CHAPTER VI – THE RIVAL FORCES

BEFORE landing with John Burgoyne at Quebec, let us consider what was the military purpose of the expedition from Canada and why was the Hudson route taken? It has been generally assumed that it was a scheme to split the rebellion in two, in other words to disunite the United States. It is all very well to talk airily of holding the line of the Hudson, and the strategical[1] advantages thereof. It is a very long line, and to hold it, even by a series of blockhouses, would have immobilized a very large number of troops and have required a fleet of gunboats. Germain's words were, "With a view of quelling the rebellion as soon as possible it has become highly necessary that the most speedy junction of the two armies should be effected." That is to say he wanted the troops in Canada to join Howe's Army in the main theater of operations, to use a modern phrase. But, if speed was necessary, why were not the troops in Canada taken south by sea? For two reasons, first because King George (and what Majesty said[2] went in those days) "greatly disliked the idea," second because Whitehall was uneasy about another possible attack upon Canada. And then there was the magic of the name Ticonderoga, a name familiar even to the gamblers at White's and the idlers in the coffee houses. Just as Belgium was destined by nature to be the cockpit of Europe, so does Ticonderoga always crop up in the history books when there was fighting in North America. In the French and Indian wars it had always been a jumping-off place for invasions of Canada by land. Germain considered it as "one of those posts necessary to possess upon the frontier in order to secure this province [i.e., Quebec] from future insults." So one may safely say that the object of the expedition was to kill two birds with one stone, to get Burgoyne's force down into the fighting country and by so doing to prevent another invasion of Canada.

Burgoyne arrived in Quebec on May 6, 1777. The force he was to command consisted of about eight thousand men: four thousand British, 9th, 20th, 21st, 24th, 47th, 53rd and 62nd Regiments; three thousand Germans; one hundred and fifty Canadians, and five hundred Red Indians. He had also a large artillery train. Some critics said that he was overartilleried.

The Noble Red Man is a myth. Two people are chiefly responsible for this fable of his nobility. First Pope, with the fine passage which begins:

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind,

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[1] By the way the words "strategy" and "strategical" only date back to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

[2] See page 72

and which ends:

To be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire,
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

The other is Fenimore Cooper with the romances which have caused so many boys to dress up in war-paint and tomahawk their little sisters' dolls. The Noble Red Indian of the late eighteenth century certainly did not ask for "Seraph's Fire," unless there was any particular brand of rum of the period so called. What Mr. J. W. Steele, a great authority on the Indians, said of the descendants may equally be said of the ancestors: "Brave only in superior numbers or in ambush, honest only in being a consummate hypocrite, merry only at the sight of suffering inflicted by his own hand, friendly only through cunning and hospitable never, and above all sublimely mendacious and a liar always, the Indian as he really is to those who, unfortunately, know him, seems poor material out of which to manufacture a hero or frame a romance. Mollified by semi-annual gifts and pacified by periodical talks about the Great Father and blarney about brothers, he has only the one redeeming fact upon his record, that he has never been tamed and never been a servant. Neither has the hyena."

Those who came in contact with the Indians of Burgoyne's day give a most unpleasant account of them. The description which Hadden gives of them in their war-paint reminds one of nothing so much as that delightful creature the King in his personation of The King's Camelopard or The Royal Nonesuch! ! ! He, it will be remembered, was "painted all over, ring. streaked and striped, all sorts of colours, as splendid as a rainbow. And—but never mind the rest of his outfit, it was just wild, but it was awful funny."

Lieutenant Hadden is less delicate than Huckleberry Finn. He gives curious details, which can not be quoted, of their costume and ornaments. The Indian ladies, he says, "cover themselves with grease as a defense against the Mousqueato's and other Flies: this makes them far from tempting." They had, too, the odd notion that it was fashionable to turn their feet inward, so as to make the toes of each foot meet. Another English observer of the same date was particularly struck by the Indian style of dancing. "Antick Postures and very high Bounds that would puzzle our best Harlequins to imitate." He found their war-cries offensive, "the most horrid Song or Cry that ever I heard, the Sound would strike Terror into the stoutest Heart."

A howl went up against the employment of Indians; what Chatham said, later on, is typical. "We had sullied and tarnished the arms of Britain for ever by employing savages in our service, by drawing them up in a British line, and mixing the scalping-knife and the tomahawk with the sword and the fire-lock." He also denied that they had been employed against the French. It is rather sad to read that when Lord Bute heard of this denial he exclaimed, "Good Heavens, did Pitt really deny it? Is it possible? Why, I have here lying by me letters of his that sing Peans on the advantages we gained by employing Indians in the Canadian war."[1] And, as a matter of fact, America was equally guilty in this respect with Britain. The Second Provincial Congress in April, 1775, sent an address to Johoiakin Mothskin (delightful name!) "and the rest of our brethren the Indians, natives of Stockbridge," urging them to "take up the hatchet" in the cause of Liberty and empowering Colonel Paterson to present "each of you that have enlisted in the service with a blanket and a ribbon as a testimony of our affection." News of this reached England and on July twenty-fourth Dartmouth wrote to Colonel Guy Johnson instructing him "to take such steps as may induce them [the Indians] to take up the Hatchet against His Majesty's Rebellious Subjects in America." These Stockbridge Indians were queer folk. Some of them took the very un-Indian step of asking Congress to take care of their money, lest they should spend it on strong drink. The Mohawk Indians were also approached, though it is doubtful if one argument used, the sins of papistry and idolatry as introduced into Canada, had any great weight with them. Washington himself, in July, 1775, saw a Chief of the Caghnewaga tribe, of the Montreal neighborhood, who said his people would give all the help they could; and in June, 1776, a Committee recommended that "the Indians shall be allowed £50 for any prisoner they shall take at Niagara," and in August of the same year a Mr. Edwards was empowered formally to enlist Stockbridge Indians "and to indulge them with liberty to join this [Washington's] or the Northern Army, or both, as their inclination may lead." So, as far as the employment of Indians goes, it would seem that England and America were "all square." But the Indians for whom Burgoyne had stipulated in his *Thoughts* were to prove, as we shall see, a very sorry corps, worse, in fact, at a pinch, than useless.

The Germans have very often in history been hirelings. In the eighteenth century they would be farmed out as soldiers by their overlords, just as, in more modern times, they would hire themselves out as waiters, and very good waiters too. The subsidies that England used to pay for German troops kept many a petty German court in pumpernickel, hams, sausages, sauerkraut, Rhenish wine and mistresses. The German princes were quite frank about it. The Landgrave of

[1] On the authority of Bute's daughter, Lady Louisa Stuart, quoted in *Prime Minister and his Son*. There is a pleasant caricature showing a Red Indian and George III each gnawing an end of the same human thigh bone. It is entitled "The Allies—par nobile Fratrum."

Hesse, in 1777, complained bitterly that a certain "Colonel M." had not lost a single man from his corps. His Hessians must remember that they were Hessians and fight to the last man. Why? Because, of course, more recruits, each worth thirty marks when recruited, and another thirty when killed, wounded or captured, would then be wanted.[1] And most desirable too, seeing that he (the Landgrave) had just engaged La Signora F. to come from Italy at a salary of five hundred guineas a year to-well, he does not say for what, perhaps to teach him Italian. The Duke of Brunswick was terribly distressed when a number of his soldiers were taken prisoners. He hoped that the British Government would not for one moment dream of having them exchanged and sent back to Germany—this would have a most unpleasant effect and create an unfortunate, sensation. If they *must* come back, for heaven's sake let them recuperate in, say, the Isle of Wight, be joined there by other German recruits-and then sent back to fight in America. Most of the German officers could just write, knew no English and had but a smattering of indifferent French. Riedesel, for example, began a letter, *"Le courier qui prendra cette lettre avec.* As one of them said, "We are neither fish nor flesh."

They were indeed a nondescript crowd. One of them wrote that his fellow recruits were "a runaway son of the Muses from Jena, a bankrupt tradesman from Vienna, a fringe-maker from Hanover, a discharged secretary from the Post Office at Gotha, a monk from Wurzburg, an upper steward from Meningen, a Prussian sergeant of Hussars, and a cashiered Hessian Major." It is difficult to imagine a more awkward squad.

The best thing about the Brunswickers and Hessians was their love for animals and their admiration of the American ladies, of whom one of them said, "There is scarcely one in ten who is not both beautiful and elegant." Their simplicity also is to be remarked. A certain Colonel von Heeringen, said, "Lord Stirling is not really a Lord and General Putnam is a butcher." This he could not understand. They were certainly solid troops, too solid for the backwoods, with their "haversacks, long-skirted coats, long swords, enormous canteens, grenadier caps with heavy brass ornaments, much hair-powder and pomatum and great clumsy queues." They were also stolid. Cresswell, who saw the Hessians in 1777 at New York, writes, "One of their Corporals ran the Gauntlet eight times through the Regiment, he had upwards of 2,000 lashes which he bore with the greatest resolution and firmness, not a single muscle of his face discomposed all the time. They appear to be a set of cruel, unfeeling people."

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[1] Nothing was paid for deserters. No doubt the Hessians were sternly commanded to remember that the blackest crime of which a soldier can be guilty is desertion.

THE RIVAL FORCES

The two chief German officers with Burgoyne were General Riedesel (not forgetting Mrs. General Riedesel of whom more anon) and Colonel Breyman. The principal English officers were Major-General Phillips, a very distinguished gunner, and Brigadier-Generals Fraser and Hamilton. The Adjutant-General was Colonel Kingston, the Quartermaster-General Colonel Money. Burgoyne's aides-de-camp were Sir Francis Clark (killed at Saratoga) and Lord Petersham. Major Lord Balcarres commanded the Light Infantry and Major Acland[1] the Grenadiers. Phillips was second in command, so appointed by Sir Guy Carleton, who, in spite of the natural mortification he felt at being passed over in favor of Burgoyne, did, in the most loyal and self-forgetting manner, everything he possibly could to make the expedition a success. Lord North wrote to him, August 3, 1777, "All the letters from General Burgoyne and the other officers of the northern army are full of the warmest acknowledgements of the cordial, zealous and effectual assistance they have received from you." North was a gentleman; Germain was not.

At a very early date Burgoyne felt uneasy about the Canadians. On May fourteenth he wrote to Germain:

"I cannot speak with much confidence of the military assistance I am to look for from the Canadians. The only corps yet instituted, or that I am informed can at present be instituted, are three Independent Companies of 100 men each, officered by Seigneurs of the country who are well-chosen; but they have not been able to engage many volunteers. The men are chiefly drafted from the militia, according to a late regulation of the Legislative Council. Those I have yet seen afford no promise of arms awkward, ignorant, disinclined to the service, and spiritless. Various reasons are assigned for this change in the natives since the time of the French government. It may partly be owing to a disuse of arms, but I believe principally to the unpopularity of their Seigneurs, and to the poison which the emissaries of the rebels have thrown into their mind."

He ends with a handsome and well-deserved compliment to Sir Guy:

"I should think myself deficient in justice and in honour, were I to close my letter without mentioning the sense I entertain of General Carleton's

[1] The Acland family is a very good example of those county families which, from Cumberland to Cornwall, were the backbone of England. The names of such families do not very often appear in the history books.They do not buy peerages; they have never made fortunes when England has been at war; they do not cozen and cheat and swindle; they have never (they would say "Thank heaven!") produced a Waw or a Shells, they have sometimes lived hard, and sometimes drunk hard, but they have always sent their cadets into the army and their bones lie buried all over the world. The Aaronsteins and Isaacsteins who have bought many of their estates will, perhaps, in time learn to follow their example.

conduct; that he was anxiously desirous of leading the military operations out of the province, is easily to be discerned; but his deference to His Majesty's decision, and his zeal to give effect to his measures in my hands, are equally manifest, exemplary and satisfactory." And on May twenty-sixth he writes from Montreal on the same subject (the Canadians) to Carleton, stating that the men are deserting* already and adding:

"When the plan of my expedition was framed, the ideas of Government respecting armed Canadians went to six times the number. . . . Without that dependence I have reason to believe the proportion of Regulars would have been larger. To remedy in some measure this deficiency I have to propose to your Excellency a Corvée of a thousand men to attend the expedition for a limited time for the purposes of labour and transport."

Carleton in his reply from Quebec of May twenty-ninth could not resist the temptation to get in a dig at the Minister who had treated him so scurvily:

"The Desertion you give me Notice of in your Letter does not surprise me, it has been the same here, and was no more than what I expected; if Government laid any great stress upon assistance from the Canadians, for carrying on the present war, it surely was not upon Information proceeding from me. Experience might have taught them and it did not require that to convince me, these People had been governed with too loose a Rein for many years, and had imbibed too much of the American spirit of Licentiousness and Independence, administered by a numerous and turbulent Faction here, to be suddenly restored to a proper and desirable Subordination."

But with the exception of Canadian and Indian, *Arcades ambo,* it was a fine army and started with every prospect of success.

The Americans began the War of Independence with no army. This may seem, and is, a drawback so far as fighting goes, but on the other hand it has its compensations. If a nation has no army it also has no preconceived, dry-as-dust, text-book ideas about Strategy and Tactics. These two branches of military study, about which thousands and thousands of books have been written, are, fundamentally, horse sense, and in that the Americans were not lacking, especially those who did not live in the towns. When you are painfully aware that the retention of your scalp and your daily dinner depend upon your ability to know instinctively when it is the right moment to come in out of the rain and upon your skill with your musket, you imperceptibly acquire a knowledge

*Later on some of them who were captured at Bennington actually enlisted in Moses Hazen's Regiment, at Albany.

of strategy and tactics in daily life which are excellent foundations upon which to work when it comes to war. You lack discipline, of course, but the Drill Sergeant will soon put *that* right. The United States in due course got their Drill Sergeant in the shape of that excellent old German Baron von Steuben, who in himself alone was worth any number of the Hessian and Brunswick regiments which fought on the other side. The Boers in South Africa were in much the same case as the Americans, and the Boer War was not won in a month. I was told by a friend who served in it, and who may perhaps have been pulling my leg, that their *corps d'élite,* their Grenadier Guards as it were, were clad in seedy old top-coats and had on their heads even seedier toppers. But they were excellent shots.

That remarkable observer, Robert Jackson, who visited America during the war and who sized up the nations of the world, ancient and modern, from a recruiting officer's point of view, has some very sensible reflections on the "Military Character of the People of North America." Briefly—for he was a long-winded old gentleman and when on his travels was always stopping to make notes about feminine "limbs"—his remarks are that the Americans had no tactics, or knowledge of maneuver, no discipline, which they abhorred, and would rather shoot from cover than in ranks in the open. On the other hand, they were wonderfully expert marksmen, far more so than the British and Germans opposed to them. They had great knowledge of wood-craft and of the nature of their country and consequently made excellent "partizans" or "guerrillas." They were, in short, Irregulars. Wars between Irregulars and Regulars, between Common Sense and Text-Books, are always interesting to read of, and as a rule take a long time to come to an end. It took the Russians about sixty years' continuous fighting to subdue the mountaineers of the Frosty Caucasus, and I do not think it would have been safe to ask any Russian general of that day, "Is the Caucasian played out?"

But the general opinion in England at the time, in spite of Bunker Hill, was that the Americans would put up but a poor fight. Wolfe had given them a very bad character; in August, 1758, he wrote: "There is no depending on them in action. They fall down dead in their own dirt and desert by battalions, officers and all. Such rascals as these are rather an encumbrance than any real strength to an army." The Sandwich man followed suit. "They are raw, undisciplined, cowardly men." I have already quoted Charles Lee's words of warning; in another letter, written before the outbreak of hostilities to Burke, he said: "If I have any judgment the people of New England are this day more calculated to form irresistible conquering armies than any people on the face of the globe. Even the appearance of their individuals is totally changed since first I knew them. Formerly they had a slouching, slovenly air. Now every

peasant has his hair smartly dressed, is erect and soldierlike in his air and gait. . . . I shall say nothing of the formidable numbers of Light Infantry, undoubtedly the best in the world, which their back provinces can produce. In short, it is my persuasion that, should the people of England be infatuated enough to suffer their misrulers to proceed in their measures, this country may scorch her fingers but they themselves will perish in the flames."

Barré, who had served (and lost an eye) in North America, said in the House he had seen as good regiments of Militia there as ever he had seen of Regulars. He also brought out the democratic nature of the Americans by a quaint anecdote; "I remember an officer of my acquaintance going to pay his respects to the commanding officer of a fort: when he came to it he sent for the barber to shave him, in order that he might clean himself and look a little smart before he waited on his Excellency. He was somewhat in a hurry, and desired the barber to make haste, for he had some business with the commanding officer of the fort. The barber said, 'Sir, you need not lose your time, you may as well disclose your business now, for I am the commanding officer.' "

The British Army has never been democratic to this extent. Which has often puzzled people. A few years ago a Member of Parliament, a native of a quarter of the globe not so very far from that island "where only man is vile," when the question of Army Agents was under discussion in the House of Commons, asked indignantly, "Is British Officer too proud, too aristocratic to go for pay to Post Office Savings Bank?" The eighteenth century Mr. Hansard would, I think, have interpolated "Here a great roar of laughter," for I do not think we are likely to see, at all events in my time, the Officers of His Majesty's Guards queueing up outside a post-office in order to draw their pay.

The drawback of course to the American system of engaging troops was that when the men's period of service was up they melted away. But for this, and the weather, Arnold might have captured Quebec. To quote Mr. Harris Dickson, "Minute-men volunteered, quite a bunch of them. They came in a minute and stayed about a minute. Every day Washington had a different army from the one of yesterday and generally smaller." Why? Because the minute-man "hiked home." I think Washington's most amazing feat was that he created an army; apart from his services in the field he was the Carnot of the United States and did for them what Lord Kitchener by the mere magic of his name did for England.

Washington's *Official Letters to the Honourable American Congress* give us a vivid idea of his difficulties, In the earlier letters there is almost on every page an allusion to scarcity of powder, arms, tents, camp-kettles, money, clothing and blankets. The men are in a state of nakedness, he has no accurate

maps, the men have to be sent to their homes without their pay, and some of them nearly mutinied for this reason; and "limited enlistment" is a curse. He writes on December 20, 1776, "Ten days more will put an end to the existence of our army." His officers, too, were a source of worry; one Brigadier was "blind and deaf," and "if I send an officer to collect the sick and scattered of his regiment, it is 10 to 1 but he neglects his duty, goes home on pleasure or business, and the next I hear of him is that he has resigned—furloughs are no more attended to than if there was no limitation of time." The militia is a "broken staff" consisting of "men just dragged from the tender scenes of domestic life, unaccustomed to the din of arms, but accustomed to unbounded freedom and no control." They not only deserted, but set a fashion in desertion. Another worry to Washington was provided by the French soldiers of fortune who came in swarms from "Old France and the Islands," hoping to get commissions. "You cannot conceive what a weight these kind of people are upon the service and upon me in particular. Few of them have any knowledge of the branches which they profess to understand and those that have are entirely useless as officers from their ignorance of the English language." And what is more, they declined to learn it. On the top of this Howe had, for once, two bright ideas. He offered sixteen dollars "bounty" to any man who would desert, and tried to get counterfeit money into circulation among the Americans, just as William Pitt did with the forged assignats in 1795, at the time of the projected expedition to Quiberon. Washington had, indeed, a very difficult task.

But Burgoyne, whom we have left sharpening his quill pen and perhaps, in his leisure, preparing Siege Operations against some Mrs. Commissary, also had his difficulties, one of them of a very serious character indeed. On May nineteenth he wrote from Montreal to General Harvey: he is much pleased with the exertions made during the winter, everything is well forward, and the troops are in health and good spirits. Sir Guy Carleton has done everything he possibly could to assist, though it is evident that "he thinks he has some cause of resentment for the general tenor of treatment he has received from some of the ministers."

He proceeds:

"My intention is, during my advance to Ticonderoga, and siege of that post, for a siege I apprehend it must be, to give all possible jealousy on the side of Connecticut. If I can by manoeuvre make them suspect that after the reduction of Ticonderoga my, views are pointed that way, it may make the Connecticut forces very cautious of leaving their own frontiers, and much facilitate my progress to Albany. I mention this intention only to Lord George and yourself, and I do it lest from any intelligence of my motions that may reach England indirectly, it should be supposed I have suffered myself to be diverted from the

main object of my orders. The King and his Majesty's ministers may rest assured that whatever demonstrations I may endeavour to impose upon the enemy, I shall really make no movement that can procrastinate my progress to Albany."

He then adds the very significant paragraph:

"One thing more occurs. I had the surprise and mortification to find a paper handed about at Montreal, publishing the whole design of the campaign, almost as accurately as if it had been copied from the Secretary of State's letter. My own caution has been such that not a man in my own family [1] has been let into the secret. Sir Guy Carleton's I am confident, has been equal; I am therefore led to doubt whether imprudence has not been committed from private letters from England, and wish you would ask my friend D'Oyley,[2] to whom my very affectionate compliments, whether there is any person within the line of ministerial communication that he can suspect to be so unguarded? It is not of great consequence here, except as far as regards St. Leger's expedition; but such a trick may be of most prejudicial consequence in other cases, and should be guarded against."

Though Burgoyne tends to make light of it, probably guessing who was responsible, this was very serious indeed. It is confirmed by Lieutenant Anburey who, writing to a friend, says: "We have more dangerous enemies at home[3] than any we have to encounter abroad; for all transactions that are to take place are fully known before they are given out in orders, and I make no doubt you will be as much surprised as the General was when I tell you that the whole operations of the ensuing campaign were canvassed for several days before he arrived, while he supposed that he was communicating an entire secret." In fact, everybody appears to have known the whole plan of campaign—except Sir William Howe!

How did this secret come out? Well, it is not difficult to guess. Statesmen at this date were extraordinarily casual. It is related of Lord North, that easy-going nobleman, that he mislaid a most important document. Search was made in all likely places, but in vain. Finally it was found lying on the floor of his water closet. To quote the old cliché: "Comment is superfluous." It might be added that Queen Victoria's Lord Salisbury was quite as casual as Lord North. It is told of him that when asked to return a most secret document, he

[1] i. e., staff. See Note on page 57.

[2] A colleague of "lownging" John Pownall.

[3] General Canonge, writing of Hannibal, said exactly the same thing: "Hannibal had two enemies, Rome and Carthage."

replied that he thought he had left it in the pocket of an old coat which he had given away.

On the same day, May twelfth, that Burgoyne wrote to General Harvey, he also wrote to Germain reporting progress and stating his intentions:

"The only delay is occasioned by the impracticability of the roads, owing to late extraordinary heavy, rains, and this difficulty will be speedily removed, by exerting the services of the parishes as soon as the weather clears. In the mean time I am employing every means that water carriage will admit for drawing the troops and stores towards their point. I trust, I shall have vessels sufficient to move the army and stores together, and in that case, will take post at once, within sight of Ticonderoga, and only make use of Crown Point for my hospital and magazine. A continuation of intelligence from different spies and deserters, confirms the design of the enemy to dispute Ticonderoga vigorously. They are also building bowgallies at Fort George, for the defence of that Lake, etc., fortifying on the road to Skenesborough. It is consigned to the New England colonies to furnish supplies of men and provision to oppose the progress of my army, and they have undertaken the task, upon condition of being exempt from supplying Mr. Washington's main army. It is my design, while advancing to Ticonderoga, and during the siege of that post, for a siege I apprehend it must be, to give all possible jealousy on the side of Connecticut."

He then repeats what he had said in his letter to General Harvey, quoted above.

It will be remembered that Burgoyne in his *Thoughts* suggested an expedition by Lake Ontario and Oswego to the Mohawk River as a diversion.[1] It finally was decided that this was to be more than a "diversion," it was intended that it should join Burgoyne and Howe at Albany. Before starting with Gentleman Johnny for Ticonderoga, let us see how this diversion fared. Fort Stanwix, better known as Fort Schuyler, was the key to the Mohawk Valley and when St. Leger set out to capture it, it had a garrison of some seven hundred and fifty men under Colonel Gansevoort. St. Leger had a mixed force under British, Canadians, Germans and Indians, in all about seventeen hundred men. The Indians, amounting to seven hundred or so, were led by a chief called Thayendanegea, or Joseph Brant. Colonel Gansevoort's position was not happy. He was surrounded by "inimical Indians," his stock of powder was low, most of the beef had gone bad and many of the bullets did not "suit the fire-locks." And, a minor point, the garrison had no flag, but this was easily remedied by making

[1] See page 72

one out of odd scraps of red, white and blue cloth. [1] His chief strength was the fort itself, a square, log-built, tough proposition, and so St. Leger found it. He arrived before it on August third—he had left Montreal in the middle of June—and the first thing he did was to send in a proclamation. The hand that drew this up was the hand of St. Leger, but the voice was the voice of Burgoyne;[2] witness this grandiloquent period; if the garrison would not surrender, "the messengers of justice and of wrath await them in the field; and devastation, famine and every concomitant horror that a reluctant but indispensable prosecution of military duty must occasion will bar the way to their return." No notice was taken of this, the siege began, and the Indians spent the first night yelling in the most discordant and unpleasant manner. But forts are not taken by yells.

Meanwhile General Herkimer marched one thousand men to its relief. They walked straight into an ambush. Herkimer was wounded but, propped up against a tree and calmly smoking his pipe, continued to direct the fight. The garrison, hearing the firing, sallied out in support of Herkimer, and the Battle of Oriskany must be regarded as a draw. The fort was not relieved; on the other hand St. Leger did not take it, though he wrote a long despatch to Burgoyne, describing the rout of the relieving force, but rather evading the main issue. Herkimer was a gallant, pious soldier. He died a few days later, reading the Bible and smoking his pipe to the end. Congress resolved to erect a monument to his memory. I believe that this has not yet been done.

St. Leger now sent an officer to parley with Gansevoort and, the wish being father to the thought, announced, "General Burgoyne is now in Albany." He anticipated matters. Burgoyne certainly was in Albany some weeks later—but as a prisoner. Negotiations were broken off, the siege was continued, but suddenly on August twenty-second St. Leger and his men made their way back to Oswego, defeated, not on the battle-field but by Dame Rumor. It arose in this way. One John Joost Schuyler, known as Hon-Yost (which I suppose is the right pronunciation of his name), half-gipsy and half-idiot, had been captured while spying for St. Leger—to employ an idiot as a spy is the act of an idiot—and had been promised his life by Arnold provided he would spread tales among St. Leger's Indians that the Americans were corning in great force.

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[1] A woman's petticoat, the soldiers' shirts and Colonel Gansevoort's military cloak all contributed to this. I think I am right in saying that it was at Fort Stanwix that Old Glory first saw service. It is a far cry from Fort Stanwix to Chiteau Thierry.

[2] See page 92.

The Indians, who had that reverence for idiots which they so often inspire,[1] asked Hon-Yost how many Americans there were? He pointed vaguely to the leaves of the trees and probably made a sound like a million. In any case it was good enough for the Red Men, and they returned to their wigwams. St. Leger returned to Montreal. He stopped on the way at Oswego to write a lengthy despatch to Burgoyne. In this he blamed everybody but himself. His miscarriage was due to the "slackness of the Messasagoes," the toughness of the sod-work of the fort, false news that Burgoyne's army was cut to pieces, and the treachery of the Indians, who "seized the officers' liquor and cloaths." The real truth seems to be that St. Leger was not equal to his task.

[1]Germain, for instance, had his admirers