Most of the garrison retreated over the bridge leading to Mount Independence, and thence by the road to Hubbardton. What could be saved of the baggage and army stores was sent off to Skenesborough, by water. Hurry and confusion were everywhere, for it was not doubted that the enemy would be upon them as soon as daylight should discover the fortress abandoned. This happened at an early hour of the morning. The British instantly marched into the deserted works, without meeting with the least resistance. Ticonderoga's hundred cannon were silent under the menace of two. Burgoyne was now free to march his victorious battalions to the east, the west, or the south, whenever he should give the order.

July 6.

FOOTNOTES:

[17] FEEBLE PLANTATIONS. No permanent settlements were begun west of the Green Mountains till after the conquest of Canada. After that, the report of soldiers who had passed over the military road from Charlestown on the Connecticut River, to Crown Point, brought a

swarm of settlers into what is now Bennington County. Settlement began in Rutland County in 1771.

- [18] GENERAL ARTHUR ST. CLAIR, of Scotch birth, had been a lieutenant with Wolfe at Quebec; he resigned and settled in Pennsylvania; served with our army in Canada; made brigadier, August, 1776; major-general, February, 1777.
- [19] ABERCROMBY lost two thousand men in assaulting these lines in 1758. Since then they had been greatly strengthened.
- [20] THROUGH OLD PATHS. The Indians had passed this way centuries before the fortress was thought of.
- [21] ST. CLAIR seems to have waited just long enough for the defence to become difficult, to admit its impossibility. He chose the part of safety rather than that of glory.

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IV.

HUBBARDTON.

(July 7, 1777.)

Not doubting he would find Skenesborough still in our possession, St. Clair was pushing for that place with all possible speed. He expected to get there by land, before the enemy could do so by water; then, after gathering up the men and stores saved from Ticonderoga, St. Clair meant to fall back toward Fort Edward, where General Schuyler,^[22] his superior officer, lay with two thousand men.

This was plainly St Clair's true course. Indeed, there was nothing else for him to do, unless he decided to abandon the direct route to Albany altogether. So St. Clair did what a good general should. He resolved to throw himself between Burgoyne and Schuyler, whose force, joined to his own, would thus be able, even if not strong enough to risk a battle, at least to keep up a bold front toward the enemy.

Though Burgoyne really knew nothing about Schuyler's force, he was keenly alive to the importance of cutting off the garrison of Ticonderoga from its line of retreat, and, if possible, of striking it a disabling blow before it could take up a new position. St. Clair counted on stealing a march before his retreat could be interfered with. He also depended on the strength of the obstructions at the bridge^[23] of Ticonderoga to delay the enemy's fleet until his own could get safely to Skenesborough. In both expectations, St. Clair was disappointed.

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In the first place, Burgoyne had sent Frazer out in pursuit of him, as soon as the evacuation was discovered; in the second, Burgoyne's gunboats had hewed their way through the obstructions by nine in the morning, and were presently crowding all sail after the American flotilla, under command of Burgoyne himself.

July 6.

Riedesel's camp, we remember, lay on the Vermont side, and so nearest to Mount Independence, and St. Clair's line of retreat. Burgoyne, therefore, ordered Riedesel to fall in behind Frazer, who had just marched, and give that officer any support he might be in want of.

Thus, most of the hostile forces were in active movement, either by land or water, at an early hour of the sixth. Let us first follow Frazer, in his effort to strike the American rear.

Frazer had with him eight hundred and fifty men of his own corps. He pushed on so eagerly that the slow-moving Germans were far in the rear when the British halted for the night, near Hubbardton. The day had been sultry, the march fatiguing. Frazer's men threw themselves on the ground, and slept on their arms.

St. Clair had reached Hubbardton the same afternoon, in great disorder. He halted only long enough for the rearguard to come up, and then hastened on, six miles farther, to Castleton, leaving Warner^[24] with three regiments, to cover his retreat. Instead of keeping within supporting distance of the main body, Warner foolishly decided to halt for the night where he was, because his men were tired, thus putting a gap of six miles between his commander and himself.

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Warner did not neglect, however, to fell some trees in front of his camp, and this simple precaution, perhaps, proved the salvation of his command the next day.

At five in the morning, Frazer's scouts fell upon Warner's pickets while they were cooking their breakfasts, unsuspecting of danger. The surprise was complete. With their usual dash, Frazer's men rushed on to the assault, but soon found themselves entangled among the felled trees and brushwood, behind which the Americans were hurriedly endeavoring

July 7.

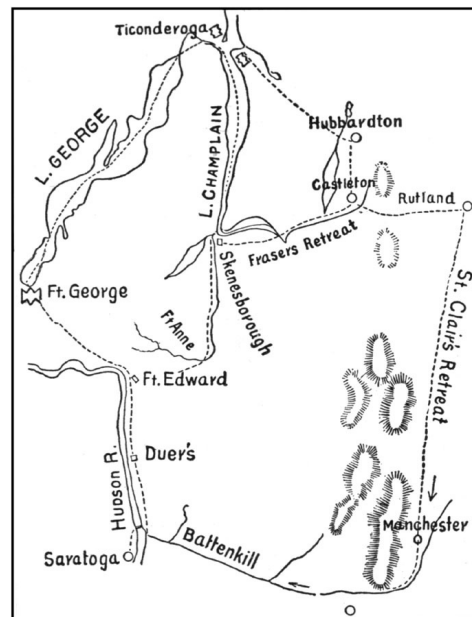
to form. At the moment of attack, one regiment made a shameful retreat. The rest were rallied by Warner and Francis,^[25] behind trees, in copses, or wherever a vantage-ground could be had. As the combat took place in the woods, the British were forced to adopt the same tactics. Musket and rifle were soon doing deadly work in their ranks, every foot of ground was obstinately disputed, and when they thought the battle already won they found the Americans had only just begun to fight.

For three hours, eight hundred men maintained a gallant and stubborn fight against the picked soldiers of Burgoyne's army, each side being repeatedly driven from its ground without gaining decided advantage over the other. Nor would Frazer have gained the day, as he at length did, but for the timely arrival of the Germans. Indeed, at the moment when the British were really beaten and ready to give way, the sound of many voices, singing aloud, rose above the din of battle, and near at hand. At first neither of the combatants knew what such strange sounds could mean. It was Riedesel's Germans advancing to the attack, chanting battle hymns to the fierce refrain of the musketry and the loud shouts of the combatants. Fifty fresh men would have turned the scale to either side. This reinforcement, therefore, decided the day. Being now greatly outnumbered, the Americans scattered in the woods around them.

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Although a defeat, this spirited little battle was every way honorable to the Americans, who fought on until all hope of relief had vanished. A single company would have turned defeat into victory, when to the British, defeat in the woods, thirty miles from help, meant destruction. Even as it was, they did not know what to do with the victory they had just won, with the loss of two hundred men, killed and wounded, seventeen of whom were officers. They had neither shelter nor medicines for the wounded, nor provisions for themselves. The battle had exhausted their ammunition, and every moment was expected to bring another swarm of foes about their ears.

The Americans had three hundred men killed and wounded, and many taken. The brave Colonel Francis, who had so admirably conducted the retreat from Ticonderoga, was killed while rallying his men. Seldom has a battle shown more determined obstinacy in the combatants, seldom has one been more bloody for the numbers engaged.



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ST. CLAIR'S RETREAT—BURGOYNE'S ADVANCE ON FORT EDWARD.

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While Frazer was thus driving St. Clair's rearguard before him on the left, the British were giving chase to the American flotilla on the lake. This had hardly reached Skenesborough, encumbered with the sick, the baggage, and the stores, when the British gunboats came up with, and furiously attacked, it. Our vessels could not be cleared for action or make effective resistance. After making what defence they could, they were abandoned, and blown up by their crews. Skenesborough was then set on fire, the Americans making good their retreat to Fort Anne,^[26] with the loss of all their stores.

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St. Clair heard of Warner's defeat and of the taking of Skenesborough almost at the same hour. His first plan had wholly miscarried. His soldiers were angry and insubordinate, half his available force had been scattered at Hubbardton, his supplies were gone, his line of retreat in the enemy's hands. Finding himself thus cut off from the direct route to Fort Edward, he now marched to join Schuyler by way of Rutland, Manchester, and Bennington. This he succeeded in doing on the twelfth, with about half the men he had led from Ticonderoga. Warner, too, brought off the shattered remnant of his command to Bennington.

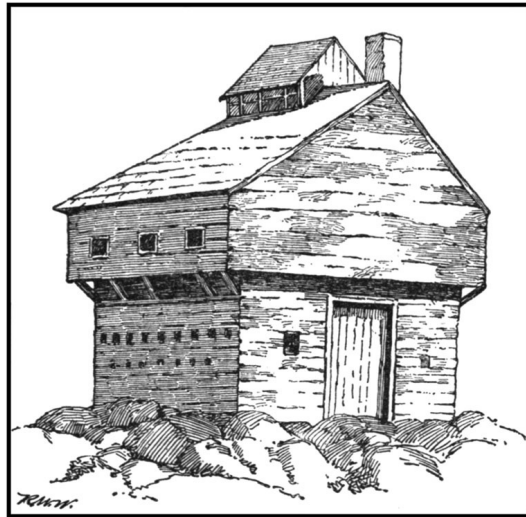
On his part, Schuyler had promptly sent a reinforcement to Fort Anne, to protect St. Clair's retreat, as soon as he knew of it. These troops soon found other work on their hands than that cut out for them.

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Burgoyne was determined to give the Americans no time either to rally, or again unite their scattered bands in his front. Without delay, one regiment was pushed forward to Fort Anne, on the heels of the fugitives who had just left Skenesborough in flames. July 7.

When this battalion reached the fort, instead of waiting to be attacked, the Americans sallied out upon it with spirit, and were driving it before them in full retreat, when the yells of some Indians, who were lurking in the neighboring woods, spread such a panic among the victors that they gave up the fight, set fire to Fort Anne, and retreated to Fort Edward with no enemy pursuing them. The defeated British then fell back to Skenesborough, so that each detachment may be said to have run away from the other.

General Burgoyne had much reason to be elated with his success thus far. In one short week he had taken Ticonderoga, with more than one hundred cannon; had scattered the garrison right and left; had captured or destroyed a prodigious quantity of warlike stores, the loss of which distressed the Americans long after; had annihilated their naval armament on the lake, and had sown dismay among the neighboring colonies broadcast. It was even a question whether there was any longer a force in his front capable of offering the least resistance to his march.



BLOCK HOUSE, FORT ANNE.

With these exploits, the first stage of the invasion may be said to have ended. If ever a man had been favored by fortune, Burgoyne was that man. The next stage must show him in a very different light, as the fool of fortune, whose favors he neither knew how to deserve when offered him, nor how to compel when withheld.

FOOTNOTES:

- [22] GENERAL PHILIP SCHUYLER, one of the four major-generals first created by Congress, June, 1775. Had seen some service in the French War; was given command of the Northern Department, including Ticonderoga, Crown Point, Fort Stanwix, etc., February, 1777, as the one man who could unite the people of New York against the enemy. Gates declined to serve under him.
- [23] OBSTRUCTIONS AT THE BRIDGE. The Americans had stretched a boom of logs, strongly chained together, across the strait.
- [24] SETH WARNER was on the way to Ticonderoga when he met St. Clair retreating. The rearguard, which Colonel Francis had previously commanded, was then increased, and put under Warner's orders.
- [25] COLONEL EBENEZER FRANCIS of Newton, Mass., colonel, 11th Massachusetts Regiment. His bravery was so conspicuous that the British thought he was in chief command of the Americans.
- [26] FORT ANNE, one of the minor posts built during the French War to protect the route from Albany to Lake Champlain. It consisted of a log blockhouse surrounded by a palisade. Boat navigation of Lake Champlain began here, fourteen miles from Skenesborough, by Wood Creek flowing into it.

V.

FACING DISASTER.

One of Washington's most trusted generals said, and said truly, that it was only through misfortune that the Americans would rise to the character of a great people. Perhaps no event of the Revolution more signally verified the truth of this saying, than the fall of Ticonderoga.

Let us see how this disaster was affecting the Northern States. In that section, stragglers and deserters were spreading exaggerated accounts of it on every side. In Vermont, the settlers living west of the mountains were now practically defenceless. Burgoyne's agents were undermining their loyalty; the fall of Ticonderoga had shaken it still more. Rather than abandon their farms, many no longer hesitated to put themselves under British protection. Hundreds, who were too patriotic to do this, fled over the mountains, spreading consternation as they went. From Lake Champlain to the New England coast, there was not a village which did not believe itself to be the especial object of Burgoyne's vengeance. Indeed, his name became a bugbear, to frighten unruly children with.

Of those who had been with the army, many believed it their first duty to protect their families, and so went home. Numbers, who were on the way to Ticonderoga, turned back, on hearing that it was taken. To Burgoyne, these results were equal to a battle gained, since he was weakening the Americans, just as surely, in this way, with entire safety to himself.

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In despair, those settlers who stood faithful among the faithless, turned to their New Hampshire brethren. "If we are driven back, the invader will soon be at your doors," they said. "We are your buckler and shield. Our humble cabins are the bulwark of your happy firesides. But our hearts fail us. Help us or we perish!"

Could Schuyler do nothing for these suffering people? To let them be ruined and driven out was not only bad policy, but worse strategy. He knew that Burgoyne must regard these settlements with foreboding, as the home of a hostile and brave yeomanry, whose presence was a constant threat to him. To maintain them, then, was an act of simplest wisdom. Schuyler could ill spare a single soldier, yet it was necessary to do something, and that quickly, for all New England was in a tumult, and Burgoyne said to be marching all ways at once. What wonder, since Washington himself believed New England to be the threatened point!^[27]

Warner's regiment had been recruited among the Green Mountain Boys of this very section. Schuyler posted what was left of it at Manchester, to be at once a rallying-point for the settlers, a menace to the loyalists, and a defence against Burgoyne's predatory bands, who were already spreading themselves out over the surrounding region. It was not much, but it was something.

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From New Hampshire, the panic quickly spread into Massachusetts, and throughout all New England. As usually happens, the loss of Ticonderoga was laid at the door of the generals in chief command. Many accused St. Clair of treacherous dealing. Everywhere, people were filled with wrath and astonishment. "The fortress has been sold!" they cried. Some of the officers, who had been present, wrote home that the place could have held out against Burgoyne for weeks, or until help could have arrived. This was sure to find ready believers, and so added to the volume of denunciation cast upon the head of the unlucky St. Clair.

But these passionate outbursts of feeling were soon quenched by the necessity all saw for prompt action. Once passion and prejudice had burned out, our people nobly rose to the demands of the situation. But confidence in the generals of the Northern army was gone forever. The men of New England would not sit long in the shadow of defeat, but they said they would no more be sacrificed to the incompetency of leaders who had been tried and found wanting. Congress had to pay heed to this feeling. Washington had to admit the force of it, because he knew that New England must be chiefly looked to in this crisis, to make head against Burgoyne. If she failed, all else would fail.

If we turn now to New York, what do we see? Five counties in the enemy's hands. Three more, so divided against themselves as to be without order or government. Of the remaining six, the resources of Orange, Ulster, and Dutchess were already heavily taxed with the duty of defending the passes of the Hudson; Westchester was being overrun by the enemy, at will; only Tryon and Albany remained, and in Tryon, every able-bodied citizen, not a loyalist, was arming to repel the invasion of St. Leger, now imminent.

P. Van Cortlandt's letters.

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We have thus briefly glanced at the dangers resulting from the fall of Ticonderoga, at the resources of the sections which Burgoyne was now threatening to lay waste with fire and sword, and at the attitude of the people toward those generals who had so grievously disappointed them in the conduct of the campaign, up to this time.

In the words of one distinguished writer, "The evacuation of Ticonderoga was a shock for which no part of the United States was prepared." In the language of another, "No event throughout the whole war produced such consternation, nothing could have been more unexpected."

John Marshall.

It was not so much the loss of the fortress itself,—as costly as it was to the impoverished colonies, that could have been borne,—but the people had been led to believe, and did believe, it was next to impregnable; nor could they understand why those who had been intrusted with its defence should have fled without striking a blow, or calling for assistance until too late.

Congress immediately ordered all the generals of the Northern army^[28] to Philadelphia, in order that their conduct might be looked into. John Adams hotly declared that they would never be able to defend a post until they shot a general. But Washington, always greatest in defeat, hastened to show how such a step was doubly dangerous to an army when fronting its enemy, and wisely procured its suspension for the present. He first set himself to work to soothe Schuyler's wounded pride, while stimulating him to greater activity. "We should never despair,"

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he nobly said. And again: "If new difficulties arise, we must only put forth new exertions. I yet look forward to a happy change." It was indeed fortunate that one so stout of heart, with so steady a hand, so firm in the belief of final triumph, so calm in the hour of greatest danger, should have guided the destinies of the infant nation at this trying hour.

FOOTNOTES:

- [27] THE THREATENED POINT. Baffled in his purpose of taking Philadelphia by Washington's success at Trenton, Sir William Howe had decided on making another attempt; but his manœuvres led Washington to believe Howe was going to Newport, R.I., with the view of overrunning Massachusetts. See Note 3, "Plan of Campaign" (p. 32).
- [28] GENERALS OF THE NORTHERN ARMY. Schuyler and St. Clair were chiefly inculpated. Brigadiers Poor, Patterson, and De Fermoy, who were with St. Clair at Ticonderoga, were included in the order. All had agreed in the necessity for the evacuation, and all came in for a share of the public censure. Poor and Patterson nobly redeemed themselves in the later operations against Burgoyne.

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VI.

THE MARCH TO FORT EDWARD.[29]

It is a well-known maxim of war, that the general who makes the fewest mistakes will come off conqueror.

In his haste to crush the Americans before they could combine against him, Burgoyne had overshot his mark. His troops were now so widely scattered that he could not stir until they were again collected. By the combats of Hubbardton and Fort Anne, nothing material had been gained, since St. Clair was at Fort Edward by the time Frazer got to Skenesborough, and the Americans had returned to Fort Anne as soon as the British left the neighborhood.

After the battle of Hubbardton, Riedesel was posted at Castleton, in order to create the impression that the British army was moving into New England. By this bit of strategy, Burgoyne expected to keep back reënforcements from Schuyler. Riedesel's presence also gave much encouragement to the loyalists, who now joined Burgoyne in such numbers as to persuade him that a majority of the inhabitants were for the king. The information they gave, proved of vital consequence in determining Burgoyne's operations in the near future.

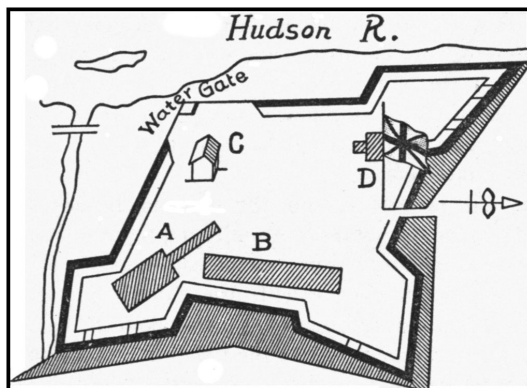
Two routes were now open to Burgoyne. Contrary to sound judgment, he decided on marching to Fort Edward, by way of Fort Anne, instead of going back to Ticonderoga, making that his *dépôt*, and proceeding thence up Lake George to Fort Edward and the Hudson. Unquestionably, the latter route would have taken him to Albany, by the time he actually reached Fort Edward, and in much better condition to fight.

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Burgoyne had said he was afraid that going back to Ticonderoga would dispirit his soldiers. It could have been done in half the time required for bringing the supplies up to it at Skenesborough, to say nothing of the long and fatiguing marches saved by water carriage across Lake George.

Be that as it may, from the moment Burgoyne decided in favor of the Fort Anne route, that moment the possession of Fort Anne became a necessity to him. Had he first attacked it with fifteen hundred men, instead of five hundred, he would have taken it; but even if he had occupied it after the fight of the eighth, the Americans would have been prevented from blocking his way, as they subsequently did with so much effect. In Burgoyne's case, delays were most dangerous. It seems only too plain, that he was the sort of general who would rather commit two errors than retract one.

Let us see what Burgoyne's chosen route offered of advantage or disadvantage. The distance by it to Fort Edward is only twenty-six miles. By a good road, in easy marches, an army should be there in two days; in an exigency, in one. It was mostly a wilderness country, and, though generally level, much of it was a bog, which could only be made passable by laying down a corduroy road. There were miles of such road to be repaired or built before wagons or artillery could be dragged over it. Indeed, a worse country to march through can hardly be imagined. On the other hand, of this twenty-six miles, Wood Creek, a tributary of Lake Champlain, afforded boat navigation for nine or ten, or as far as Fort Anne, for the artillery, stores, and baggage.



OLD FORT EDWARD.

A, Magazine. B, Barracks. C, Storehouse. D, Hospital.

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But while Burgoyne was getting his scattered forces again in hand, and was bringing everything up the lake to Skenesborough, the garrison of Fort Edward had been spreading themselves out over the road he meant to take, and were putting every obstacle in his way that ingenuity could devise or experience suggest. Hundreds of trees were felled across the road. The navigation of Wood Creek was similarly interrupted. Those trees growing on its banks were dexterously dropped so as to interlock their branches in mid-stream. Farms were deserted. All the live-stock was driven out of reach, to the end that the country itself might offer the most effectual resistance to Burgoyne's march.

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Burgoyne could not move until his working parties had cleared the way, in whole or in part. From this cause alone, he was detained more than a week at Skenesborough. This delay was as precious to the Americans as it was vexatious to Burgoyne, since it gave them time to bring up reënforcements, form magazines, and prepare for the approaching struggle, while the enemy's difficulties multiplied with every mile he advanced.

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At length the British army left Skenesborough. It took two days to reach Fort Anne, July 25. and five to arrive at Fort Edward, where it halted to allow the heavy artillery, sent by way of Lake George, to join it; give time to bring up its supplies of food and ammunition, without which the army was helpless to move farther on; and, meanwhile, permit the general to put in execution a scheme by which he expected to get a supply of cattle, horses, carts, and forage, of all of which he was in pressing want.

Still another body of savages joined Burgoyne at Fort Edward. Better for him had they staid in their native wilds, for he presently found himself equally powerless to control their thirst for blood, or greed for plunder.

Not yet feeling himself strong enough to risk a battle, Schuyler decided to evacuate July 21. Fort Edward on the enemy's approach. He first called in to him the garrison at Fort George. Nixon's brigade, which had just been obstructing the road from Fort Anne, was also called back. All told, Schuyler now had only about four thousand men. With these he fell back; first, to Moses's Creek, then to Saratoga, then to Stillwater.

FOOTNOTES:

- [29] FORT EDWARD, a link in the chain of forts extending between Canada and the Hudson,—first called Fort Lyman, for Colonel Phineas Lyman, who built it in 1755,—stood at the elbow of the Hudson, where the river turns west, after approaching within sixteen miles of Lake George, to which point there was a good military road. The fort itself was only a redoubt of timber and earth, surrounded by a stockade, and having a casern, or barrack, inside, capable of accommodating two hundred soldiers. It was an important military position, because this was the old portage, or carrying-place, from the Hudson to Lake George, though the fort was no great matter.

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VII.

BEFORE BENNINGTON.

On the 9th of August, Frazer's corps moved down to Duer's house, seven miles from

Frazer

Fort Edward, and seven from Saratoga. This was done to cover the expedition advances. Burgoyne had planned; first, to confirm the belief that he was about to fall on New England, and, next, for supplying his army with horses, cattle, carts, provisions, forage—everything, in short, of which he stood in want. Both objects would be gained at once, since fear of the first would make easy the second.

Burgoyne ached to strike a blow at New England. The successes he had just met with tempted him on toward his wishes; yet he dared not go too far, because the king's orders forbade his turning aside from his main object, to march into New England, as he himself had asked for discretionary power to do, when laying his plan before the ministers. Still, as New England was to be the final object of the campaign, Burgoyne was impatient to set about humbling her in good earnest. Events were working so favorably for him, that he now saw his chance to go at least half way toward his desires. So the expedition to Bennington was certainly far from being the effect of any sudden decision on Burgoyne's part, or wholly due to the pressing want of supplies. It would, we think, have been undertaken in any event.

Real object
of the
Bennington
raid.

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On the other hand, the victualling of his army was the one obstacle to Burgoyne's advance to Albany. So long as every pound of bread and meat had to be brought from Quebec to Skenesborough, and from Skenesborough to his camp, the farther the army marched, the greater the difficulty of feeding it became. It was now living from hand to mouth, so to speak. Nobody but Tories would sell it a pound of beef or an ear of corn. What gold could not buy, Burgoyne determined to take by force. If enough could be gleaned, in this way, from the country round, he could march on; if not, he must halt where he was, until sufficient could be brought up over a road every day growing longer and more dangerous. Burgoyne would never submit to the last alternative without trying the first.

For the moment then, the problem, how to feed his army so as to put it in motion with the least possible delay, was all-important with General Burgoyne. The oldest, and most populous, of the Vermont settlements lay within striking distance on his left. He knew that rebel flour was stored in Bennington. He had been told that half the farmers were loyal at heart, and that the other half would never wait for the coming of British veterans. Burgoyne was puffed up with the notion that he was going to conjure the demon of rebellion with the magic of his name. Already he saw himself not only a conqueror, but lawgiver to the conquered. On the whole, the plan seemed easy of accomplishment. Burgoyne was like a man starving in the midst of plenty. Supplies he must have. If they could be wrung from the enemy, so much the better.

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An expedition chiefly designed to rob barnyards, corn-cribs, and henroosts promised little glory to those engaged in it. This may have been the reason why Burgoyne chose to employ his Germans, who were always excellent foragers, rather than his British soldiers. Perhaps he thought the Germans would inspire most fear. Be that as it may, never did a general make a more costly mistake.^[30]

The command was given to Colonel Baum, who, with about a thousand Germans, Indians, Canadians, and refugee loyalists, started out from camp on his maraud, on the eleventh, halted at Batten-Kill on the twelfth, and reached Cambridge on the thirteenth. He was furnished with Tory guides, who knew the country well, and with instructions looking to a long absence from the army.

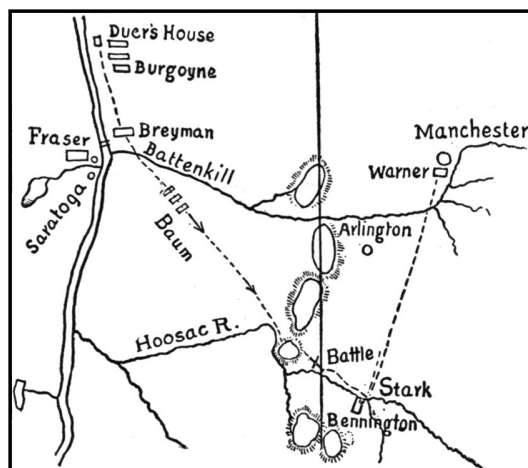
Baum
marches for
Bennington.

Burgoyne then began manœuvring so as to mask Baum's movements from Schuyler.

Frazer was marched down to Batten-Kill, with his own and Breyman's corps. Leaving Breyman here to support either Baum or himself, in case of need, Frazer crossed the Hudson on the fourteenth, and camped on the heights of Saratoga that night. The rest of the army moved on to Duer's, the same day. By thus threatening Schuyler with an advance in force, of which Frazer's crossing was conclusive proof, Burgoyne supposed Baum would be left to plunder at his leisure, but he seems to have thought little of the opposition which Baum, on his side, might meet with from the settlers themselves; though this too was provided against in Baum's orders, and by posting Breyman on Baum's line of march.

Frazer
crosses the
Hudson.

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POSITION OF BELLIGERENTS BEFORE BENNINGTON.

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If Baum succeeded to his wishes, Burgoyne meant to throw the whole army across the Hudson immediately. Already Frazer was intrenching at Saratoga, with the view of protecting the crossing. Having now so placed his troops as to take instant advantage of Baum's success, of which he felt no manner of doubt, Burgoyne could only sit still till Baum should be heard from.

Meanwhile, the New England militia were flocking to Manchester in squads, companies, or regiments. Washington had said they were the best yeomanry in the world, and they were about to prove their right to this title more decisively than ever. Ministers dismissed their congregations with the exhortation, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." Some clergymen even took a musket and went into the ranks. Apathy and the numbness that succeeds defeat were dissipated by these appeals and these examples.

It was Washington's policy to keep a force on Burgoyne's flank, which might be used to break up his communications, cut off his provision trains, or otherwise so harass him as to delay his march. In General Lincoln^[31] he found an officer, at once capable and brave, who had the confidence of the New England people. Lincoln was, therefore, sent to take command of the militia now mustering at Manchester.

At the same time, New Hampshire called upon the veteran Stark^[32] to lead her forces into the field. Stark had left the army in disgust, because Congress had promoted other officers over his head, not more worthy than himself. He was still smarting under the sense of wrong, when this command was offered him. He was like Achilles, sulking in his tent.

Stark said that he asked nothing better than to fight, but insisted that he would do so only upon condition that the State troops should be exclusively under his orders. To agree to this would be practically an exercise of State sovereignty. But time pressed, Stark's name was a host in itself: it was thought best to give his wounded vanity this sop; for, by general consent, he was the only man for the crisis.

Lincoln found six hundred men assembled at Manchester, most of whom belonged to Stark's brigade. On the seventh, Stark himself arrived with eight hundred more. By Schuyler's order, Lincoln desired Stark to march them to the main army at once. Stark replied that, being in an independent command, he would take orders from nobody as to how or where he should move his troops.

Aug. 6.

Though plainly subversive of all military rules, Stark's obstinacy proved Burgoyne's destruction; for if Schuyler had prevailed, there would never have been a battle of Bennington.

Though undoubtedly perplexed by the situation in which he found himself placed, of antagonism to the regularly constituted military authority of the nation, Stark's future operations show excellent military judgment on his part. He was not going to abandon Schuyler, or leave Vermont uncovered; still less was he disposed to throw away the chance of striking Burgoyne by hanging on his flank, and of thus achieving something on his own account. Stark's sagacity was soon justified to the world.

He determined to march with part of his force to Bennington, twenty-five miles south of Manchester, and about the same distance from Stillwater. In this position he would easily be able to carry out either of the objects he had in view, assist Schuyler, cover Bennington, or get in a telling blow somewhere, when least expected.

Aug. 9.

Burgoyne's expectation of surprising Bennington was thus completely frustrated.

Baum learned at Cambridge that the Americans were at Bennington, to the number of eighteen hundred. He immediately wrote Burgoyne to this effect. On the next day, he marched to Sancoic, a mill-stream falling into the Walloomsac River in North Hoosac, and after again writing Burgoyne, confirming the account he had previously sent about the force in his front, moved on toward Bennington, under the impression that the Americans would not wait to be attacked.

Aug. 14.

FOOTNOTES:

- [30] A COSTLY MISTAKE to give the command to an officer who could not speak English; still another, to intrust an expedition in which celerity of movement was all-important, to soldiers loaded down with their equipments, as the Germans were, instead of to light troops. Colonel Skene went with Baum. See note 4, p. 18.
- [31] GENERAL BENJAMIN LINCOLN, born at Hingham, Mass., 1733. Made a major-general, February, 1777. Joined Schuyler, July 29, at Fort Miller, while our army was retreating; sent thence to Manchester. One of those captains who, while seldom successful, are yet considered brave and skilful commanders.
- [32] GENERAL JOHN STARK, born at Londonderry, N.H., 1728, had seen more active service than most officers of his time. He had fought with Abercromby at Ticonderoga, against Howe at Bunker Hill, and with Washington at Trenton. Notwithstanding this, he was passed over in making promotions, perhaps because he had less education than some others, who lacked his natural capacity for a military life. Congress first censured him for insubordination, and then voted him thanks, and promotion to a brigadiership for his victory over Baum.

VIII.

BATTLE OF BENNINGTON. [33]

Burgoyne's movements convinced Schuyler that he would shortly be attacked by the whole British army, as Burgoyne had intended and foreseen. Schuyler therefore again urged Stark to come to his assistance without more delay, if he would not have the burden of defeat lie at his own door. This appeal took present effect.

Nothing happened till the thirteenth. Meantime, Stark had decided to go to Schuyler's assistance. His brigade was under arms, ready to march, when a woman rode up in haste with the news that hostile Indians were running up and down the next town, spreading terror in their path. She had come herself, because the road was no longer safe for men to travel it. Stark quickly ordered out two hundred men to stop the supposed marauders, and gain further intelligence.

This detachment soon sent back word that the Indians were only clearing the way for a larger force, which was marching toward Bennington. Swift couriers were instantly despatched to Manchester, to hurry forward the troops there to Stark's aid.

The next day Stark moved out toward the enemy, in order to look for his detachment. Aug. 14. He soon fell in with it, fighting in retreat, with the enemy following close behind. Stark halted, formed his line, and gathered in his scouts. This defiance brought the enemy to a stand also.

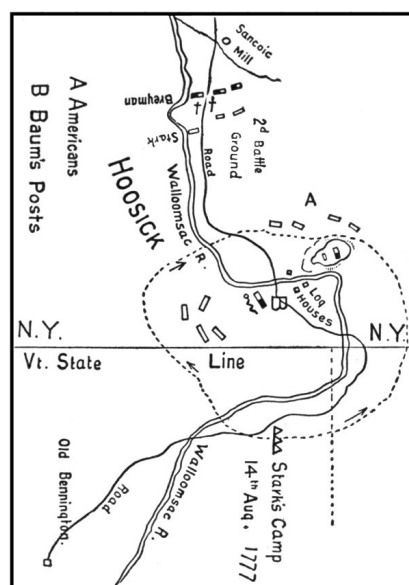
[Pg 78]

Seeing before him a force as strong as, or stronger than, his own, Baum was now looking about him for ground suitable to receive an attack upon; making one himself was farthest from his thoughts, as Burgoyne had given him express orders not to risk an engagement, if opposed by a superior force, but to intrench, and send back for help at once. This was precisely Baum's present situation. He therefore lost no time in sending a courier to headquarters.

On his part, Stark did not wish to fight till Warner could come up, or delay fighting long enough for the enemy to be reënforced. Baum's evident desire to avoid an action made Stark all the more anxious to attack him, and he resolved to do so not later than the next morning, by which time he confidently reckoned on having Warner's regiment with him. Though small, it had fought bravely at Hubbardton, and Stark felt that his raw militia would be greatly strengthened by the presence of such veterans among them.

Rain frustrated Stark's plan for attacking the next day, so there was only a little Aug. 15. skirmishing, in which the Americans had the advantage. Baum improved the delay by throwing up a redoubt of logs and earth on a rather high, flat-topped hill, rising behind the little Walloomsac River. In this he placed his two field-pieces. His Canadians and loyalists took up a position across and lower down the stream, in his front, the better to cover the road by which his reënforcements must come, or the Americans attempt to cut off his retreat. These dispositions were all that time, the size of his force, and the nature of the ground, would permit.

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BATTLE OF BENNINGTON.
August 16, 1777.

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Rain also kept back the reinforcements that each side was so impatiently expecting. Stark chafed at the delay, Baum grew more hopeful of holding out until help could reach him. Burgoyne had, indeed, despatched Breyman to Baum's assistance at eight o'clock in the morning, with eight hundred and fifty men and two guns. This corps was toiling on, through mud and rain, at the rate of only a mile an hour, when an hour, more or less, was to decide the fate of the expedition itself. The fatigue was so great, that when urged on to the relief of their comrades, the weary Germans would grumble out, "Oh, let us give them time to get warm!"

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Warner's regiment could not leave Manchester till the morning of the fifteenth, but by marching till midnight, it was near Bennington on the morning of the sixteenth. Breyman put so little energy into his movements that he was nowhere near Baum at that hour. Stark, however, was strengthened by the arrival of several hundred militia from Massachusetts, who came full of fight, and demanding to be led against the enemy without delay. Stark's reply was characteristic: "Do you want to go out now, while it is dark and rainy?" he asked. "No," the spokesman rejoined. "Then," continued Stark, "if the Lord should give us sunshine once more, and I do not give you fighting enough, I will never ask you to turn out again."

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The day broke clear and pleasant. Both parties prepared for the coming battle. Stark had the most men, but Baum the advantage of fighting behind intrenchments, and of having artillery, while Stark had none.

Aug. 16.

At midday, Stark formed his men for the attack. All were yeomanry, in homespun, rudely equipped with pouches and powder-horns, and armed with the old brown firelocks, without bayonets, they had brought from their homes. Some had served in the preceding campaign, but not one in fifty had ever fired a shot in anger; while many were mere lads, in whom enthusiasm for their leader and cause supplied the want of experience. The work now required of them was such as only veterans were thought capable of doing. They were to storm intrenchments, defended by the trained soldiers of Europe; yet not a man flinched when Stark, with a soldier's bluntness and fire, pointed his sword toward the enemy's redoubt and exclaimed, "There, my lads, are the Hessians! To-night our flag floats over yonder hill, or Molly Stark is a widow!"

His men answered with loud cheers, grasped their weapons, and demanded to be led against the enemy. Stark then gave the wished-for order to march.

Meanwhile, dismay reigned in Bennington. Every man who could load a musket had gone out to fight with Stark. Their household goods had been loaded upon wagons, ready to move off in case the day went against them. Their wives and little ones stood hand in hand along the village street, throughout that long summer afternoon, listening to the peal of cannon and musketry, in fear for those who had gone forth to the battle, and expecting the moment that was to make them homeless wanderers.

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The story of the battle is soon told. Stark so divided his force as to attack the enemy in front, flank, and rear, at once. The nature of the ground was such as to hide the march of the several detachments from Baum's view, but he had no other idea than to keep close in his intrenchments.

At three in the afternoon, firing began in Baum's rear. This was the signal that the several attacking columns had reached their allotted stations. All the Americans then rushed on to the assault. Baum found himself everywhere assailed with unlooked-for vigor. Never had he expected to see raw rustics charging up to the muzzles of his guns. In vain he plied them with grape and musketry. The encircling line grew tighter and tighter; the fire, hotter and hotter. For an hour he defended himself valiantly, hoping for night or Breyman to come. At last his fire slackened. The Americans clambered over the breastworks, and poured into the redoubt. For a few moments there was sharp hand-to-hand fighting. The Germans threw down their muskets, drew their broadswords, and desperately attempted to cut their way out. Most of them were beaten back or taken. A few only escaped. The Tories and Canadians fared no better. The victory was complete and decisive.

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Now, at the eleventh hour, Breyman was marching on the field to the sound of the firing. He had taken thirty-two hours to get over twenty-four miles. Supposing the day won, Stark's men were scattered about in disorder. Not even Stark himself seems to have thought of a rescuing force. Some were guarding the prisoners, some caring for the wounded, and some gathering up the booty. All had yielded to the demoralization of victory, or to the temptation to plunder. Most opportunely, Warner's men now came fresh into the fight. This gallant little band flung itself boldly in the path of the advancing foe, thus giving Stark the time to rally those nearest him, and lead them into action again.

At first Breyman gained ground. With steady tread his veterans fired and moved on, pushing the Americans back, toward the scene of the first encounter; but Baum was no longer there to assist, the scattered militiamen were fast closing in round Breyman's flanks, and Stark had now brought one of Baum's cannon to bear, with destructive effect, upon the head of the enemy's advancing column.

In no long time the deadly fire, poured in on all sides, began to tell upon Breyman's solid battalions. Our marksmen harassed his flanks. His front was hard pressed, and there were no signs of Baum. Enraged by the thought of having victory torn from their grasp, the Americans gave ground foot by foot, and inch by inch. At last the combatants were firing in each other's faces; so close was the encounter, so deadly the strife, that Breyman's men were falling round him by scores, under the close and accurate aim of their assailants. Darkness was closing in. His artillery horses were shot down in their traces, his flanks driven in, his advance stopped.

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As soon as they perceived their advantage, the Americans redoubled their efforts. The firing

grew tremendous. It was now Breyman who was forced back. Soon all order was lost. Favored by the darkness, he began a disorderly retreat. In an instant his guns were taken. Exhausted by fighting two battles in one afternoon, no longer able in the darkness to tell friend from foe, the Americans soon gave over the pursuit. But, for the second time, they stood victors on the hard-fought field. All felt it to be a narrow escape from defeat, for if Breyman had loitered by the way, he had fought like a lion in the toils of the hunter.

Thus Washington's sagacity had been vindicated, Stark's insubordination nobly atoned for, Schuyler's worst fears set at rest, by the fortunes of a single day.

Four cannon, one thousand stand of arms, and seven hundred prisoners, were the trophies of this victory. The enemy left two hundred of his dead on the field. Baum's corps was virtually destroyed, Breyman's badly cut up, Burgoyne's well-laid plans scattered to the winds.

FOOTNOTES:

- [33] BATTLE OF BENNINGTON. Both actions actually occurred in the town of Hoosic, N.Y. (we cannot be held responsible for the absurd variations in spelling this name), though the troops were formed for the attack within the limits of Bennington, and Stark's despatch announcing his victory is dated at this place. A battle monument, designed to be three hundred and one feet high, is now being built on a commanding site at Bennington Centre, which is the old village. No more beautiful spot than this hill-environed valley, overlooked by Mount Anthony, could possibly commemorate to future centuries one of the decisive conflicts of the War for Independence.

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IX.

AFTER BENNINGTON.

Stark had, indeed, dealt Burgoyne a stunning blow. In a moment all his combinations were overthrown. Efforts were made to keep the disaster a secret from the army, but the movements made in consequence of it told the story but too plainly.

In the first place, the whole army was hurried up to Batten-Kill in order to cover Breyman's and Frazer's retreat,^[34] for Frazer had been ordered to recross the Hudson at once. Frazer's position was most critical; his bridge had been broken by a freshet, and for one whole day he was cut off from the main army. Aug. 17.

As soon as Breyman's worn-out men had straggled into camp, Burgoyne's fell back to Duer's again. Meantime, Frazer had repaired his bridge and hastily recrossed the Hudson. Riedesel's corps was sent back to Fort Edward. The whole army had thus made a retrograde movement in consequence of the defeat at Bennington, and now lay in *echelon*^[35] from Fort Edward to Batten-Kill, in the camps it had occupied before the advance was begun; it had retreated upon its communications; it was put on the defensive. Aug. 18.

Burgoyne had now no choice left but to hold fast his communication with the lakes, and these could not be called safe while a victorious enemy was threatening his flank. From this time forward, he grew wary and circumspect. His councils began to be divided. The prestige of the army was lowered, confidence in its leaders visibly shaken. Even the soldiers began to grumble, criticise, and reflect. Burgoyne's vain boast that this army would not retreat, no longer met the conditions in which it stood. It had retreated. [Pg 88]

As if to prove the truth of the adage that misfortunes never come singly, most of Burgoyne's Indians now deserted him. So far from intimidating, their atrocities had served to arouse the Americans as nothing else could. As soldiers, they had usually run away at the first fire. As scouts, their minds were wholly fixed upon plundering. Burgoyne had sharply rebuked them for it. Ever sullen and intractable under restraint, their answer was at least explicit, "No plunder, no Indians;" and they were as good as their word.

We find, then, that the battle of Bennington had cost Burgoyne not far from two thousand men, whether soldiers or Indians. More than this, it had thrown him back upon his second alternative, which, we remember, was to halt until supplies could be brought from Canada. This was easily equivalent to a month's delay. Thirty days of inaction were thus forced upon Burgoyne at a time when every one of them was worth five hundred men to the Americans. Such were some of the substantial results of the victory at Bennington.

To the Americans, the moral and material gains were no less striking or important. At once confidence was restored. Men no longer hesitated to turn out, or feared for the result. A most hopeful sign was the alacrity with which the well-to-do farmers went into the ranks. There was [Pg 89]

general appreciation of the fact that Burgoyne had seriously compromised himself by advancing as far as he had; in short, the re-action was quite as decisive as that which had followed the victory at Trenton.

FOOTNOTES:

- [34] BREYMAN'S RETREAT. The express from Baum arrived at headquarters at 5 A.M. of the fifteenth. Orders were immediately given Breyman to march. News of Baum's defeat reached Burgoyne during the night of the sixteenth. The 20th regiment, British, was immediately marched to Breyman's support. Burgoyne's anxiety was so great, that he followed it until Breyman's corps was met on the road.
- [35] ECHELON, the French word for step-ladder, by adoption a universal military term, well describes the posting of troops, belonging to one army, at stated intervals apart, so as to be moved forward or backward step by step, always keeping the same relative distances between the separate bodies. In marking out such positions on the map, the columns would look like the rounds of a ladder, hence the term.

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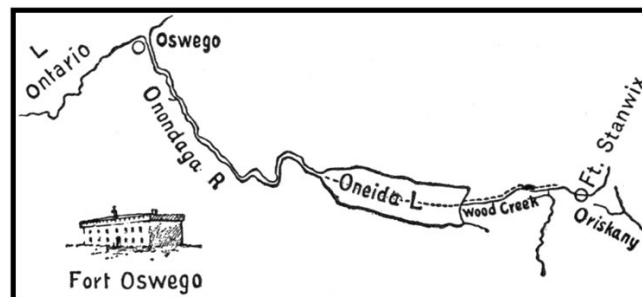
X.

ST. LEGER'S EXPEDITION.

Burgoyne's hopes now chiefly turned upon the promised coöperation of St. Leger from Oswego, and of Sir William Howe from New York.

Convinced that the enemy would shortly invade the Mohawk Valley, Schuyler had sent Colonel Gansevoort^[36] to put Fort Stanwix,^[37] the key to this valley, in a state of defence, before it should be attacked.

Refer to
"Plan of
Campaign."



ST. LEGER'S ROUTE TO FORT STANWIX.

St. Leger's force was the counterpart of Burgoyne's, in that it consisted of regular troops, loyalists, and Indians. Many of the loyalists, and most of the Indians, had lived in this valley, so that St. Leger had no want of guides, who knew every foot of ground, or of spies acquainted with the sentiments of every settler.

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A scanty supply of provisions had just been brought into the fort when St. Leger's scouts opened fire upon it. The garrison shut the gates and returned the fire. Instead of finding Fort Stanwix defenceless, St. Leger was compelled to lay siege to it.

Aug. 3.

The news of St. Leger's appearance in the valley roused the settlers in arms. Near a thousand men, all brave, but without discipline, promptly marched, under General Herkimer,^[38] to the relief of Fort Stanwix. Gansevoort was notified, and was to aid the movement by making a sortie from the fort, at the proper moment.

St. Leger's spies soon discovered Herkimer's men coming. All the rangers, and most of the Indians, went out to waylay them in the thick forests. Not far from Oriskany, Brant,^[39] the Mohawk chief, and Johnson,^[40] the loyalist leader, hid their men in a ravine, through which the Americans would have to pass, in a thin line, over a causeway of logs.

Meantime, the Americans were heedlessly pressing on, without order, to the rescue of their comrades. In their impatience, even ordinary precautions were neglected. When the van entered the ravine, a terrible fire mowed down the front ranks by scores; those in the rear fled in a panic from the field. It was downright butchery.

Aug. 6.

After the firing had continued some time, those Americans whom panic had not seized, threw themselves into a posture of defence, and resolved to sell their lives dearly. Herkimer, their

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leader, had been struck down by a bullet, among the first; but, notwithstanding his wound was a disabling one, he continued to direct his men, and encourage them by his firm demeanor to fight on. In the face of overwhelming odds they gallantly stood their ground, until the enemy was alarmed by hearing firing in its rear, and drew off, leaving Herkimer's little band of heroes to retire unmolested from the field.

The firing had been heard at Fort Stanwix, and the cause easily guessed. While the battle was raging at Oriskany, the garrison of the fort sallied out upon the besiegers' camps. They met with little opposition, as most of the defenders had gone out to fight Herkimer. The firing, however, had called off the savages from Herkimer, to the defence of their own camps. The sortie was gallantly made, and entirely successful; but the attack on Herkimer rendered it of so little avail, that the battle of Oriskany left Gansevoort hardly better off than before.

Two hundred of Herkimer's men were killed. He, too, soon died of his wounds.

Though this attempt to relieve Fort Stanwix had so signally failed, Schuyler was much too sensible of the importance of holding it, not to make another effort to raise the siege. He could ill afford to spare the troops necessary for the undertaking, since Burgoyne was now manœuvring in his front; but the gravity of the situation could not be overlooked. He therefore sent Arnold, with Learned's brigade, to retrieve Herkimer's disaster in the valley.

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Gansevoort was still holding out against St. Leger as stubbornly as ever. His situation was, however, growing desperate, when, one day, without apparent cause, the besiegers suddenly decamped in headlong haste, leaving their tents standing, their baggage in their tents, and their artillery in the trenches.

Aug. 22.

This inglorious and unlooked-for flight was brought about by emissaries from Arnold, who spread the report among St. Leger's Indians, that the Americans were coming with forces as numerous as leaves on the trees. Arnold, whom no one will accuse of want of courage, was really undecided about advancing farther with his small force. His stratagem, however, took effect. Grown weary of the siege, the Indians now made no scruple of deserting their allies on the spot. In vain St. Leger stormed and entreated by turns; stay they would not. He therefore had no choice but to follow them, in mortification and disgust, back to Oswego. In the belief that Arnold was close upon them, everything was left behind that could impede the march. The siege was abandoned in disgrace, and Fort Stanwix saved by a simple stratagem.

Six days later, Burgoyne was informed of St. Leger's retreat. He had now no other resource than in the promised advance up the Hudson, and in the strength of his artillery. By acting in detachments, his immediate force had been so seriously weakened that a forward movement on his part, without full assurance of active support from New York, savored far more of recklessness than sound military judgment.

Aug. 28.

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FOOTNOTES:

- [36] COLONEL PETER GANSEVOORT, born at Albany, 1749, had fought with Montgomery at Quebec.
- [37] FORT STANWIX, also called Schuyler, built by General Stanwix of Abercromby's army in 1758.
- [38] GENERAL NICHOLAS HERKIMER, a leading settler of the Mohawk Valley.
- [39] JOSEPH BRANT, or Thayandanega, sometime pupil of Dr. Wheelock's school (since Dartmouth College), was by all odds the most active, intelligent, and implacable enemy to the Americans that the war produced among his people. With Johnson, he held most of the Six Nations at enmity with us during the Revolution. (See Note 5.)
- [40] SIR JOHN JOHNSON was the son of Sir William, who gained wealth and a title by his victory over Dieskau at Lake George, 1755. He was also the king's superintendent over the Six Nations, and had his residence at Caughnawaga, since called Johnstown in his honor. Sir John succeeded to his father's title and estates. He took sides with the Royalists, raised a body of Tory followers, and with them fled to Canada. Out of these refugees, he raised a corps of rangers called Royal Greens, with whom he joined St. Leger, in the hope of crushing out his enemies in the valley.

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XI.

OUR ARMY ADVANCES.

We remember that the united voice of the army and people had demanded the recall of those generals whose want of foresight or energy, or both, had caused the disasters

Refer to Chapter V.,

with which the campaign had opened. Congress chose General Gates^[41] to command in room of Schuyler, who, with St. Clair, was ordered to report at headquarters. With the methods of travel then in use, Gates was nearly two weeks in getting from Philadelphia to Albany. This fact will sufficiently illustrate the difficulties which attended the movement of reënforcements from one army to another, before the day of railways and steamboats.

"Facing Disaster."

Aug. 4.

All that lay in the power of man to do, Washington had done for the Northern army. Though fronting an enemy greatly superior to himself, he had still found time to so direct operations in the North, that his hand may almost be said to have guided the course of events in that quarter. He had soothed Schuyler's wounded self-love, commended his efforts, strengthened his hands in the field, and nobly stood between him and his detractors in Congress. When Congress had suspended all the generals of the Northern army from command, it was Washington who interposed to save them and the army from the consequences of such blindness and folly. To Schuyler he had said, "Burgoyne is doing just what we could wish; let him but continue to scatter his army about, and his ruin is only a question of time." Schuyler urgently called for more troops. Brigade after brigade had gone from Washington's own army to swell Schuyler's ranks. "I care not where the victory is won, so we do but gain it," Washington said. Schuyler again pleaded his want of general officers. Washington sent him Arnold, the dare-devil of the army, and Lincoln, a man of sound head, steady hand, and even temper, as a counterpoise to Arnold's over-confident and impetuous nature. Thanks to these efforts, we had created a new army on the ruins of the old.

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Schuyler's deportment toward the Massachusetts authorities at this time was neither conciliatory nor conducive to the interests of the service. He knew their feelings of distrust toward him, and in making application to them for reënforcements showed his resentment in a way that called forth an acrimonious response. He upbraided them for their shortcomings; they entreated him to look nearer home. Thus we find General Schuyler and the Massachusetts Council engaged in an exchange of sarcasms at a time when the exigency called for something besides a war of words between the commander of an army and the executive head of a powerful State.

Gates took command just after the Battle of Bennington was won. He found the army in much disorder, but pleased with the change of commanders. Gates was a thorough disciplinarian and organizer. In his hands, the efficiency of the army daily increased. Old jealousies were silenced, and confidence restored. Letters from the soldiers show the change in temper and spirit to have been instant and marked. One of them says, "When we came to Albany, things looked very dark for our side, for there were officers in town who had left camp, and would not go back as long as Schuyler had the command. Both officers and soldiers were determined not to fight under him, and would tell him so to his head. But General Gates came to town, and then the tune was turned, and every face showed a merry heart."

Aug. 19.

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The hostile armies now lay, quietly gathering up their strength for the decisive struggle, within sound of each other's evening guns.

Gates was the first to act. Having been joined by Morgan's rifle corps,^[42] and by large numbers of militia, the whole army now moved up to Stillwater, within a dozen miles of the enemy, who still remained intrenched behind the Batten-Kill. This movement put new life into our soldiers, and was not without its effect upon the enemy, whose spirit was aroused at finding the antagonist it had been pursuing suddenly become the aggressor. The Americans had a well-served though not numerous artillery, but the presence of Morgan's corps more than made good any deficiency in this respect. The great drawback to the efficiency of the army was the want of cordiality between Gates and Arnold. The breach between them was daily widening that was presently to become an impassable gulf.

Sept. 9.

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Gates purposed taking up a strong position, and awaiting Burgoyne's attack behind his intrenchments. Either Burgoyne must risk an assault, under conditions most favorable to the Americans, or retire discomfited under conditions highly unfavorable to a successful retreat.

The country between Saratoga and Stillwater, covered with woods and intersected by ravines, was wholly unsuited to the free movement of troops. All the shore of the Hudson is high ground, rising to a nearly uniform level next the river, but gradually ascending, as the river is left, to the summit of the streams falling into it. Long slopes or terraces are thus formed, furrowed here and there by the ravines, which serve to drain off the water from above into the river below. Puny rivulets where they begin, these watercourses cut deeper as they run on, until, at the river, they become impassable gulches. The old military road skirts the foot of the heights, which sometimes abut closely upon the river, and sometimes draw back far enough to leave a strip of meadow between it and them.

Kosciusko,^[43] Gates's engineer, chose the ground on which to receive Burgoyne's attack, at one of these places where the heights crowd upon the river, thus forming a narrow defile, which a handful of men could easily defend against an army. At this place the house of a settler named Bemis stood by the roadside. Our army filed off the road here, to the left, scaled the heights, and encamped along a ridge of land, running west as far as some high, rough, and woody ground, which formed the summit.

Sept. 12.

Bemis' Heights.

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Except two or three clearings, all the ground in Gates's front was thickly wooded. One settler, called Freeman, had cleared and planted quite a large field in front of the American centre and left, though at some distance beyond, and hid from view by intervening woods. This field of Freeman's was one of the few spots of ground lying

Freeman's Farm.

Sept. 13.

between the two armies, on which troops could be manoeuvred or artillery used with advantage. The farm-house stood at the upper edge of it, at a distance of a mile back from the river. Our pickets immediately took post there, as no one could enter the clearing without being seen from the house. Accident has thus made this spot of ground, Freeman's Farm,^[44] famous. The Americans were at work like beavers, strengthening their line with redoubts, felled trees, and batteries, when the enemy was discovered marching against them.

FOOTNOTES:

- [41] GENERAL GATES had resigned his command at Ticonderoga, rather than serve under Schuyler. There was no good feeling between them.
- [42] MORGAN'S RIFLEMEN was the most celebrated corps of the Continental Army. The men were unerring marksmen, and on that account greatly feared by the British. All were expert woodsmen, devoted to their leader, who held them under strict discipline.
- [43] THADDEUS KOSCIUSKO came to this country to offer his services to Congress. "What can you do?" asked Washington. "Try me," was the laconic reply. In course of time, he was sent to Schuyler as engineer of his army.
- [44] FREEMAN'S HOUSE was made use of by Burgoyne, during the battle of September 9, as his headquarters. After this battle it was included within the British lines.

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XII.

BATTLE OF BEMIS' HEIGHTS.^[45]

(September 19, 1777.)

Burgoyne, at Batten-Kill, had only a choice of evils to make. Either he could save his army by retreating to Fort Edward, and thus give up all hope of seeing the ends of the campaign fulfilled, or he might still make a bold push for Albany, and so put everything at the hazard of battle.

But to fall back when he had promised to go forward, when the doing so meant ruin to his reputation, and possibly to the cause of his king, was not only a bitter alternative, but a responsibility heavier than he was prepared to take.

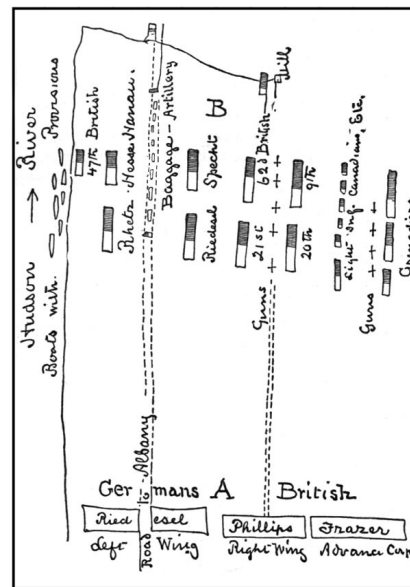
On the other hand, should he now cross the Hudson, with intent to bring on a decisive battle,—and his crossing meant just this,—Burgoyne knew that he must drop his communications with Canada, because he could not afford the guards necessary to keep them open. Already he had been weakened by the loss of more than fifteen hundred men, without counting the Indians who had so basely deserted him; St. Leger had failed him in his utmost need. On his left, the Americans were watching their chance to strike a blow in his rear. Burgoyne therefore felt that, from the moment he should put the Hudson between his army and its only way of retreat, all must be staked on the doubtful issue of battle. He decided to make the gambler's last throw.

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Burgoyne himself has said that his orders left him no choice but to go on. It is evident he construed them to his own wishes. He still believed his six thousand excellent soldiers, with their superb artillery, would prove themselves more than a match for twice their own number of undisciplined yeomanry. He would not admit even the possibility of defeat. He felt confident of beating Gates with ease.

In choosing to fight, rather than retreat, Burgoyne, perhaps, acted from the impulse of a brave nature, rather than the promptings of his sober judgment, as he was bound to do; since he had known for some time that Sir William Howe had gone to Pennsylvania, without making any definite preparations to come to his assistance. Notwithstanding this assurance, that a most important part of the plan of campaign had failed, through no fault of his, Burgoyne seems to have put his trust in the chapter of accidents, rather than remain inactive until it was certain he would be supported from New York. Not one solitary circumstance, except faith in the valor of his troops, favored a further advance at this time. But his gallant little army was ready to follow him, the enemy was within striking distance, and so Burgoyne marched on, bemoaning his ill luck, but with the pluck characteristic of the man.

On the thirteenth the British army crossed the Hudson, by a bridge of boats, to Saratoga. Burgoyne took with him provisions for five weeks, which were loaded in bateaux and floated down the river as he advanced. As yet he knew comparatively nothing of what preparations the Americans were making to receive him, and but little about the country he was in. But he did know that the patriot army had at last faced about, and that was enough to rouse the spirit of his soldiers to the highest pitch.



BURGOYNE'S ORDER OF BATTLE.
19th September.

Pen and ink sketch by a British officer.

A, The Line Formed. B, The Columns in March.

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On the fifteenth the British Army began its march southward in three divisions. The only road had to be given up to the baggage and artillery. To protect it, the left, or German division, marched along the meadows, next the river. The centre, or British division, kept the heights above; while Frazer's corps moved at some distance, on the right of it, with Breyman's following just behind in support. Two divisions were therefore marching on the heights, and one underneath them. Sept. 15.

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What with the delays caused by broken bridges on the road, bridging the ravines on the heights, or forcing a way through thick woods, which it was necessary always to reconnoitre with care,—the royal army could get over but six miles in two days. Being then near the enemy, a halt was made to prepare for battle. Sept. 17.

On this day, Burgoyne continued his march in the same order as before, with skirmishers thrown out well in advance of each column. The centre, which he directed in person, would, in following the direction it was taking, very shortly find itself at Freeman's Farm. Sept. 19.

On his part, Gates had sent out Morgan's rifle corps to feel the enemy, in order to learn what they were doing or intending to do. Morgan had advanced as far as our outpost at Freeman's house, when the British skirmishers came out of the woods into the clearing. They were instantly fired upon and returned the fire. It was therefore here that the action of September 19 began. [Pg 106]

Morgan's hot fire soon drove the enemy back to cover again, with loss. Our riflemen dashed into the woods after them, got into disorder, and, before they were aware, fell upon the supporting battalions, by whom they were defeated and scattered, in their turn. This division then advanced into the clearing, from which by this time the Americans had decamped. Burgoyne thus gained the ground about Freeman's house, whence his pickets were first attacked and driven in.

At this place, Burgoyne formed his line, facing towards the woods into which Morgan's men had retreated. He rightly judged the enemy to be there, though threats failed to extort any information from the prisoners he had taken. When Frazer told one of Morgan's captains he would hang him up to the nearest tree, unless he would point out the place where his comrades were posted, the man undauntedly replied, "You may, if you please."

Knowing that Gates could not be attacked on his right, Burgoyne meant to make the trial on the left. If that wing could be turned, Gates would have to retreat from his works, or be driven into the river. This was all the simple plan of attack, but as yet, Burgoyne did not know where the American left was posted. The woods effectually masked the American position, and all was now quiet. [Pg 107]

Burgoyne now prepared to go forward again. From what had just taken place, he supposed the troops now with him would strike the American line first. It was therefore arranged that when he became fully engaged, Frazer was to charge the American flank, and crush it, making the centre division his pivot. With his right, Burgoyne meant to turn the American left.

Burgoyne had with him four battalions of the line, and four guns. He would have brought more guns if more could have been used with effect in the woods, as he greatly relied upon this arm. Frazer had twenty companies of grenadiers and light infantry, the 24th British regiment, Breyman's Germans, and all the Canadians, loyalists, and Indians now left with the army; he also had four pieces of artillery. About four thousand men were thus in readiness to engage. The left wing was now in motion along the river road, under the heights, but was too far off to be of much

use in reënforcing the right. It was, however, of service in preventing Gates from sending troops away from his right, to fight Burgoyne on the left.

Though Burgoyne did not know the American position, which thick woods everywhere masked from his view, he had disclosed his own very clearly to Morgan, who sent an urgent request for reënforcements.

[Pg 108]

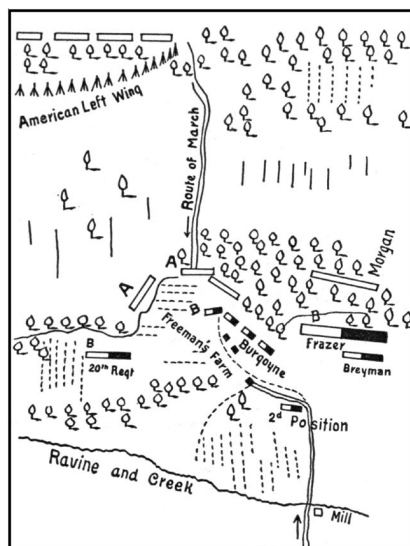
Gates wished to receive the attack in his works, not make one himself. He therefore ordered only one or two battalions from his left to go to Morgan's assistance, and withstood the entreaties of his officers to be allowed to meet the enemy in the open field.

At between two and three o'clock, as Burgoyne had just finished his dispositions for attacking, a heavy fire broke from the woods in Frazer's front. This came from Morgan and the troops sent to his support. Making no impression on Frazer, whose cannon held them in check, the assailants suddenly shifted their attack over to the left, where Burgoyne commanded in person. And thus it was that, instead of attacking, Burgoyne found himself assaulted; instead of turning Gates's left, his own was being assailed, with the purpose of separating the two wings of his army.

On finding a battle actually in progress, Gates reënforced the troops who were fighting against odds, with dribbles of a regiment at a time. Instead of going on the field himself, or letting Arnold go,^[46] he pretended to believe that his own right was the real object of attack, and kept in his quarters. This day's battle was therefore fought wholly by his subordinates, against the British general-in-chief, seconded by his ablest lieutenants.

Having found the enemy's left, the Americans chiefly turned their attention to that flank, as has just been said. The 62d British regiment was posted here with two guns. This flank was crushed, and its artillery silenced by a superior fire. Its defeat caused the whole British line to give way, leaving part of their artillery in our hands.

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FIRST BATTLE OF BEMIS' HEIGHTS.
[Pen and ink sketch by a British officer.]
A, Americans Attacking. B, British Positions.

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So far the battle had gone in our favor. Any demonstration from our right, upon the enemy's left, would, unquestionably, have rendered the victory complete. As nothing of the kind was attempted, the British were able to bring up reënforcements from that wing, without opposition, and the golden opportunity was lost.

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From the river road, Riedesel, by making a roundabout march, brought two of his regiments into action. Phillips hurried with four guns taken from the reserve artillery to the front. Frazer turned part of his force upon the American flank, thus relieving Burgoyne from the pressure laid upon him, and enabling him to form a second line. When this was done, the whole British force advanced again as far as their first position, while the Americans, for want of fresh troops to meet them, were compelled to fall back under cover of the woods again. The combat had now lasted four hours. Darkness put an end to it, nearly on the spot where it had begun. The British were indeed masters of the field; but instead of attacking, they had always been attacked, and instead of advancing, they had been everywhere stopped; their artillery alone had saved them from defeat. Our army lost three hundred and nineteen killed and wounded; the British, more than five hundred,—the difference being due to superior marksmanship. Our losses could easily be made good; the British could not. All the real advantages, therefore, were clearly on the side of the Americans.

FOOTNOTES:

[45] BATTLE OF BEMIS' HEIGHTS. Bemis' Heights formed part of the American position, but not of the battle-ground. Freeman's Farm would have been a more accurate designation. Stillwater locates it anywhere within a township of many miles in extent.

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[46] ARNOLD'S PART in this battle has been long a matter of dispute. Gates was jealous of him

because he was the idol of his soldiers. Arnold had no high opinion of Gates. After Arnold turned traitor, every one seems to have thought it a duty to give him a kick. This feeling is unfortunately conspicuous in the only detailed account from the American side we have of this battle, which was written by Wilkinson, Gates's adjutant-general, and given to the world nearly forty years (1816) afterwards. Wilkinson seems to have fully shared his commander's likes and dislikes, and has treated Arnold shabbily. The battle was almost wholly fought by Arnold's division, and it is equally incompatible with his duty and temper to suppose he would have remained in camp when his troops were engaged, though he was probably held back until a late hour in the day.

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XIII.

LINCOLN'S RAID IN BURGOYNE'S REAR.

Much to Burgoyne's chagrin, he had been obliged to garrison Ticonderoga with troops taken from his own army, instead of being allowed to draw upon those left in Canada, under command of General Carleton. About a thousand men were thus deducted from the force now operating on the Hudson.

Ever since the battle of Bennington, Lincoln had been most industriously gathering in, and organizing the militia, at Manchester. All New England was now up, and her sons were flocking in such numbers to his camp, that Lincoln soon found himself at the head of about two thousand excellent militia.

Guided by the spirit of Washington's instructions, he now determined on making an effort to break up Burgoyne's communications, capture his magazines, harass his outposts, and, perhaps, even throw himself on the British line of retreat. There is a refreshing boldness and vigor about the conception, something akin to real generalship and enterprise. It was a good plan, undertaken without Gates's knowledge or consent.

On the same day that Burgoyne was crossing the Hudson, Lincoln sent five hundred men to the head of Lake George, with orders to destroy the stores there; five hundred more to attack Ticonderoga; and another five hundred to Skenesborough, to support them in case of need. Unknown to Lincoln, Burgoyne had now wholly dropped his communications with the lakes, but these movements were no less productive of good results on that account. Sept. 13. [Pg 114]

The first detachment, under command of Colonel Brown,^[47] reached Lake George landing undiscovered. The blockhouse and mills there were instantly taken. Mount Defiance and the French lines at Ticonderoga^[48] were next carried without difficulty. In these operations, Brown took three hundred prisoners, released over one hundred Americans from captivity, and destroyed a great quantity of stores.

The second detachment having, meantime, come up before Mount Independence, Ticonderoga was cannonaded, for some time, without effect. Unlike St. Clair, the British commander would neither surrender nor retreat, even when the guns of Mount Defiance were turned against him.

Failing here, the Americans next went up Lake George, to attack Burgoyne's artillery depot, at Diamond Island. They were not more successful in this attempt, as the enemy was strongly fortified and made a vigorous defence. After burning the enemy's boats on the lake, Brown returned to Skenesborough.

General Lincoln was about to march from Skenesborough to Fort Edward, with seven hundred men, when he received a pressing request from Gates, dated on the morning of the battle, to join him at once. [Pg 115]

Abandoning, therefore, his own plans, Lincoln retraced his steps with so much speed, that he arrived in Gates's camp^[49] on the twenty-second. Gates immediately gave him command of the right wing^[50] of the army.

The road between Skenesborough and Fort Edward was now constantly patrolled by parties of American militia; so that it was truly said of Burgoyne, that the gates of retreat were fast closing behind him.

FOOTNOTES:

[47] COLONEL JOHN BROWN, of Pittsfield, Mass.,—who had been with Allen at the taking of Ticonderoga in 1775, and with Montgomery at Quebec,—Colonels Warner, Woodbridge, and Johnson coöperated in this expedition.

[48] TICONDEROGA was garrisoned at this time by one British and one German battalion, under

command of General Powell.

- [49] GATES'S CAMP. By this time, Gates also had connected his camp with the east bank of the Hudson, by a floating bridge, to facilitate the crossing of reënforcements to him.
- [50] THE RIGHT WING was composed of Nixon's, Glover's, and Patterson's Continental brigades, with a certain proportion of militia. The left wing of Poor's and Learned's brigades, Dearborn's Light Infantry, and Morgan's corps, with a like proportion of militia.

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XIV.

SECOND BATTLE OF FREEMAN'S FARM.

(*October, 1777.*)

Convinced that another such victory would be his ruin, Burgoyne now thought only of defending himself until the wished-for help should come. To this end, he began intrenching the ground on which he stood. The action of September 19 had, therefore, changed the relative situation of the antagonists, in that from being the assailant, Burgoyne was now driven to act wholly on the defensive.

On the day following the battle, a courier brought Burgoyne the welcome news that forces from New York would soon be on the way to his relief. Word was instantly sent back that his army could hold its ground until the 12th of October, by which time it was not doubted that the relieving force would be near enough at hand to crush Gates between two fires.

Burgoyne, therefore, now threw his bridge across the Hudson again, posted a guard on the farther side, made his camp as strong as possible, and waited with growing impatience for the sound of Sir Henry Clinton's [\[51\]](#) cannon to be heard in the distance. But Clinton did not move to Burgoyne's assistance until too late. The blundering of the War

At Wilber's
Basin.

Office had worked its inevitable results. By the time Clinton reached Tarrytown, thirty miles above New York, Burgoyne's army had been put on short rations. With the utmost economy the provisions could not be made to last much beyond the day fixed in Burgoyne's despatch. Foraging was out of the question. Nothing could be learned about Clinton's progress. All between the two British armies was such perilous ground, that several officers had returned unsuccessful, after making heroic efforts to reach Clinton's camp.

Oct. 4.

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While Burgoyne was thus anxiously looking forward to Clinton's energetic coöperation, that officer supposed he was only making a diversion in Burgoyne's favor, a feint to call off the enemy's attention from him; and thus it happened that in the decisive hour of the war, and after the signal had been given, only one arm was raised to strike, because two British commanders acted without unison; either through misconception of the orders they had received, or of what was expected of them in just such an emergency as the one that now presented itself.

Perhaps two armies have seldom remained so near together for so long a time without coming to blows, as the two now facing each other on the heights of Stillwater. The camps being little more than a mile apart, brought the hostile pickets so close together, that men strayed into the opposite lines unawares. Day and night there was incessant firing from the outposts, every hour threatened to bring on a battle. Half Burgoyne's soldiers were constantly under arms to repel the attack, which—in view of the desperate condition they found themselves placed in, of the steady progress from bad to worse—was rather hoped for than feared.

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Two weeks passed thus without news of Clinton. Burgoyne's provisions were now getting alarmingly low. If he staid where he was, in a few days, at most, he would be starved into surrendering. Again the ominous word "retreat" was heard around the camp-fires. The hospital was filled with wounded men. Hard duty and scant food were telling on those fit for duty. Lincoln's raid announced a new and dangerous complication. It was necessary to try something, for Gates's do-nothing policy was grinding them to powder.

A council was therefore called. It is a maxim, as old as history, that councils of war never fight. Some of Burgoyne's generals advised putting the Hudson between themselves and Gates, as the only means now left of saving the army; none, it is believed, advocated risking another battle.

Burgoyne could not bring himself to order a retreat without first making one more effort for victory. He dwelt strongly upon the difficulty of withdrawing the army in the face of so vigilant and powerful an enemy. He maintained his own opinion that even in order to secure an honorable retreat it would be necessary to fight, and it was so determined.

It is evident that Burgoyne nourished a secret hope that fortune might yet take a turn favorable

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to him; otherwise, it is impossible to account for his making this last and most desperate effort, under conditions even less favorable than had attended his attack of the 19th of September.

Fifteen hundred men and ten guns were chosen for the attempt. In plain language, Burgoyne started out to provoke a combat with an enemy greatly his superior in numbers, with less than half the force his former demonstration had been made with. His idea seems to have been to take up a position from which his cannon would reach the American works. After intrenching, it was his intention to bring up his heavy artillery, and open a cannonade which he was confident the enemy could not withstand, as their defensive works were chiefly built of logs. And out of this state of things, Burgoyne hoped to derive some substantial benefit.

This plan differed from that of the 19th of September, in that it looked chiefly to obtaining a more advantageous position; while on the former occasion it was attempted to force a way through or around the American left. The lesson of that day had not been lost on Burgoyne, who now meant to utilize his artillery to the utmost, rather than risk the inevitable slaughter that must ensue from an attempt to carry the American lines by storm.

Everything depended upon gaining the desired position before the Americans could make their dispositions to thwart the attempt.

The importance to the army of this movement induced Burgoyne to call his three best generals to his aid; so that nothing that experience could suggest, or skill attempt, should be left undone. It was kept a profound secret till the troops who were going out to fight were actually under arms. The rest of the army was to remain in the works; so that, if worst came to worst, the enemy might not reap any decided advantage from a victory gained over the fighting corps.

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It was near one o'clock, on the afternoon of the seventh, when Burgoyne marched out from his own right, toward the American left. He had reached an eminence rising at the right of the late battle-ground, and not far removed from Frazer's position on that day, when the pickets of Arnold's division discovered his approach, and gave the alarm. Having gained a favorable position for using his guns, Burgoyne halted, and formed his line.

Oct. 7.

Upon hearing that the British had advanced to within half a mile of his left, and were offering battle, Gates decided to accept the challenge, as he now felt strong enough to do so without fear for the result, and the behavior of his own troops in the previous battle had been such as to put an end to his doubts about their ability to cope with British soldiers. Morgan was therefore ordered to make a *détour* through the woods, and fall on the British right flank, while other troops were attacking on its left.

These movements were gallantly executed. At three o'clock, Burgoyne's artillery opened the battle; at four, the Americans charged the British position under a heavy fire of cannon and musketry. Again and again, the Continentals met the British bayonet without flinching. Never was a battle more manfully fought. Burgoyne faced death like the meanest soldier in the ranks. After some discharges, the British cannoners were shot down at their pieces, and the hill on which they stood was carried at the point of the bayonet.

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On his part, Morgan grappled with the British right, overthrew it after a fierce struggle, and drove it back upon the centre. In vain Frazer^[52] tried to stem the tide of defeat by throwing himself into the thickest of the fight. "That man," said Morgan, pointing him out to his marksmen, "must die." A rifle bullet soon gave the gallant Scot his death wound, and he was led from the field.

The combat had lasted scarce an hour. All Burgoyne's guns were taken. Of the fifteen hundred soldiers he had led into action, four hundred lay dead or dying around him. Frazer's fall had carried dismay among those who were still stubbornly yielding the ground to the victorious Americans. A retreat was sounded. The Americans followed on with loud shouts. For a few moments a rearguard fight was kept up, then the retreat became a rout, the rout a race, to see who should first reach the British lines.

Thus far the action had been maintained on our part, by the same troops who had fought the battle of September 19, and in part on the same ground. It was now to be transferred to the enemy's own camp.

Hardly had the British gained the shelter of their works, when the Americans, led on by Arnold, stormed them with reckless bravery. Gates had held Arnold back from the field from motives of envy and dislike; but Arnold, to whom the sound of battle was like the spur to the mettled courser, at last broke through all restraint. Leaping into the saddle, he spurred into the thickest of the fight before Gates could stop him.

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The point of attack was strongly defended by artillery, and the Americans here suffered their first repulse. Other troops came up. The assault soon began again all along the British line. Beaten off in one place, Arnold spurred over to the enemy's extreme right, where Breyman was posted behind a breastwork of logs and rails, that formed a right angle with the rest of the line. Calling on the nearest battalion to follow him, Arnold leaped his horse over the parapet. The Germans fired one volley and fled. Our troops took guns and prisoners. By this success they had gained an opening on Burgoyne's right and rear, precisely as he had meant to do by them. In this last assault Breyman was killed, and Arnold wounded.

The day was now too far spent for further efforts to be made on either side. Little by little, the angry roll of musketry sunk into silence. The battle was over.

[51] SIR HENRY CLINTON then commanded at New York, under the orders of Sir William Howe. Not having received orders to assist Burgoyne in any event, until he was about to engage with Washington for the possession of Philadelphia, Howe turned over the matter of assisting Burgoyne to Clinton, who was compelled to wait for the arrival of fresh troops, then on the way from England, before he could organize an expedition to attack our posts in the Highlands of the Hudson. See Introduction; also Note 1, "Facing Disaster" (p. 60).

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[52] GENERAL SIMON FRAZER was of Scotch birth, younger son of Frazer of Balnain. His actual rank on joining Burgoyne was lieutenant-colonel, 24th foot. With other field officers assigned to command brigades, he was made acting brigadier, and is therefore known as General Frazer, though Burgoyne was notified that this *local rank* would cease when his army joined Sir William Howe. Frazer's remains were disinterred and taken to England. The spot where he was wounded is marked by a monument, and indicates where he endeavored to make a stand after being driven from his first position. Anburey and Madame Riedesel give graphic accounts of his death and burial.

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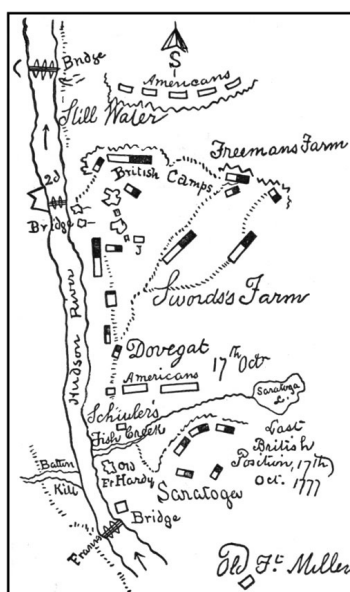
XV.

RETREAT AND SURRENDER.

Burgoyne had been everywhere foiled by the battle of the seventh. Instead of turning Gates's flank his own had been turned. Instead of thrusting Gates back upon the river, he would surely be forced there himself, in a few hours, at most. Instead, even, of dealing Gates such a blow as would favor a retreat, Burgoyne's situation was now more precarious than ever: it was more than precarious; it was next to hopeless.

It is again but too plain that Burgoyne had not taken defeat—such a defeat—seriously into account, or he would never have led out that gallant little column of fifteen hundred men; first, for victory, then, for an honorable retreat. His army was now like the wounded lion, whose expiring struggles the hunter watches at a distance, without fear, and without danger. All had been lost but honor.

The first and only thing to be done now was promptly to form a new line of defence, behind which the army could mask its retreat. This was skilfully and quietly done on the night after the battle, our troops not attempting to do more than hold the ground already won. In the morning they occupied the deserted works.



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THE RETREAT TO SARATOGA.

Burgoyne's new position stretched along the heights next the river, so as to cover the road to Saratoga. He had merely drawn back his centre and right, while his left wing remained stationary; and he now stood facing west, instead of south, as before the battle.

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The day passed in skirmishing, reconnoitring, and artillery firing. The Americans were feeling their way along the enemy's new front, while Burgoyne's every effort was

Oct. 8.

limited to keeping them at a distance, with his superior artillery, till night. On our side, his intentions were rather guessed than certainly known. His great problem was how to get his army over the Hudson undiscovered. It was supposed that he would attempt to retreat across his bridge as soon as it was dark. Our artillery, therefore, tried to destroy it with shot. Moreover, fourteen hundred men were crossed over to the east bank, and now stood ready to dispute Burgoyne's passage from that side of the river.

At sunset, General Frazer was buried^[53] inside a battery, on the brow of the heights, according to his dying wish. Chaplain Brudenell read the burial service, with our balls ploughing up the earth around him, and our cannon thundering the soldier's requiem from camp to camp.

At nine o'clock, the British army began its retreat along the river road, leaving its camp-fires burning behind it; profound silence was enjoined. To avoid confusion, the different corps simply moved off in the order in which they stood on the lines, or by their right. Upon finding that his crossing would be opposed by the troops who had passed over to the east bank, Burgoyne had decided to go back the way he came as far as Saratoga, and on fording the river at that place. Orders were therefore given to destroy the bridge. Just before day, his rearguard set fire to it, and marched off without interference. All the sick and wounded were left behind.

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In view of the fact that all of the enemy's movements announced a rapid retreat, the Americans seem to have shown a want of vigor in pushing the advantages they had won by the late battles. This hesitation may be in part accounted for by the other fact that both Arnold and Lincoln were disabled. Lincoln had been wounded while reconnoitring the enemy's right, on the eighth, with a view of passing a force round in his rear. Gates was thus deprived of his most efficient lieutenants at the moment when they were most needed. The British army could hardly have been placed in a more critical position; but, by keeping up a bold front, it managed to extricate itself without the loss of a man.

Rain began falling early the next morning. Burgoyne had marched but six miles, yet dallied till afternoon on the spot where he had halted early in the day. He then saw, to his inexpressible dismay, the same body of Americans^[54] whom he had seen opposite his encampment at Stillwater, now marching abreast of him, with the evident design of seizing the Saratoga ford before he could get to it. The road he meant to take was, therefore, already as good as in the enemy's hands.

Oct. 9.

Dovegat,
now
Coveville.

The discovery that he was being everywhere hemmed in hastened Burgoyne's departure. Much baggage and many wagons and tents were burned, in order that the army might march the faster. Like a ship, laboring with the gale, it was relieving itself of all unnecessary burdens.

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Pelted by the storm, in silence, and with downcast looks, the soldiers plodded wearily on, through mud and water, ankle deep. No tap of drum or bugle-call put life into their heavy tread. The sense of defeat and disgrace brooded over the minds of officers and men, as they stole away in darkness and gloom from an enemy for whom they had but lately felt such high disdain. Grief, shame, and indignation were the common lot of high and low. No word was spoken, except when the curt "Forward" of the officers passed along the ranks. All knew instinctively, that this retreat was but the prelude to greater disaster, which, perchance, was not far off.

The same evening, the bedraggled and footsore soldiers waded the Fishkill^[55] where the bridge had been, but was now destroyed, and bivouacked on the heights of Saratoga.^[56] Too weary even to light fires, to dry their clothing, or cook their suppers, they threw themselves on the wet ground to snatch a few hours' sleep; for, dark as it was, and though rain fell in torrents, the firing heard at intervals throughout the night told them that the Americans were dogging their footsteps, and would soon be up with them. It seemed as if the foe were never to be shaken off.

It was not till after daylight that the British artillery could ford the Fishkill with safety. The guns were then dragged up the heights and once more pointed toward the advancing enemy. Numbness and torpor seem to have pervaded the whole movement thus far. Now it was that Frazer's loss was most bitterly deplored, for he had often pledged himself to bring off the army in safety, should a retreat become necessary. He had marked out, and intrenched this very position, in which the army now found its last retreat. Almost twenty-four hours had been consumed in marching not quite ten miles, or at a much slower rate of progress than Burgoyne had censured Breyman for making to Baum's relief, at Bennington. Burgoyne seemed to find satisfaction in showing that he would not be hurried.

Oct. 10.

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The army took up its old positions along the heights into which the Fishkill cuts deeply, as it runs to the Hudson. Being threatened in front, flank, and rear, Burgoyne had to form three separate camps, facing as many different ways. One fronted the Fishkill and commanded the usual fording-place. A second looked east at the enemy posted across the Hudson; a third faced the west, where the ground rose above the camps, and hid itself in a thick forest.

Though he secured his camps as well as he could, Burgoyne meant to make no delay here. But it was no longer in his power to control his own acts. The want of energy shown in the retreat had given the Americans time to close every avenue of escape against him.

Let us note how the fate of armies is decided. Active pursuit did not begin until the morning of the ninth, when the retreat was first discovered. A start of ten hours had thus been gained by the British. Their artillery had so cut up the roads as to render them next to impassable for our troops. Frequent halts had to be made to mend broken bridges. From these causes, even so late as the morning of the tenth, our army had advanced but three miles from the battle-ground. But Burgoyne had marched, when he marched at all, like a general who means to be overtaken. Four

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thousand men were being pushed around his right; an equal number followed in his rear; while fourteen hundred more menaced with destruction any attempt he might make to ford the river.

No choice being left but to continue the retreat by the west bank, pioneers were sent out, under a strong escort, to make the road passable.

But the golden moment had already flown. By this time Gates's van had come up with Burgoyne. Morgan's corps had crossed the Fishkill at a point above the British camps, had taken post within rifle-shot, and had thus fastened upon the enemy a grip never more to be shaken off.

As a last resort, the British general decided to attempt a night retreat, leaving behind the artillery he had so persistently dragged after him when the fate of his army was hanging on its speed alone. Before this desperate venture could be put to trial, worse news came to hand. It was learned that Stark, with two thousand men, was in possession of Fort Edward, and of all the fords below it. Turn what way he would, Burgoyne found a foe in his path.

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Even General Burgoyne now saw no way open but surrender; either he must do this, or let his soldiers be slaughtered where they stood. Cannon and rifle shot were searching every corner of his camp; retreat was cut off; his provisions could be made to last but a day or two longer at most; the bateaux were destroyed; his animals were dying of starvation, and their dead bodies tainting the air his soldiers breathed; water could only be had at the risk of life or limb, as the American sharpshooters picked off every one who attempted to fetch it from the river; and no more than thirty-five hundred men could be mustered to repel an assault;—a crisis had now been reached which loudly called on the British general, in the name of humanity, to desist from further efforts to maintain so hopeless a struggle.

Oct. 13.

Burgoyne called his officers together in council. The absence of such men as Frazer, Baum, Breyman, Ackland, Clarke, and others from the meeting, must have brought home to the commanding general, as nothing else could, a sense of the calamities that had befallen him; while the faces of the survivors no less ominously prefigured those to come. A heavy cannonade was in progress. Even while the council was deliberating, a cannon-ball crashed through the room among them, as if to enjoin haste in bringing the proceedings to a close. The council listened to what was already but too well known. Already the finger of fate pointed undeviatingly to the inevitable result. A general lassitude had fallen upon the spirits of the soldiers. The situation was manifestly hopeless to all.

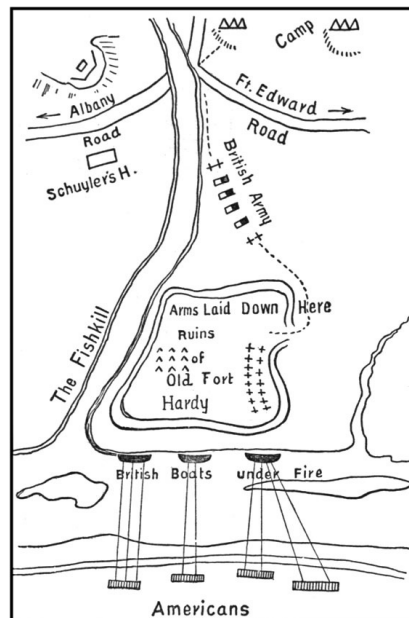
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There could be but one opinion. Enough had been done for honor. All were agreed that only a surrender could save the army.

Without more delay, an officer was sent to General Gates. At first he would listen only to an unconditional surrender. This was indignantly rejected. Two days of suspense followed to both armies. Indeed, the vanquished seemed dictating terms to the conqueror. But if the British dreaded a renewal of hostilities, the Americans knew that Clinton's forces were nearing Albany from below. Gates lowered his demands. The British army was allowed the honors of war, with liberty to return to England, on condition of not serving against the United States during the war. These terms were agreed to, and the treaty was duly signed on the seventeenth.

Oct. 14.

Burgoyne's situation when gathering up his trophies, and issuing his presumptuous proclamation at Ticonderoga, compared with the straits to which his reverses had now brought him—a failure before his king and country, a captain stripped of his laurels by the hand he professed to despise, a petitioner for the clemency of his conqueror—affords a striking example of the uncertain chances of war. It really seemed as if fortune had only raised Burgoyne the higher in order that his fall might be the more destructive at last.



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WHERE THE SURRENDER TOOK PLACE.

FOOTNOTES:

- [53] FRAZER'S BURIAL would not have been molested had our artillerists known what was going forward. Seeing so many persons collected in the redoubt, they naturally directed their fire upon it. [Pg 135]
- [54] THIS BODY OF AMERICANS was led by Colonel John Fellows, whom Gates had ordered to seize the fords as high up as Fort Edward.
- [55] FISHKILL, or Fish Creek, is the outlet of Saratoga Lake. Though a rapid mill-stream, there were several fords. The precipitous banks were a greater obstacle to troops than the stream itself.
- [56] HEIGHTS OF SARATOGA are in what is now called Schuylerville, a village owing its prosperity to the water-power of the Fishkill. At the time of the surrender, there were only a few houses strung along the river road. Schuyler's house stood in the angle formed by the entrance of the Fishkill into the Hudson. On arriving at Saratoga, Burgoyne occupied this house as his headquarters, but burned it to the ground immediately on the appearance of the Americans. On the opposite (north) bank of the Fishkill was old Fort Hardy, built during the French War, to cover the ford of the Hudson at this place. Within this fort, Burgoyne's army laid down its arms, October 17, 1777. On the heights back of the river a granite obelisk, one hundred and fifty-four feet high, has been built to commemorate the event.
- [57] CLINTON'S FORCES carried Forts Montgomery and Clinton, in the Highlands, by assault on the sixth. Having thus broken down all opposition to their advance up the Hudson, they reached Kingston (Esopus) on the thirteenth, burned it, and were within a few hours' sail of Albany when news of Burgoyne's surrender caused them to retreat down the river.

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XVI.

THE SEVENTEENTH OF OCTOBER, 1777.

The closing scene of this most memorable campaign is thus described by one of the actors in it. He says,—

"About ten o'clock we marched out, according to treaty, with drums beating, and the honors of war; but the drums seemed to have lost their former inspiring sounds, and though we beat the Grenadiers' March, which not long before was so animating, yet now it seemed by its last feeble effort as if almost ashamed to be heard on such an occasion.

"I shall never forget the appearance of the American troops on our marching past them. A dead silence reigned through their numerous columns. I must say their decent behavior to us, so greatly fallen, merited the utmost praise.... Not one of them was uniformly clad. Each had on the clothes he wore in the fields, the church, or the tavern; they stood, however, like soldiers, well arranged, and with a military air, in which there was but little to find fault with. All the muskets had bayonets, and the sharpshooters had rifles. The men all stood so still that we were filled with wonder. Not one of them made a single motion as if he would speak with his neighbor. Nay, more, all the lads that stood there in rank and file, kind nature had formed so trim, so slender, so nervous, that it was a pleasure to look at them, and we were all surprised at the sight of such a handsome, well-formed race. The whole nation has a natural turn for war and a soldier's life. [Pg 138]

"The generals wore uniforms, and belts which designated their rank, but most of the colonels were in their ordinary clothes, with a musket and bayonet in hand, and a cartridge-box or powder-horn slung over the shoulder. There were regular regiments which, for want of time or cloth, were not yet equipped in uniform. These had standards, with various emblems and mottoes, some of which had a very satirical meaning for us."

The number of regular troops, British and German, who laid down their arms at Saratoga was 5,591. The camp-followers amounted to two hundred more. Forty-two pieces of artillery, nearly five thousand muskets, with ammunition for both, fell into the victors' hands.

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XVII.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF DEFEAT.

We come now to the reasons why Burgoyne's surrender proved decisive to the cause of American independence.

Our opening chapter states that England took Canada from France in 1759, and annexed it to her own dominions in 1763. This conquest came about through what is known in history as the Seven Years' War, which had not only raised all Europe in arms, but had lighted the flames of war throughout our own continent also. The great battle was fought on the plains of Quebec. Victory decided for England. Defeated France had, at last, to give up Canada to her ancient enemy.

France came out of this conflict sorely humbled. She was brooding over her defeat, when the American colonies took up arms. The colonists at once turned with confidence to France; now was her chance to cripple England, to get back what she had lost, to gain the friendship of a grateful people, and make them her debtor for all time. But France would not go to war unless assured that her doing so would turn the scale against England. The memory of her humiliation was too recent, the chances of the contest too doubtful, to admit of any other course of conduct on her part. Meanwhile, she gave us much secret help, but none openly. The course of events was, however, closely watched, and when Burgoyne's surrender was known in Paris, it was seen that the day of revenge had come at last. Doubt and hesitation gave way before the general demand for war. Franklin was openly received at Versailles. Within three months, the French court had acknowledged our independence. Her armies and fleets prepared to give us active aid, and it was not doubted that her example would soon be followed by Spain and Holland.

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Thus, Burgoyne's surrender gained for us at once recognition as a nation, and the alliance of the first military power of Europe.

The effect of the surrender in England is thus described by Gibbon, the historian, who was then sitting in Parliament: "Dreadful news indeed! An English army of nearly ten thousand men laid down their arms, and surrendered, prisoners of war, on condition of being sent to England, and of never serving against America. They had fought bravely, and were three days without eating. Burgoyne is said to have received three wounds; General Frazer, with two thousand men, killed; Colonel Ackland likewise killed. A general cry for peace."

England now gave up the colonies for lost. In truth, it needed no prophet to foretell that what England could not do before, she could do still less now, with France against her. From this time forward, the war was carried on more to save the nation's pride than with any hope of success. The military policy underwent an instant change; it now looked rather to destroying our commerce and ports, than to marching large armies into the interior of the country, to meet with a like fate to Burgoyne's. Howe was ordered to evacuate Philadelphia. In Parliament, a plan was hurriedly put forth to grant everything the Americans had asked for, except independence. As Gibbon well said, the two greatest countries of Europe were fairly running a race for the favor of America.

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The movements taking place on the continent showed everywhere a feeling hostile to England. No nation was ever so friendless as she, none had so richly deserved the coldness with which the other powers now treated her. Spain and Holland were getting ready to follow the lead of France. It was well known that England could not carry on the war without the aid of mercenaries. The King of Prussia and the Empress of Austria now refused to permit any more German soldiers to go to America. In the threatening condition of affairs at home, England could not spare another army for so distant a field. Whichever way England looked, she saw either open enemies or half friends. Everywhere the sky was dark for her, and bright for us.

At home the surrender of Burgoyne thrilled the whole land, for all felt it to be the harbinger of final triumph. The people went wild with joy; salvos of artillery, toasts, bonfires, illuminations, everywhere testified to the general exultation. The name of France was hailed with acclamations. At once a sense of national dignity and solidity took the place of uncertainty and isolation. Now and henceforth, the flag of the United States was known and respected; abroad as at home, on the sea as on the land.

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Burgoyne's disaster has been charged to the grossest carelessness on the part of some under official of the British War Office. It is said that the orders for Sir William Howe were never put in the despatch bag at all, but lay forgotten until the catastrophe at Saratoga brought them to light. On such trifles does the fate of nations sometimes hang. Certainly, greater unity of purpose in the two generals might have given the history of the campaign a different reading. But all such conjectures must fall before the inexorable logic of accomplished results. The world has long since passed upon the merits of the great conflict which set America free. Its verdict is recorded. The actors are but as dust in the balance.

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Transcriber's Note

Some inconsistent hyphenation and spelling in the original document has been preserved.

Typographical errors corrected in the text:

Page 5 126 changed to 124
Page 5 143 changed to 139
Page 143 followes changed to follows
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