

## CHAPTER XXVII.

GENERAL MONTGOMERY found a large proportion of the troops indisposed to comply with his invitation to accompany him to Quebec ; and many precious days—days composed of those golden moments of opportunity that might have secured victory—passed by, while he was engaged in futile endeavors to persuade the New Englanders, whose terms of service had expired, to reënlist. Even those who had yet a short time to serve became turbulent, and some absolutely refused to go another step forward. Home-sickness, a most natural malady under the circumstances, took possession of whole companies ; and day after day they left the camp in groups, and made their way up Lake Champlain to Ticonderoga, to receive their discharge from General Schuyler. “ I believe,” wrote that officer to Montgomery, on the 18th of November, “ that you have few of the New England troops left, as near three hundred have passed here within these few days, and so very impatient to get home that many have gone from here by land.”

To the Continental Congress Schuyler wrote, on the 20th, saying :

“ Our army in Canada is daily reducing—about three hundred of the troops raised in Connecticut having passed here within a few days—so that I believe not more than six hundred and fifty or seven hundred from that colony are left. From the different New York regiments about forty are also lately come away. An unhappy home-sickness prevails. Those mentioned above all came down as invalids, not one willing to

reëngage for the winter service. Unable to get any work done by them, I discharged them in groups. Of all the specifics ever invented for *any*, there is none so efficacious as a discharge for *this* prevailing disorder. No sooner was it administered but it perfected the cure of nine out of ten, who, refusing to wait for boats to go by the way of Lake George, slung their heavy packs, crossed the lake at this place, and undertook a march of two hundred miles, with the greatest good will and alacrity." He added: "The most scandalous inattention to the public stores prevails in every part of the army. The tents are left lying in the boats; axes, kettles, etc., lost, and every thing running into confusion. The only attention that engrosses the minds of the soldiery is, how to get home the soonest possible. Nothing, sir, will ever put a stop to this shameful negligence but obliging the officers to pay for what is not accounted for, and let them deduct it out of the men's wages. They can not think this a hardship, as they were informed by me that every article that was issued to them should be returned into store, or properly accounted for. If they were suffered to do it with impunity this year, it will be the same next."\*

Washington was also experiencing trouble at this time with the New England troops.

"Such a dearth of public spirit, and such a want of virtue—such a stock-jobbing and fertility in all the low arts to obtain advantages of one kind or another in this great change of military arrangement—I never saw before," he wrote to the Continental Congress, "and pray God's mercy that I may never be witness to again. What will be the end of these maneuvers is beyond my scan. I tremble at the prospect. \* \* \* \* The Connecticut troops will not be prevailed upon to stay longer than their term, saving those who have enlisted for the next campaign and are mostly on furlough; and such a mercenary spirit pervades the whole, that I should not be at all surprised at any disaster that may happen."†

Having complained of their conduct to Governor Trumbull, informing him of their leaving in great numbers, and carrying with them, in many instances, the arms and ammunition belonging to the public, that functionary, whose views of patriotic duty were not bounded by the outlines of his own province, wrote:

\* Schuyler's MS. Letter Books.

† Sparks's *Life and Writings of Washington*, iii., 178.

“The late extraordinary and reprehensible conduct of some of the troops of this colony impresses me, and the minds of many of our people, with grief, surprise, and indignation, since the treatment they met with, and the order and request made to them [to remain until the arrival of other troops, already engaged], were so reasonable, and apparently necessary, for the defense of our common cause and safety of our rights and privileges for which they freely engaged; the term they voluntarily enlisted to serve not expired, and probably would not end much before the time when they would be relieved, provided their circumstances and inclination should prevent their undertaking further.” He added, apologetically: “Indeed there is great difficulty to support liberty, to exercise government, to maintain subordination, and at the same time to prevent the operation of licentious and levelling principles which many very easily imbibe. The pulse of a New England man beats high for liberty; his engagement in the service he thinks purely voluntary; therefore when his term of enlistment is out he thinks himself not holden without further engagement.”\*

At about this time a circumstance occurred at Ticonderoga, which increased the ill-feeling of some of the Connecticut troops toward General Schuyler. The prisoners taken at Chamblée and St. John's, as we have seen, were sent to Schuyler for his final disposition of them. A schooner and row-galley, with more than one hundred persons, many of them prisoners, and quite a number of women and children, from Canada, arrived at Crown Point late in November. The ice prevented their reaching Ticonderoga, and they became destitute of provisions. In that perilous hour they sent an express to General Schuyler imploring relief. He immediately ordered three captains of Wooster's regiment who were at that post with a considerable body of men, to attempt the relief of the sufferers. They manifested much unwillingness to go, and made many frivolous excuses. This display of selfish inhumanity disgusted and irritated the benevolent and high-minded Schuyler, and in a public order, on the following day (November 29th), he

\* Spark's *Life and Writings of Washington*, iii., 183. Note.

mentioned the circumstances, and named the three captains (Porter, Arnold, and Peck), and said : " The general, therefore, not daring to trust a matter of so much importance to men of so little feeling, has ordered Lieutenant Riker, of Colonel Holmes's regiment, to make the attempt. He received the order with the alacrity becoming a gentleman, an officer, and a Christian."\*

This was a severe but merited rebuke ; and these officers were loud in their denunciations of Schuyler in the willing ears of their superiors.

November was passing away, and Montgomery was yet at Montreal. " I am ashamed," he wrote to Schuyler, on the 24th, " of dating my letter from hence. You will no doubt be surprised at my long stay here, but day after day have I been delayed, without a possibility of getting to Arnold's assistance. To-morrow, I believe, I shall sail with two or three hundred men, some mortars, and other artillery."

Montgomery had just heard that Lieutenant Halsey, of Waterbury's regiment, whom he had left as assistant engineer, to put up barracks at St. John's, had not only been chiefly instrumental in urging the Connecticut troops to leave for home, but had " run away without leave," taking with him the artificers Montgomery had left to carry on the work. While greatly annoyed by this information, he was subjected to the indignity of remonstrances from several of his officers because he had shown certain humane indulgences to British prisoners in his possession. " Such an insult," he wrote, " I could not bear, and immediately resigned. However, they have to-day qualified it, by such an apology as puts it in my power to resume the command with some propriety, and I have promised

\* Schuyler's MS. Orderly Book.

to bury it in oblivion. Captain Lamb, who is a restless genius, and of a bad temper, was at the head of it. He has been used to haranguing his fellow-citizens in New York, and can not restrain his talent here. He is brave, active, and intelligent, but very turbulent and troublesome, and not to be satisfied.”\*

General Schuyler communicated these facts to the Continental Congress, saying :

“This turbulent and mutinous spirit will tend to the ruin of our cause; and the necessity of checking it immediately, and taking measures to prevent it in future, strikes me so forcibly, that I take the liberty to observe that it is worthy of the immediate attention of Congress. I speak the more freely on this subject, as I would not wish that General Montgomery’s and my successors, whoever they may be, should lead the disagreeable lives that we have.”†

Day after day Montgomery’s little army dwindled, when it should have increased, and even the Green Mountain Boys, who were among the latest to join the expedition as an organized corps, and on whose promises he had relied, left him “in the lurch,” he said, at the moment of his greatest need.

“It may be asked,” wrote Schuyler to the Continental Congress, on the 27th of November, “why Warner’s regiment was suffered to come away, and some other of the troops raised in this colony, as the term for which they were engaged would not expire until the last day of next month? The unhappy cause is this: At St. John’s the Con-

\* Autograph letter, Nov. 24, 1775. Montgomery fully appreciated the value of Captain Lamb to the service. Four days before, he had written to Schuyler concerning him, saying: “I have had some difficulty in persuading him to stay. He says the pay is such a trifle that he is consuming his own property to maintain himself, and that by and by his family must starve at home. He is absolutely necessary with this army, if we are to have artillery. He is active, spirited, and industrious; and I do think he should have an appointment adequate to the services he has rendered. I have entreated him to stay, with the assurance that I would represent his circumstances to Congress. I hear of your bad health with the most real concern.”

† Schuyler’s MS. Letter Books.

necticut troops were so very importunate to return home that General Montgomery was under the necessity of promising that all those that would follow him to Montreal should have leave to return. This declaration he could not confine to the Connecticut troops, as such a discrimination would have been odious. It might have been expected that men, influenced by a love of liberty, would not have required such a promise, and that others to whom it was not immediately intended would not have taken the advantage of it."\*

While the army was thus melting, the Continental Congress were very dilatory in furnishing men to fill the vacancies, notwithstanding their eagerness to possess Canada; and Montgomery found himself, at the close of November, when on the point of marching to Quebec, in command of less than two thousand men in all Canada, including those under Arnold, and the garrisons to be left at St. John's, Chamblée, and Montreal. He yearned for relief, yet his duty to his adopted country would not permit him to leave the chief command of the army in the field with General Wooster, who, Gates wrote, it was "on all hands agreed, was too infirm for that service." "Will not your health," he wrote to Schuyler, "permit you to reside at Montreal this winter? I must go home, if I walk by the side of the lake. I am weary of power, and totally want that patience and temper requisite for such a command. I wish exceedingly for a respectable committee of Congress. I really have not weight enough to carry on business by myself. I wish Lee could set off immediately for the command here."†

\* Schuyler's MS. Letter Books.

† Autograph letters, Nov. 13-24. Schuyler and Montgomery had both urged the Congress to send a committee of their body to act in concert with the military commander in the northern department, in the management of the campaign, and in the formation of civil government, in the event of the reduction of Canada, or in the arrangement of a new army for that service, if the campaign should not prove successful.

On account of the continued ill health of General Schuyler it had been proposed to make General Charles Lee commander-in-chief of the northern department.

Schuyler's health would not permit him to go to Montreal, nor even to remain at Ticonderoga; and for the purpose of rest as a means of recovery, he was compelled to leave for his home at Albany, early in December. He deeply regretted the stern necessity that deprived him of participation in the toils, dangers, and glory of the conquest of Canada, for the consummation of which he had so earnestly labored. He had daily and hourly afforded Montgomery all the aid in his power; and before leaving Ticonderoga he had disposed of all the prisoners sent to him, put the entire service on as good footing as the means at his command would allow, and arranged every thing that might facilitate the labors of Colonel Knox in removing the cannon, mortars, and artillery stores from Ticonderoga to Boston, on which service he had been sent by General Washington. Leaving the post of Ticonderoga in charge of Colonel Holmes, with very particular instructions for his conduct, he proceeded southward by the way of Lake George (at the head of which he met Colonel Knox), and arrived at Albany on Thursday, the 7th of December. On Saturday, the 9th, he addressed the following note to the pastor of the church in Albany which he and his family attended:

"General Schuyler's respectful compliments: He begs the Rev. Mr. Westerlo publicly to acknowledge the manifold favors he, and the army under his command, have experienced from the Fountain of all Grace and Mercy; and while he approaches the throne of Heaven with a grateful heart for mercies past, humbly to supplicate a continuance of the Divine protection, and to pray for a speedy and a happy reconciliation with the mother country."\*

On his arrival at Albany, Schuyler found about sixty of the Six Nations of Indians waiting for him. Mr. Douw was the only other commissioner present, yet the

\* Autograph draft of letter.

exigency of the case demanded action, and Schuyler and Douw opened business with them. The savages had come to testify their friendship, and the communications which they made were important.

“The Indians,” said Schuyler, in a letter to the Continental Congress, on the 14th of December, “delivered us a speech on the 12th, in which they related the substance of all the conferences Colonel Johnson had with them the last summer, concluding with that at Montreal, where he delivered to each of the Canadian tribes a war-belt and a hatchet, who accepted it; after which, they were invited to feast on a Bostonian and to drink his blood, an ox being roasted alive for the purpose and a pipe of red wine given to drink. The war-song was also sung. One of the chiefs of the Six Nations that attended at that conference accepted of a very large, black war-belt, with a hatchet depicted in it, but would neither eat nor drink nor sing the war-song. The famous belt they have delivered up, and we have full proof that the ministerial servants have attempted to engage the savages against us.” To Washington he wrote: “The Mohawks have received a severe and public reprimand from the other Nations, because they did not immediately send for the few of that tribe that were in Canada [under Brant], some of whom were killed by our people.” And to Montgomery he wrote: “The Indians have delivered to us Colonel Johnson’s war-belt, which he gave them at Montreal. Your conquests have convinced them that they cannot do without us, and they are all humiliation.”\*

At about this time the Congress received such information concerning the conduct of Sir John Johnson and the Tories of the Mohawk Valley, indicative of their speedy activity in the royal cause, such as collecting arms, ammunition, and military stores, that they resolved to take countervailing measures. When the committee appointed to inquire into the matter reported, it was—

“*Resolved*, That the said committee be directed to communicate this intelligence to General Schuyler, and, in the name of the Congress, desire him to take the most speedy and effectual measures for securing the said arms and military stores, and for disarming the said Tories, and apprehending their chiefs.”\*

\* Schuyler’s MS. Letter Books. † Journal of Congress, Dec. 30, 1775.



Although further removed from the most important events transpiring in the northern department, than when he was at Ticonderoga, General Schuyler was equally useful and efficient, with his head-quarters at Albany, (while Montgomery and Arnold were prosecuting the campaign on the St. Lawrence,) in the general management of the details of the service, and the paramount duty of furnishing the troops with supplies, urging forward reënforcements, and keeping the civil authorities and the commander-in-chief of the armies so constantly and clearly advised of all matters pertaining to his department, that nothing to promote the success of the expedition was left undone, because of a lack of information.

No officer was ever more vigilant and active than Schuyler. Nothing escaped his observation ; and nothing of the least value to the service was too insignificant to engage his earnest attention. Instead of leaving the entire management of separate departments—commissary, quartermaster, muster-master, and hospital-superintendent—to those whom Congress had appointed for that service, he exercised a direct personal supervision of all. He made out careful estimates of provisions and stores for the commissary ; directed many of the details of the quartermaster's department ; made lists of materials used in the construction of vessels, and took great interest in the hospital provisions for the sick. He attended with zeal and courtesy to the wants and comfort of prisoners, and listened with complacency to the petitions of private soldiers who could obtain no redress for alleged wrongs through their immediate superiors. Some of the letters of these humble men (carefully filed among his papers), in which they laid their grievances before him, are most touching examples of that unhesitating faith in his justice which was

felt by all who knew him, and the love and reverence of every man whose worthiness made him an object of General Schuyler's kind regard. It was only to the assuming, the disobedient, the insubordinate, the idle, and the vicious, that he appeared as a stern master.

General Schuyler was as tender and tenacious of the rights of others as of his own ; and in all his intercourse with the officers of his army his conduct was so inflexibly and irreproachably honorable that no man, not even his bitter enemies, ever complained that General Schuyler had claimed for himself that which he was not willing to allow to others, or by his just authority invaded any right belonging to a fellow-soldier, high or low in rank or merit. He was scrupulously just to all ; and in exacting from others that loyalty to his official power which he was ever quick to give to his own superiors in rank, he was always governed by the highest sense of right. Therefore, when we see him rebuking insubordination, peculation, and waste, in the army, sternly, and sometimes passionately, in clear Saxon language, which all might understand ; speaking out his sentiments without circumlocution, or using soft and submissive words as a cover to a dissimulating spirit, we behold a man, fearless in the performance of duty, regardless of reputation, except that which rests upon the solid basis of useful actions, and so fortified by the consciousness of rectitude against the shafts of "envy, hatred, and malice," that he could afford to be dutiful at the expense of present unpopularity. A careful guardian of the public welfare, economical in his management, and an exact disciplinarian, it is no wonder that the disorderly spirit manifested by the troops, the peculations of commissaries and others in offices of trust, wastefulness in every department, and the selfishness and sectional jealousy

that continually appeared, that vexed and annoyed him every hour, made him weary of the service, and caused him at last to ask Congress to allow him to retire.

From the beginning, Schuyler's illness had given Washington and the General Congress much uneasiness, for upon him hung the best hopes of the northern campaign. The commander-in-chief had been specially concerned when he found that Wooster was about to join the army of the North, and might claim to be next in rank and command to Schuyler. "General Wooster," he wrote to Schuyler, "I am informed, is not of such activity as to press through difficulties with which that service is environed. I am therefore much alarmed for Arnold, whose expedition was built upon yours, and who will infallibly perish, if the invasion and entry into Canada are abandoned by your successors."\* But when Schuyler, as we have seen, by prompt action, settled the point concerning Wooster's rank, Washington's mind was relieved, and he wrote to him saying: "I much approve your conduct in regard to Wooster. My fears are at an end, as he acts in a subordinate character."†

Washington's mind was again disturbed, when Schuyler, tortured by disease and vexed beyond all forbearance by the conduct of the troops around him, gave notice to the commander-in-chief of his intention to resign. "Gentlemen," he said in his letter to Washington, "find

\* Sparks's *Life and Writings of Washington*, iii., 119.

† Ibid, iii., 143. Gunning Bedford, writing to Schuyler from Philadelphia, said: "I find that the majority of the members are by no means pleased with the Connecticut troops, and are glad to hear you managed General Wooster as you did. I own, for myself, I had great fears of this dangerous tendency of his and their prevailing spirit, and it gives me particular pleasure that your most prudent conduct has relieved you of so much trouble and anxiety. The gentlemen here all feel for your disagreeable situation; but put that confidence in your conduct, that when restored to health, and aided by some new regulations for the government of the soldiery, you will find yourself more comfortable, at the head of a more obedient army.—*Autograph Letter*.

it very disagreeable to coax, to wheedle, and even to *lie*, to carry on the service. Habituated to order, I can not, without the most extreme pain, see that disregard of discipline, confusion, and inattention which reigns so generally in this quarter, and I am, therefore, determined to retire."

The Congress entreated Schuyler to remain at his post, because, they said, his retirement "would deprive America of the benefits of his zeal and abilities, and rob him of the honor of completing the work he had so happily begun."

Washington, regarding Schuyler as one of the main supports of the Continental army, was much concerned, and immediately wrote to him an expostulatory letter.

"I know your complaints are too well founded," he said; "but I would willingly hope that nothing will induce you to quit the service, and that, in time, order and subordination will take the place of confusion, and command be rendered more agreeable. I have met with difficulties of the same sort, and such as I never expected; but they must be borne with. \* \* \* The cause we are engaged in is so just and righteous that we must try to rise superior to every obstacle in its support; and, therefore, I beg that you will not think of resigning, unless you have carried your application to Congress too far to recede." Three weeks later, Washington wrote to him, saying: "I am very sorry to find, by several paragraphs [in Schuyler's letter to Congress], that both you and General Montgomery incline to quit the service. Let me ask you, sir, when is the time for brave men to exert themselves in the cause of liberty and their country, if this is not? Should any difficulties that they have to encounter, at this important crisis, deter them? God knows there is not a difficulty that you both very justly complain of, which I have not, in an eminent degree, experienced, that I am not every day experiencing; but we must bear up against them, and make the best of mankind as they are, since we can not have them as we wish. Let me, therefore, conjure you and Mr. Montgomery to lay aside such thoughts—thoughts injurious to yourselves, and extremely so to your country, which calls aloud for gentlemen of your abilities."\*

General Schuyler felt the force of this appeal, and replied as follows:

\* Sparks's *Life and Writings of Washington*, iii., 209.

“I do not hesitate a moment to answer my dear general’s question, in the affirmative, by declaring, that now or never is the time for every virtuous American to exert himself in the cause of liberty and his country, and that it becomes a duty cheerfully to sacrifice the sweets of domestic felicity to attain the honest and glorious end America has in view; and I can, with a good conscience, declare that I have devoted myself to the service of my country, in the firmest resolution, to sink or swim with it, without anxiety how I quit the stage of life, provided I leave to my posterity the happy reflection that their ancestor was an honest American.” Then anticipating the question, “Why, then, do you wish to retire from public office?” General Schuyler unburdened his full heart in the confidence of brother with brother, and said: “I think I should prejudice my country by continuing any longer in this command. The favorable opinion you are pleased to entertain of me, obliges me to an explanation which I shall give you in confidence. I have already informed you of the disagreeable situation I have been in during the campaign, but I would waive that, were it not that it has chiefly arisen from prejudice and jealousy, for I could point out particular persons of rank in the army who have frequently declared that the general commanding in this quarter ought to be of the colony whence the majority of the troops come. But it is not from the opinion or principles of individuals that I have drawn the following conclusion: *That troops from the colony of Connecticut will not bear with a general from another colony.* It is from the daily and common conversation of all ranks of people from that colony, both in and out of the army; and I assure you, that I sincerely lament that a people of so much public virtue should be actuated by such an unbecoming jealousy, founded on such a narrow principle—a principle extremely unfriendly to our righteous cause—as it tends to alienate the affections of numbers in this colony, in spite of the most favorable constructions that prudent men and real Americans among us attempt to put upon it. And although I frankly avow that I feel a resentment, yet I shall continue to sacrifice it to a nobler object—the welfare of that country in which I have drawn the breath of life.”\*

Entreated by leading men of all classes, who knew his worth, to remain in command of his department, Schuyler yielded; and in the events of 1776, in that quarter, his services were of incalculable value to the cause which he had so heartily espoused.

\* Schuyler’s MS. Letter Books.