

CHAPTER III.

THE father of Philip Schuyler died in the autumn of 1741, and was interred at The Flats, (now Watervliet,) in the family burying-place of his cousin, Colonel Philip Schuyler, son of the eminent first mayor of Albany. Philip was then only eight years of age, and was the eldest of five children that were left to the care of their mother. Their grandfather, Captain John Schuyler, was seventy-three years old, and enfeebled by the severe labors he had performed and the hardships he had endured in military life on the frontier and as Indian commissioner. The entire duties of guardian and guide for the orphans were therefore laid upon the mother, Cornelia Van Cortlandt Schuyler, a person of superior excellence, and then in the prime of early womanhood.

According to the English laws of primogeniture, Philip inherited all of the large real estate of his father, and upon him the hopes of the family were naturally suspended. His mother, fully equal to the responsibilities imposed upon her, and sensible of the importance of the trust committed to her keeping, trained him with anxious care and solicitude, and was rewarded at every step by earnest filial affection, displays of great goodness of heart, and promises of an honorable career.

Mrs. Schuyler was an indulgent mother, but a firm disciplinarian, and she never allowed her authority to be questioned by her children. Philip frequently mentioned

an illustrative example that occurred when he was about ten years of age. On one occasion, not satisfied with some food that was set before him at dinner, he refused to eat it and asked for another dish. His mother, regarding his dislike as whimsical, ordered a servant to carry the dish away, and nothing else was given him. At supper the same dish was set before him, and it was again refused. He went to bed fasting, and the next morning the same dish was given him for breakfast. All this while his mother had not uttered a word of reproof, nor exhibited the least unkindness of manner. Hunger had subdued his rebellious spirit, and conscience made him penitent. He ate the obnoxious food cheerfully, begged his mother to forgive him for his obstinacy, and resolved never again to defy her authority. This kind of maternal discipline had a powerful effect, and was reproduced in the character of the son in an eminent degree.

And now a dark and ominous cloud gathered in the northern horizon of the colony and filled the inhabitants with alarm. The banner of hostility was again raised upon the St. Lawrence, and the savages of the north were preparing to go out upon the old war paths which led to the frontier settlements of New York. For thirty years after the treaty at Utrecht the colonists had enjoyed comparative repose. The English and French governments had been at peace, and their respective colonists in America had lived in as much accord as national antipathies and dissimilarities would allow. The sword had been kept in its scabbard and the hatchet in its grave, and the benign influence of traffic was apparently smoothing the way for a real friendship between the Canadians and the people of New York, when the torch of war was suddenly kindled in Europe, and speedily lighted up the forests of America.

A contest had arisen between Maria Theresa, Empress of Hungary, and Louis the Fifteenth, King of France, concerning the occupancy of the throne of Austria as the seat of the German empire, just become vacant by the death of the Queen's father, Charles the Sixth, who, full twenty years before, had publicly settled his dominions on his daughter. Louis was resolved that Charles Albert, Elector of Bavaria, should be elevated to that throne, while the English people enthusiastically favored the claims of the Hungarian Queen ; and the King of England, as Elector of Hanover, espoused her cause. A contest, called in Europe the war of the Austrian succession, ensued, in which nearly all the continent became involved.

France declared war against England in the spring of 1744, and for almost four years the contest raged in both hemispheres. In America it was called King George's war, and the loyal colonists, sympathizing with their fellow subjects in England, heartily espoused the cause of their sovereign. The peace that had so long rested upon the hills and valleys of America was suddenly banished, and the excitement of hostile sentiments and preparations prevailed all over the middle, northern, and eastern colonies. For a time it was uncertain where the flame would be first kindled, and anxiety and continual alarm harassed the people. The whole frontier of New York and New England was exposed to invasion by the French and their savage allies ; and from every point between Niagara and Quebec came intelligence of tampering with the Indians in the English interest by French emissaries, and of hostile preparations.

Albany, the chief frontier town, was in the programme of every scheme of invasion, because it was the key to the Hudson river and the provincial capital at its mouth, so

much coveted by the Gallic power on the St. Lawrence ; and it was continually menaced with the terrible blow dealt upon Schenectada fifty years before. Every family and every individual had an important interest at stake, and from the dawn of morning until the falling of the evening shadows the war was the great topic which occupied the thoughts and speech of all, from the mere child, listening with wonder, to the mature and aged, who planned and prepared to execute. The bud of young Schuyler's life was then just developing into the blossom of youth, and his plastic mind was continually impressed with words and deeds that left ineffaceable records of memory there, to be consulted in future years.

At length the great question was decided, and the chief theatre of war was prepared in the far east, where the fortress of Louisburg, the great stronghold of French power on this continent, reposed. It was upon the island of Cape Breton, which lies westward of the entrance to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and had been constructed by the French at an expense of five and a half millions of dollars. On account of its great strength it was called the Gibraltar of America; and the sagacious William Shirley, then governor of Massachusetts, under whom young Schuyler served in after years, perceived its immense importance in the coming contest. Plans for its capture were speedily formed by the Legislature of Massachusetts, and other colonies cheerfully lent their coöperation. Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Connecticut furnished their proper quota of troops, New York sent artillery, and Pennsylvania provisions. Thus common danger was extending the idea of a necessity for a union of the Anglo-American colonies ten years before it assumed a practical form in a colonial convention at Albany.

Preparations for the expedition against Louisburg occupied several months, and then, after vainly waiting for some time in expectation of aid from Commodore Warren, who was in the West Indies, the colonial forces, thirty-two hundred strong, under the general command of William Pepperell, sailed for Louisburg on the 4th of April, 1745. They were joined at Canseau by Warren early in May, and on the 11th of that month, the combined forces, four thousand strong, landed a short distance from the Louisburg fortress. Their appearance was unexpected to the French, and at first great consternation prevailed in the town and garrison. A regular siege was commenced on the last day of May, and on the 28th of June the French surrendered the fortress, the city of Louisburg, and the island of Cape Breton into the hands of the English.

Although this great and important victory was achieved almost entirely by the colonial troops, the British government awarded the whole of the prize money, amounting to at least a million of dollars, to the officers and crews of the royal ships-of-war. The two commanders, Warren and Pepperell, were each rewarded with the title of baronet, but the British ministry, with a mean spirit of jealousy toward the colonies, used every effort to depreciate the services of the provincial troops, and to deprive them of their share of the glory of the conquest also. This injustice was never forgotten, yet the loyalty of the colonists was too ardent and sincere to be seriously diminished by it.

Who can tell how much the recollection of this injustice, quickened by subsequent oppression, served to make Richard Gridley, the engineer, and David Wooster, the brave young Connecticut captain, earnest patriots and uncompromising opponents of the crown in the war for independence which broke out thirty years afterward.

Flushed with this great victory in the east, Shirley contemplated the complete conquest of the French colonial dominions. He urged the ministry to send over a sufficient land and naval force for that purpose, and to defend the prizes already won, for it could not be doubted that the mortified and exasperated French would put forth all their energies in efforts to regain what they had lost. Shirley's general plan was to send a British fleet and army, with New England troops, up the St. Lawrence, to attack Quebec, while colonial forces from New York, and provinces southward of it, should rendezvous at Albany, and proceed against the French fort at Crown Point, on Lake Champlain, and the city of Montreal on the St. Lawrence. The ministry appeared to listen favorably, and promised the desired aid. The Massachusetts Assembly agreed to the measure, and a large body of New England troops were speedily collected at Boston, and waited long for the regulars from England. For reasons not satisfactorily explained, the whole summer of 1746 passed away before any troops from abroad arrived, and the fleet of Warren did not come at all.

Shirley was disappointed but not disheartened, and he proposed to detach a portion of the New England troops to join the other provincials at Albany in an attack upon Crown Point. George Clinton, the governor of New York, warmly seconded the proposition. Through the influence of the Schuyler family and others, he had succeeded, as we shall observe presently, in not only securing the friendship of the Six Nations, but in engaging them to render active assistance in the contest; and the enterprise appeared to promise abundant success. But before the plan could be carried into effect intelligence came from the east that Louisburg was in danger, French troops and Indian war-

parties being on their march toward it. The New Englanders were accordingly directed to hasten toward Cape Breton, but when they were on the point of embarking from Boston, tidings came that a large French fleet and army were upon the coast of Nova Scotia. It was an armament consisting of forty vessels, under the Duke D'Anville, conveying more than three thousand disciplined troops and a formidable train of artillery, for the recovery of the fortress and the desolation of the English settlements. The provincials were dismayed. To proceed would have been madness, and for a moment the deepest gloom settled upon the colonists, for it appeared as if they were doomed to destruction. But the strong arm of God's providence, which had so often and so long preserved them in the midst of many perils, was not now withdrawn. Storms wrecked many of the French vessels, and disease soon wasted hundreds of the Gallic troops; and D'Anville, thoroughly dispirited, abandoned the enterprise without striking a blow.

The pious New Englanders regarded this as a special deliverance, and hymns of joy and thanksgiving went up from ten thousand homes, unmixed, however, with any expressions of gratitude or respect for the parent State, whose neglect, but for this deliverance, would have insured their ruin.

Meanwhile the settlers on the extreme northern frontiers had been terribly smitten by bands of French and Indian marauders, and an expedition quite formidable in numbers had swept down the valley of the Hudson as far as Saratoga, within about thirty miles of Albany, leaving there a horrible record, and spreading the wildest alarm among the settlements below. This expedition, consisting of upwards of five hundred Frenchmen and Huron Indians, ac-

accompanied by some disaffected warriors of the Six Nations, left Montreal on the afternoon of the 4th of November, 1745, under the command of M. Marin, an active French officer, and proceeding up the Sorel from Chamblé, crossed Lake Champlain to Fort St. Frederic at Crown Point, which was then commanded by M. Vaudreuil. They arrived there on the 20th, and Marin prepared to cross the country to attack some English settlements on the Connecticut river, which was the original object of the expedition, when the Indians expressed a reluctance to go eastward on account of the lateness of the season, and their lack of preparation for the rigors of winter weather. Marin was disappointed, for he was unwilling to return empty of military achievements. On the suggestion of Father Piquet, the French Prefect Apostolique to Canada, who met the expedition at Crown Point, and the representations of the Iroquois who were with Marin, that officer determined to lead his party southward, toward Orange, as Albany was yet called by the French, and cut off the advancing English settlements. They passed up Lake Champlain and Wood Creek, crossed the country to the Hudson river, destroyed Lydius' lumber establishment on the site of Fort Edward, and approached the thriving settlement of Saratoga, seated on the flats at the junction of the Fish Creek and Hudson river.

The scattered village of Saratoga consisted of about thirty families, many of them tenants of Philip Schuyler, who owned mills and a large landed estate there; and near it, upon a hill across the river, was a small fort in a dilapidated condition, and without a garrison. Marin, with his motley horde of white and dusky savages, accompanied by Father Piquet, having laid waste nearly fifty miles of settlement, approached the village stealthily on the night of the 28th of November, when the inhabitants were asleep.

They burnt the fort and most of the houses, plundered everything of value, murdered Mr. Schuyler and a few others, and took captive one hundred and nine men, women and children, including negroes.

Beauvais, one of the officers who accompanied Marin, knew and respected Mr. Schuyler. He went to his house and requested him to surrender, assuring him at the same time that he should suffer no personal injury. Schuyler was a brave and high spirited man, and refused to surrender. He called Beauvais a dog, and fired a fusee at him. Beauvais again begged him to surrender, when Schuyler fired a second time. The incensed Beauvais instantly returned the fire with fatal effect. The house, which was of brick and pierced for muskets to the roof, was entered, pillaged and burnt, together with the body of Mr. Schuyler, and, it was believed, some persons who were concealed in the cellar.

On the following morning the marauders chanted the *Te Deum* in the midst of the desolation they had made, and then turned their steps toward Canada. A part of the prisoners were distributed among the savages, and the remainder were carried to Montreal, where the whole party arrived on the 9th of December.*

* Among the Schuyler papers is a manuscript of twenty-two foolscap pages, in the French language, containing a complete narrative of this expedition, entitled "Journal de la Campagne de Sarastoguc, 1745." It is in the peculiar handwriting of the time, and was evidently written immediately after the occurrence by a participant in the expedition. The following is the entry concerning the death of Schuyler, the substance of which is given in the text. It will be seen that Schuyler is spelt Skulle :

"Sortant du moulin, nous allâmes a la maison du nommé Philippe Skulle, brave homme qui nous aurait fort embarrassé s'il eut eu vue douzaine d'hommes aussi vaillans que luy. Beauvais qui le connoissait et qui l'aimoit, s'etoit rendu à sa maison le premier et en lui disant son nom l'invita fort à se rendre qu'il n'aurait point de mal. L'autre luy repondit qu'il étoit un chien et qu'il le voulait tuer en effet luy tira un coup de fusil. Beauvais luy reitera sa prière de

The murdered Schuyler was young Philip's uncle, from whom he inherited the fine estate at Saratoga, which he owned when it was desolated by order of Burgoyne more than thirty years afterward. The circumstances of his death caused the fiercest indignation as well as alarm throughout the province, and his brother, Colonel Peter Schuyler, who had been Indian commissioner for many years, importuned Governor Clinton for a detachment of three hundred of the militia of the lower counties to defend the frontier, and also to have the fort at Saratoga rebuilt and garrisoned.* The Commissioners of Indian affairs also urged the governor to take other measures for the security of the frontiers in connection with the friendly Six Nations; and a letter from Doctor Cadwallader Colden, who resided in the vicinity of Newburgh, was received by Clinton at about the same time, giving alarming suggestions concerning an expected attack by the Indians on the western borders of Ulster County. Coincident with these movements, the Massachusetts people sent an earnest request for

se rendre à quoi Phillipe repondit par des coups de fusils, enfin Beauvais las d'être exposé à son feu, lui tira son coup et le tua; nous entrâmes aussitôt, et tous fut pillé dans l'instant—cette maison étoit de briques percée de creneaux jusques à rez de chaussée, les sauvages nous l'avoit annoncée comme un espèce de corps de garde on il y avoit des soldats—ou y fit quelques domestiques prisonniers, on dit qu'il y a eu du monde de brulé qui s'étoit retiré dans la cave.

* Fort Saratoga stood upon a hill on the east side of the Hudson, opposite the present Schuylerville. It was rebuilt in the spring of 1746, in quadrangular form and strongly palisaded, and named Fort Clinton. At each corner of the fort were the houses of the officers, and timber barracks for the soldiers were within the palisades. A French account of it says it was twenty-five *toises* (one hundred and fifty feet) in height, meaning, no doubt, its height above the level of the river. The English, unable to defend this fort against the attacks of the French and Indians, burned it at about the 1st of December, 1747. A French officer (Villiers), who visited it three weeks after its destruction, saw twenty chimneys then standing. He reported that the English had ninety batteaux there which they took away with them.

New York to join with the New England colonies in a confederation for mutual welfare. These things were pressed upon the governor, and by him upon the representatives of the people, at a moment auspicious for their receiving attention. The public service had been neglected in consequence of the almost incessant quarrels between the chief magistrate and the assembly, causing supplies asked for to be refused, and the best interests of the commonwealth, in a time of great danger, to be made shuttlecocks for the amusement or profit of partisan players.

Governor Clinton was a son of the Earl of Lincoln, had spent most of his life in the navy, loved ease and good cheer, and evidently came to America to mend his fortune—impaired by extravagance—by genteel frugality in a society more simple than he found at home. He was a good-humored, kind-hearted man, and the ten years of his administration might have passed happily, had not unwise advisers influenced him at the beginning, and rancorous party spirit cursed the province. The old politicians who survived the administrations of Cosby and Clarke were as violent in their mutual animosities as ever, and the governor, after trying for awhile to propitiate the favor of both with no success, made the wealthy, able, and influential James De Lancey, then chief justice of the province, his confidant and guide. They finally quarreled over their cups and became personal and political foes, and from that hour Clinton found no peace in his public life. De Lancey was implacable. He was a politician of most exquisite mould, and bore almost absolute sway over the colonial assembly and the people. At the table where their friendship was broken he had taken an oath of revenge, and he pursued Clinton with the tenacity of a hound. He aimed to thwart every effort of the governor toward placing the

province in a state of proper defense, for the evident purpose of making him, by his seeming inefficiency, unpopular with the people, while the governor, having the advantage of power, dealt severe blows of retaliation in return.

By these personal disputes and public agitations which disturbed the waters of society in New York, a hitherto obscure man was cast up to the surface, and for thirty years he held a conspicuous place in the history of the province, especially in that portion that pertained to the Indian tribes within its borders. That man was William Johnson, a nephew of Admiral Sir Peter Warren, and then in the prime of young manhood. His uncle, by marriage with Miss Watts of New York, became possessed of many broad acres upon the Mohawk river, and Johnson came from Ireland to take charge of the princely domain. For several years his ambition lay dormant, and he was content to reside in obscurity near Fort Hunter, surrounded by the Mohawk savages.

The quarrels between Clinton and De Lancey wrought a change in Johnson's aspirations and fortunes as sudden as it was great. Colonel Schuyler, who had long and faithfully exercised the duties of Indian commissioner, and was greatly beloved by the Six Nations, unfortunately for the public good attached himself to the interests of De Lancey. The governor was offended, and as Johnson, who had become a favorite with the Indians, had given Clinton full proofs of his friendship, upon him the office held by Colonel Schuyler was conferred, strictly on party grounds. That office became to Johnson the door of entrance to honors, fame and fortune ; and thus the man with whom Philip Schuyler the younger had so much to do in after years, in connection with the Iroquois confederacy, was first presented to public view.

The foray against Saratoga, and the imminent danger that every where overhung the province, hushed the voice of party spirit for a while ; and when, early in 1746, the governor, by his message, demanded from the Legislature provision for constructing six new block houses on the northern frontier ; the punctual payment of their militia garrisons, and the appointment of twenty-five men to be posted in two others at Schenectada ; notified them that the Six Nations had refused to act in the war ; urged an alliance with the New England colonies to lessen the expense of repurchasing the aid of the Iroquois confederacy ; insisted upon more money to strengthen the hands of the Indian commissioners ; demanded a further aid of provisions for a garrison at Oswego, and a quota of men to garrison Louisburg till others should arrive from England ; and declared that “ the enemy could not be more industrious for the ruin of the colony than he could be careful to preserve it in the quiet possession of his Majesty’s subjects,” scarcely a murmur of opposition was heard. The assembly proceeded to vote for the services recommended, and an increase in the amount of paper money to be issued.

Soon after this a scene occurred at Albany that must have made a deep and lasting impression upon young Schuyler. He was then nearly thirteen years of age, quite precocious, and vigilant and acute in his observations of passing events. Intelligence had come from England that the British ministry had determined to send an expedition against Canada, and desired aid from the colonies in men and supplies. This was the project of Governor Shirley already mentioned. It gave the people joy. The assembly voted a most loyal address to the governor. Bounties were raised for volunteers, and for the purchase of ammunition and provisions ; exportation of provisions was forbidden ;

the Six Nations were invited to meet the governor at Albany in council, and the other colonies were requested to join in collecting presents to conciliate them; artificers were impressed for the public works, and other measures for vigorous coöperation were planned.

A few days after the assembly adjourned, in July, the governor departed for Albany, with Dr. Colden and Philip Livingston, of his Majesty's council, and Captain Rutherford, who commanded in the north. They arrived at Albany on the 21st of July, and after being cordially received by the corporation, the regular troops in the city, and the militia, the governor took up his abode in the fort, on account of the prevalence of the small pox in the town.

Commissioner Johnson, meanwhile, had made great exertions to arouse the Mohawks to war against the French. He flattered their pride by dressing like them, and gained their further good will by feasting them. He was very successful, and on the 8th of August he appeared on the hills that overlooked old Albany, dressed and painted like the savages, at the head of a large number of them. Preparations having been made for their formal reception, they were led down to the fort, where the chiefs were treated with wine. It was a large and imposing gathering of the noblest sons of the forest, who came with their best appointments to hold friendly communion with "Corlear," as the governors of New York were styled. And there were many other braves there besides those of the Mohawk valley. Chiefs and warriors came from the Delawares, the Susquehannahs, the River Indians, and the Mohegans of the Connecticut valley. All the people of the town flocked to see the spectacle, and many came for the purpose from the neighboring settlements.

The council was satisfactory to all parties. The Indians

generally promised to lift the hatchet against the French, and were dismissed with presents, and Johnson was furnished with arms and directed to send out war parties from Schenectada and his own settlement near the lower Mohawk Castle, to annoy the French and their savage allies, who brooded in the forests northward of the English homes on the borders of the wilderness.

From this time no actual hostilities of importance occurred within the province of New York or on its frontier for several years ; but the annals of New Hampshire for two years thereafter present a long and mournful catalogue of plantations laid waste and colonists slain or carried into captivity by the French and Indians. Pillage appeared to be the chief object of the invaders ; “and their prowess,” says an elegant English writer, “was directed less against States and armies than against dwelling-houses, families, rural industry and domestic life.”*

In April, 1748, a treaty of peace was concluded at Aix-la-Chapelle, in western Germany, when it was mutually agreed that all prisoners should be released, and all acquisitions of property or territory made by either party should be restored. Louisburg, therefore, passed back into the hands of the French, and France and England were both immense losers by the conflict. But the American colonists, heavy as were their pecuniary and industrial sacrifices during the war, were great gainers, for their latent strength was developed, and the incalculable advantages of union were discovered and appreciated. They were tutored for great achievements in the future—achievements in which Philip Schuyler bore a conspicuous part.

* Grahame's Colonial History of the United States, i. 183.