

CHAPTER IV.

FOLLOWING close upon the news of the flight of the Americans from Quebec, came intelligence of a serious disaster at the Cedars Rapids, forty-five miles above Montreal, where, as we have seen, Arnold had posted Colonel Bedel, with two hundred of his New Hampshire regiment, at a little fort there. That vigilant and veteran officer, who had performed long and signal service in the Provincial army before the Revolution, was charged, also, with the duty of keeping the Caughnawaga Indians (residing about twelve miles above Montreal) and others in a state of neutrality. Informed that they were much excited, he went down to hold a conference with them, leaving Major Butterfield in temporary command at the Cedars. It was with much difficulty that he persuaded the Caughnawagas to remain neutral, for they had heard of the retreat from Quebec, and had been told that Captain Forster was coming from Detroit with a part of a British regiment and a large number of Canadians and Indians, and they were disposed to join him.

While Bedel was yet in conference at Caughnawaga, word came to him that Forster, with regulars, Canadians and Indians, had come down from Fort Oswegatchie (now Ogdensburg) and were menacing his command. He was told that he could return to his post almost as quickly by way of Montreal as by the route he had come down, so he hastened to that city for the purpose of soliciting from

Arnold a reinforcement for the Cedars. One hundred and forty men were immediately detached for that service, under Major Sherburne of Rhode Island. Bedel accompanied him, although then suffering from small-pox in its earlier stage. He was so ill when they arrived at Lachine that he could go no further. Sherburne was detained by unforeseen obstacles, and did not arrive near the menaced post until the 20th of May.

Meanwhile Forster, with forty regulars, one hundred Canadians, and full five hundred Indians under the Mohawk chief Brant, had appeared before the fort, demanded its surrender, and threatened the garrison with massacre by the savages if resistance should be made. This threat intimidated Major Butterfield, who, contrary to the wishes of his officers and men, surrendered all without fighting. This was unknown to Sherburne, who, the next day, after leaving forty men as a guard on the shore of Lake St. Louis, pressed on toward the Cedars with one hundred men. At five o'clock in the evening, when he was within five miles of the post, Forster and his whole force, lying in ambush, burst suddenly upon Sherburne. A severe battle ensued which lasted more than an hour, when the Indians, in number four times that of the republicans, encircled the little band, and, at a given signal by Brant, rushed forward and disarmed them. Furious because of the resistance made and its results, the savages butchered about twenty of Sherburne's men (and would have murdered them all had not Brant restrained them), and stripped the remainder and drove them in triumph to the fort. The loss of the Americans, in the action and by murder, was fifty-eight; the enemy lost twenty-two—among them a Seneca chief, whose death it was that so exasperated them.

When Arnold heard of this disaster, he marched with

about eight hundred men against the enemy, then at Vaudreuil, for the twofold purpose of chastising them and releasing the American prisoners. On the afternoon of the 21st he arrived at St. Anne's, and saw the batteaux of Forster taking prisoners from an island to the southern shore of the St. Lawrence. At about the same time a party of Caughnawaga Indians whom he had sent to demand a surrender of the prisoners, or to convey a threat of extermination if any more Americans should be murdered, returned with an answer of defiance. The Indians sent Arnold word that if he should cross the river and land for the purpose of rescuing the prisoners, they would put them all to death. Unmindful of their threats, Arnold pursued, and after a slight skirmish returned to St. Anne's and called a council of war. There he received a flag from Forster, accompanied by Sherburne, with an assurance that if Arnold persisted in attacking him he could not restrain the Indians from executing their threat. He also demanded of Arnold an agreement to a proposed cartel that Sherburne had been compelled to sign, which provided for an exchange of prisoners, with the condition that the Americans should immediately return to their homes and not again take up arms, and that four American captains should go to Quebec as hostages until the exchange should be effected. Sherburne assured Arnold that the Indians had already prepared for the threatened massacre, and that the prisoners were in the greatest peril. Considerations of humanity caused Arnold to yield to these demands, excepting to the condition concerning the taking up of arms again. This point Forster waived, and the agreement was signed. That leader's conduct was considered so disgraceful, in forcing his opponents into an agreement by holding the hatchets of the Indians over

their heads, that Congress refused to ratify it, and the British government did not insist upon it. Prisoners and hostages were finally released.

The conduct of Butterfield was severely condemned, and Bedel, innocent of all blame, was involved in the disgrace. Arnold arrested him on the charge of quitting his post at the Cedars, contrary to orders. On this charge he was tried by a court-martial, at Ticonderoga, in July, and, on the evidence of Arnold alone, he was convicted, cashiered and dismissed the service. General Gates, then in command there, sharing the indignation which then filled the country because of the affair at the Cedars, approved the sentence, and, in his letter to Congress transmitting it, he suggested that a little more severity would have been well. The proceedings of the court and Bedel's defence were referred to the newly-created Board of War, after the excitements and resentments because of the reverses in Canada had cooled, when the sentence was reversed, Colonel Bedel was honorably acquitted, and he was restored to his rank by a re-commission from the Continental Congress. He was afterward employed by General Schuyler (among whose papers I nowhere find evidence that he shared in the censure of Colonel Bedel) in some of the most delicate and responsible positions in connection with the Indians; also by General Gates, who countersigned his new commission, and was satisfied that he had suffered wrong. I have noticed this matter so particularly in order to do justice to a brave patriot, whose character, like that of General Schuyler and nearly every other true man in public life then, has been assailed, and which has, for well nigh a century, borne the stain of cowardice. All historians of the events here recorded, misled and uninformed, have branded him as a coward.

There exists ample documentary evidence, besides the fair inferences to be drawn from the fact of his restoration to rank and the confidence of the leading characters of his times, to prove that the arrest of Colonel Bedel and the sentence of the court that tried him, were cruel wrongs. He was evidently one of the many victims of the jealousy, mendacity, vanity, egotism or malignity of Arnold, who, at that very time, was endeavoring to lower, in the esteem of their superiors in rank, such officers as Colonel Hazen and Lieutenant-Colonel Antill, by mean and malicious insinuations against their faithfulness to the cause.

At the opening of June all hopes for holding Canada vanished from the minds of experienced men. Several thousand British troops had arrived at Quebec under General John Burgoyne, and full four thousand German troops, under General the Baron Frederic Adolphus Von Riedesel, were following. The little force of patriots at Deschambault had continued their retreat up the river to the mouth of the Sorel, the outlet of Lake Champlain, and there joined the detachment of troops under General Thompson which Washington had first sent from New York. General Thomas, who had forbidden further inoculation for the small-pox because it put so many of his troops in the hospitals, had caught the infection, been carried to Chamblée, and there died on the 2d of June. Wooster, in whom the Commissioners had no confidence as a commander, because of his wretched mismanagement, had been recalled from Canada, and General John Sullivan, who had lately arrived with his brigade, succeeded Thomas in the command in that province. Confusion and disorder almost everywhere prevailed. Want and lack of discipline had demoralized nearly the whole army, while sickness was busy with its fearful work. "The small-pox,"

Arnold wrote to Schuyler, "has broke and divided the army in such a manner, that it is almost ruined. Our want of almost every necessity for the army, and repeated misfortunes and losses, have greatly dispirited the troops. Our enemies are daily increasing and our friends are deserting us. Under these discouragements and obstacles, with a powerful army against us, and wanting in no one article for carrying on their operations, it will be a miracle if we keep the country. My only expectation is to secure our retreat to St. Johns, or the *Isle aux Noix*, where it will doubtless be thought necessary to make a stand."* On the same day Washington wrote to Schuyler from New York: "The most vigorous exertions will be necessary to retrieve our circumstances there, and I hope you will strain every nerve for that purpose. Unless it can now be done, Canada will be lost forever." To which Schuyler, more hopeful than all, replied: "I assure you, my dear sir, that I do all in my power to forward and arrange matters. Such a variety of business comes upon me that I hardly know which to take in hand first. A steady perseverance will, however, I hope, carry me through, and if I can find time, I will repair to Canada, though I hope and believe that General Sullivan will put our affairs in good order, seconded by Generals Arnold and Thompson, who are indefatigable."† Sullivan, brave, sanguine, but as yet inexperienced, had written cheerily when he took command at the Sorel, on the 5th of June: "In a few days I can reduce the army to order and put a new face upon our affairs here."

Schuyler had, indeed, a "great variety of business," and could not well go into Canada. He was ably assisted,

* Autograph Letter, June 7, 1776.

† Schuyler's MS. Letter Books.

however, by Richard Varick (afterward mayor of the city of New York), a captain in McDougal's regiment, and then the General's aid-de-camp and secretary, who remained in Albany, and to whom Schuyler delegated large powers to act in his absence.* Also by Walter Livingston, the Deputy Quartermaster-General, whose head-quarters were in Albany, and the energetic Colonel Peter Gansevoort, at Fort George. But his attention was continually directed to various points within his command, and he gave his personal attention at several of these. He had just hastened from Fort George to Albany, because of alarming letters concerning the attitude of the Indians in Western New York; and Congress had just made another spasmodic movement in relation to Canada. At the moment when Arnold was contemplating the best means for securing a retreat for the little army left in his charge on the death of Thomas, and the Commissioners, having given up all as lost, were packing their trunks for a homeward journey, Congress resolved to employ six thousand militia "to reinforce the army in Canada, and to keep up the communication with that province," and called upon Massachusetts to furnish one-half the number, Connecticut one-quarter, and New Hampshire and New York seven hundred and fifty each.† They also resolved to employ two thousand Indians as soldiers.

* "All letters that you may receive from Congress, General Washington, any of the commanders-in-chief of any colony, or any military officer, you are to open, and if they contain any orders or matters respecting affairs at Albany, or to the northward, you will send extracts to the persons who should be advised thereof, observing that you do it by my orders. Any letters from officers in the Northern Department you will also open, and comply with any requisitions you may judge that I would accede to."—*Autograph Letter of General Schuyler to Captain Richard Varick.*

† Journals of Congress, ii. 187.

Washington transmitted the last resolution to Schuyler, on whom would devolve the task of mustering the savages into service; and evidently yet averse to employing them, notwithstanding they were becoming powerful auxiliaries of the enemy, he expressed a hope that no more would be so embodied than were necessary. Schuyler, in reply, significantly asked where the Indians were to be found, and said: "So far from being able to procure two thousand to join us, I shall be extremely happy if we can prevent them from acting against us; and I believe nothing will do it but the spirited measures I have proposed to Congress." Those measures were to hold a conference with the Six Nations at the German Flats; demand an explicit declaration from them as to who were friends and who were enemies to the patriot cause; give them to understand that the latter should feel the heavy hand of power, and that the troops of Congress would immediately take post at Fort Stanwix (now Rome) and build fortifications there—a necessary measure of defence in the event of the British repossessing Canada. Washington perceived the danger, and the wisdom of Schuyler's plan, and immediately directed him and his associate Commissioners of Indian affairs to hold the proposed conference with the Six Nations, without waiting for further orders from Congress. A week later that body gave him similar directions, and expressed their approval of his proposition to take post at Fort Stanwix, and fortify it. The Commissioners appointed the 15th of July as the time for the conference, and sent Mr. Deane to notify the Six Nations.

General Sullivan, being the senior officer in Canada after the death of Thomas, took the command of the army in that province, and advanced with his brigade to the

mouth of the Sorel, on the 5th of June, where he was greeted with great joy by the inhabitants, who, in that particular region, were mostly friendly to the Americans, and consequently feared the resentment of the British if they should repossess the country. He found General Thompson there in temporary command of the army, with only two hundred men, and busily employed in sending off the sick and heavy baggage to be prepared for a retreat. Thompson had been informed at Chamblée that a British force was ascending the St. Lawrence, and that the veteran Colonel McLean had advanced, with about eight hundred regulars and Canadians, as far as the Three Rivers. He hastened to the Sorel and despatched from that place Colonel St. Clair, with nearly seven hundred Pennsylvania and New Jersey troops, with orders to attack that British advanced force if there should seem to be a chance for success. At the same time he wrote to Arnold, at Montreal, to send three hundred Pennsylvanians down to the Sorel from that post; also to Baron de Woedtke, at St. John's, to forward the first regiment that might arrive there.* Arnold paid no attention to the order. Sullivan's arrival was, therefore, timely. "It was really affecting," he wrote to Washington, "to see the banks of the Sorel lined with men, women and children, leaping and clapping their hands with joy to see me arrive."

Contrary to the opinions of others, the sanguine Sullivan believed he could regain the eligible post of Des-

* Autograph Letter of General Thompson, June 3, 1776. "My greatest distress," he said in the same letter to General Schuyler, "is on account of the unhappy situation of the Canadians, who have taken an active part with us. I know not whether I shall long be able to protect them from the vengeance of General Carleton, with which they are threatened. They apprehend the worst and are truly objects of compassion."

chambault, and make it impregnable. He also believed that he could regain all that others had lost. He proceeded to complete the fortifications at the Sorel, and sent General Thompson, with detachments under Colonels Wayne and Irvine, to overtake St. Clair and join him in the attack at Three Rivers. He wrote a most hopeful letter to General Washington, telling him that affairs had taken a strange turn since his recent arrival in the province, and that the Canadians were flocking by hundreds to take part with the Americans. "The only reason of their disaffection," he wrote, "was because our exertions were so feeble that they doubted much of our success, and even our ability to protect them. * * * If General Thompson succeeds at Three Rivers, I will soon remove the [British] ships below Richelieu Falls, and after that approach toward Quebec as fast as possible; and according to present appearance of affairs, we may exceed in number the Hanoverians, et cetera, which we are threatened with. I have no doubt of the general attachment of the Canadians, though I suppose some unprincipled wretches among them will always appear against us; but a vast majority will be for us, and, perhaps, as many, according to their numbers, are really in our favor as in some other colonies upon the continent. Many of them are with General Thompson in this expedition, and great numbers are here, ready equipped, waiting my orders."

Sullivan's letters were the first hopeful ones that Washington and Schuyler had lately received from Canada. They were both acquainted with his temperament, and made many grains of allowance for his enthusiasm, yet they had confidence in his energy, and were gratified at his words of cheer; and they indulged some hope that his expectations might, in a degree, be fulfilled. "Before

your letter came to hand," Washington wrote, "I had almost dreaded to hear from Canada, as my advices seemed to promise nothing favorable, but rather further misfortunes. But I now hope that our affairs, from the confused, distracted, and almost forlorn state in which you found them, will emerge and assume an aspect of order and success."

Schuyler wrote to Sullivan on the 13th of June, acknowledging the receipt of his cheering letters, and saying: "They came in a lucky moment to relieve us from the anxiety we have been thrown into by a letter from General Arnold of the same date (June 6), received two hours before, and which I had just inclosed in one of mine to General Washington, and was on the point of sending off by express, when your comforting letter came to hand. I am extremely happy to find that the chaos and confusion which has reigned so triumphant in our army, to the great disgrace of our arms, are on the point of being expelled, and that good order, with all its beauties and train of never-failing good consequences, is on the point of being established. We already owe you much, my dear general, and hope our debt will daily increase."*

Ignorant of the enemies' force then in Canada, and moving up the St. Lawrence by land and water, in divisions, horse, foot, and artillery, Sullivan's despatches continued to glow with the same encouraging language for a few days longer. He was not, at first, aware that full

* Schuyler's MS. Letter Books. Washington wrote to Schuyler on the 16th of June: "The intelligence contained in General Sullivan's letter is extremely pleasing, and I sincerely wish his most sanguine hopes may be more than answered. If the affection of the Canadians can be engaged, and he seems to have no doubt of it, it will be of much importance, and probably be the means of our retrieving our misfortunes in that quarter."

thirteen thousand troops were then between his little handful of men, sent to attack the advanced guard at Three Rivers, and coveted Quebec. Several regiments had lately arrived from Ireland, one from England, one from Halifax sent by General Howe after his flight from Boston, and a body of German troops under General Riedesel. A greater portion of them were now moving up the St. Lawrence, upon its bosom or along its shores, led by such officers as Lieutenant-General Burgoyne and Brigadier-Generals Riedesel, Phillips and Frazer, whose names afterwards became familiar to the Americans. Carleton was also among the military leaders, and took the occasion to awe the Canadians by very harsh treatment of those who had actively helped the Americans.

Sullivan was so certain of success, that on the 8th, after receiving a despatch from Thompson, saying he had made the attack at Three Rivers at dawn that morning, according to orders, he began a letter to Washington, saying that everything was going on to his satisfaction. "At daylight a heavy cannonading began and lasted until twelve o'clock. It is now near one P. M.; the firing has ceased, except some irregular firing with cannon, at a considerable distance of time, one from the other. At eight o'clock a very heavy firing of small-arms was heard even here, at the distance of forty-five miles. * * * I am almost certain that victory has declared in our favor, as the irregular firing of the cannon, for such a length of time after the small-arms ceased, shows that our men are in possession of the ground." He complained that he could not, as he wished to, "immediately set off to join General Thompson, with De Haas's detachment;" but Arnold, contrary to repeated orders, would not send them to the Sorel, but had ordered them to Chamblée, and had actually abandoned

Montreal and gone towards the latter post with all his force.

The day wore away, and Sullivan evidently began to suspect that there might have been a defeat of his troops instead of a victory for them. He had kept his letter open. "I am anxious to know the event," he continued, "which God grant may be fortunate. However, if our party have been, or should be, defeated, I am determined not to leave Canada, but to make vigilance and industry supply the want of numbers. I am determined to fortify and secure the most important posts and hold them as long as one stone is left upon another."

Alas! the hopes of Sullivan and the expectations raised by his sanguine letters were doomed to bitter disappointment. His troops had suffered a terrible defeat at Three Rivers. At one o'clock in the morning of the 7th, General Thompson and his troops overtook St. Clair's party on the Nicolet, and during that day they all lay in the woods. At dusk they crossed the St. Lawrence, intending to surprise the enemy in their camp at Three Rivers, whom they supposed not to exceed four hundred men. But General Frazer was there with a considerable force, and twenty-five transports filled with troops, which had passed Quebec without landing, had just arrived. These were landing with field-pieces. A Canadian peasant promptly informed Frazer of the approach of the Americans, and the general made immediate dispositions to surround and capture the whole party. At dawn, while Thompson and his force were marching under the bank of the river, they were unexpectedly cannonaded from the ships. The Americans pressed forward through a wooded swamp, and mire knee deep, and after a weary struggle in the slough for four hours, they gained a piece of firm

ground, where Wayne formed his detachment, and attacked and repulsed an advanced party. With great gallantry Thompson's whole force then pressed forward and assailed a breastwork that covered the main body of the British, who were three for one of the Americans in number. The latter were soon compelled to retire. Wayne, with five officers and twenty men, covered the retreat by keeping up a fire for an hour longer, at the edge of a wood which concealed the smallness of the number of his companions. At length Wayne and his compatriots were compelled to fly. Thompson and Irvine, who became separated from the rest, were betrayed by the Canadians, and with about one hundred and fifty of their party were made prisoners. The remainder escaped in consequence, as the British alleged, of blunders and want of alertness on the part of Carleton. Without refreshment of any kind they wandered about in the woods for twenty-four hours, when they found their boats and returned to the Sorel, leaving over two hundred of their companions behind, dead, wounded, missing, and prisoners.

The returned fugitives gave General Sullivan an explanation of the firing on the morning of the attack quite different from his own theory expressed in his letter. That letter he kept open until the 12th, when he finished it with an account of the affair at Three Rivers. "This, my dear general," he said, "is a statement of this unfortunate enterprise. What you will hear next I cannot say. I am every moment informed of the vast number of the enemy which have arrived. * * * I have here only two thousand five hundred and thirty-three, rank and file. Most of the officers seem discouraged, and, of course, their men. I am employed, day and night, in fortifying and securing my camp, and am determined to hold it as long as a person will stick by me."

But the pluck of the general could not resist the force of adverse circumstances. His officers were nearly unanimous in opinion that by a retreat alone could the little broken and wasted army in Canada be saved from total destruction. Arnold had already acted upon such belief without waiting for orders, and had fled from Montreal just in time to escape a strong detachment of the enemy sent up from Three Rivers by Burgoyne.

On the 14th a British fleet under full sail was seen approaching the Sorel. Sullivan immediately broke up his camp and, only an hour before the arrival of the vessels, commenced a retreat towards Chamblée, taking with him every article, even to a spade.* His only losses in the retreat were nine batteaux, left by a guard who fled by land. It was a masterly movement under the circumstances. He was closely followed up the Sorel by Burgoyne, with a heavy force, but eluded him.

Near Chamblée, Sullivan was joined by Arnold and his retreating column, carrying with them parcels suitable for the use of the army, which he had seized at Montreal. He, too, had been closely followed, and the pursuers would also soon join their forces. Chamblée being untenable, the retreat was continued to St. John's. The batteaux, ordnance (except three old and very heavy pieces), arms, baggage, and supplies were taken above the rapids. The gondolas and other vessels below the rapids, and all the woodwork of the fort were destroyed by fire; and all the bridges were torn up behind the fugitives in their rapid march.

At St. John's another council of war was held, when it was unanimously agreed that to attempt to hold that place

* Autograph Letter of General Sullivan to General Schuyler, June 19, 1776.

would inevitably expose the whole army to destruction, because its communication might easily be cut off. To that council Sullivan read the resolves of Congress to send six thousand troops to reinforce the army in Canada. It was the opinion of the council that, in the then state of supplies and unhealthy condition of the troops, such reinforcement would weaken rather than strengthen the cause. It was resolved, after due deliberation, to continue the retreat to Crown Point, on Lake Champlain, and to fortify that post, and there build vessels to secure the navigation of the lake. At the close of the council, the whole army concentrated at St. John's moved southward to Isle aux Noix. Farther than that Sullivan did not feel authorized to go without instructions from Generals Washington or Schuyler. The pursuit was now very languid; and from that island Sullivan wrote to Schuyler, giving him a detailed account of the events here recorded, and requesting him to send copies of his letter to Washington and to Congress.

"I send on the sick," Sullivan wrote, "the looks and numbers of which will present you with the most dismal spectacle ever furnished from one army in this quarter of the globe. I have sent on General Arnold to give directions at Crown Point and receive your orders. The men who are fit for duty I shall retain here ready to execute any orders you will please to communicate. Thus, dear general, I have given you an account of my unfortunate campaign, claiming no merit except in making a safe and regular retreat. Although driven to it by inevitable necessity (as the grand post was lost before my arrival, and put beyond my power to regain), and although it was before an army much more powerful than mine, yet I am sufficiently mortified, and sincerely wish I had never seen this fatal country, unless I had arrived in season to have done some good to my country and answered the expectations of Congress."*

To Washington he wrote: "I am extremely sorry it was not in my power to fulfil your Excellency's wishes."

* Autograph Letter to General Schuyler, June 19, 1776.

After stating the causes of failure, he added: "I think we shall secure all the public stores and baggage of the army, and secure our retreat with very little loss. Whether we shall have well men enough to carry them on I much doubt, if we don't remove quickly; unless Heaven is pleased to restore health to this wretched army, now, perhaps, the most pitiful one that ever was found."

Sullivan's account of that army was a most painful one. When he first arrived at Sorel, he wrote :

"It is a serious truth that our army is extremely weak. Colonel Greaton is with me, without a single man—all under inoculation; Colonel Bond, with all his regiment, in the same situation; Colonel Patterson has six only; Colonel Stark about forty; Colonel Reed's and Colonel Poor's nearly in the same situation."

The sickness increased and whole regiments were disabled afterwards. Three weeks later, writing from Isle aux Noix, he said :

"Since I made the general returns, day before yesterday, I suppose a quarter part have been taken down with the camp disorder. This, however incredible it may seem, is a real fact. For instance, Colonel Wayne had sixty, out of one hundred and thirty-five, taken down since. Colonel De Haas and all his field officers, with a number of his men, are since taken down. This seems to run through the whole, no corps being exempt from it. I am shocked to relate, but much more to see, this dreadful havoc among the troops."

Isle aux Noix was so low and unhealthy that, after sending away the sick, Sullivan moved forward and encamped on Isle la Motte. The voyage to Crown Point was a dreadful one for the poor invalids. They were conveyed in leaky boats, without awnings, and exposed to drenching rain and hot sun. Their only food was raw pork and hard bread, and unbaked flour. "At the sight of so much privation and distress," Dr. Samuel Stringer, the medical director of the Northern Department, who was with them, wrote, "I wept till I had no more power

to weep." And when, early in July, all the fragments of that army were gathered at Crown Point, to which Schuyler had ordered them, the scene of distress was so appalling that it produced almost despair in officers and men. Of the five thousand troops, poorly clad, sheltered, and fed, at that post, full one-half were sick. The northern army had lost by death and desertion, during two months, more than five thousand men.

So ended in disaster that remarkable invasion. It appears as one of the boldest ever conceived, when the circumstances are considered; and the incidents of its execution are among the most startling and romantic in the annals of war. And those annals may be searched in vain for a parallel to the amazing efforts of its commander-in-chief to accomplish the object. Had official coöperation fully responded to his own labors, the task might have been accomplished before the close of 1775. Upon a monument commemorative of that invasion might be justly inscribed—FAILED BECAUSE OF NEGLECT.

A new and healthier state of things now began to appear. The reverses in Canada, early in May, caused Washington to be summoned to Philadelphia to confer with Congress about future military operations. He had already sent to them Horatio Gates, the Adjutant-general of the army, to give them the advantage of his military knowledge and experience, but they more desired a personal conference with the commander-in-chief. He arrived in Philadelphia on the 23d of May, when Congress appointed a committee to confer with him, Gates, and Thomas Mifflin, a Quaker, who had just been commissioned a brigadier in the Continental army. They were to consider "the most speedy and effectual means for supporting the American cause in Canada."

Washington's influence at that conference had a most salutary effect. He furnished Congress with that "military electricity" which General Lee said they lacked. The deliberations of the committee took a wider range than the resolution creating it contemplated. They considered the conduct of the war in all its bearings. Washington impressed upon them the necessity of recognizing the undoubted fact that Great Britain would not offer any terms of reconciliation which the colonies would now accept, and that the quarrel must be settled by the arbitrament of the sword. He persuaded Congress to enlist soldiers for three years instead of a few months or one year, and to offer bounties for new recruits; and he suggested the necessity of delegating large powers to a commission that should have exclusive supervision over military affairs and operations. This led to the important measure of establishing a Board of War, on the 12th of June, composed of John Adams, Benjamin Harrison, Roger Sherman, James Wilson, and Edward Rutledge; Richard Peters was appointed their Secretary. At that time the revealed scheme of the British ministers for the seizure of the country along the line of the Hudson River and Lake Champlain was considered, and plans for the campaign in Canada, and for fortifying New York and the Hudson River, were matured.

On the 17th of May Congress resolved that an experienced general be immediately sent into Canada, to whom large powers were given, such as appointing some of the most important officers, filling up vacancies in the army in Canada, and suspending army officers there till the pleasure of Congress should be known. At the same time, without giving Washington the privilege, which common courtesy entitled him to, of nominating such commander, Con-

gress peremptorily directed him to send General Gates into Canada, to take command of the forces there.

Gates was the special favorite of John Adams, the chairman of the newly-appointed Board of War, and of other New England delegates, who then formed a powerful faction in Congress; and this appointment, following close upon the promotion of Gates to the rank of Major-general, was intended, as subsequent events revealed, to be a step preliminary to his further promotion to commander-in-chief of the Northern Department, in place of General Schuyler. The investing him with such large and independent powers, when he was to be only the commander of that portion of the Northern Army which was in Canada, subject as it had been under Wooster, Thomas and Sullivan to the control of Schuyler as chief, gave reason for the suspicion which the patriot's friends in Congress at once entertained, that the New England delegates intended to have the Northern Army entirely under the control of New England influence, in the person of General Gates.

The new appointment naturally gave umbrage to Sullivan, who aspired to the command of the army in Canada. He had ranked Gates as brigadier, and felt aggrieved by what seemed to be a reflection upon his military character. "I should not have the least objection," he wrote to Schuyler, "to being commanded by General Gates—I have no personal objections to him—and would willingly have served under him, had he, in the first instance, held a commission superior to the one Congress was pleased to honor me with. But this not being the case, and the procedure so strong an implication against my conduct, I must beg leave to quit this department with my family and baggage, as I cannot, with honor, act in future, and shall, as soon as

possible, repair to Congress, and petition for leave to resign my commission.”*

General Schuyler, then at Crown Point, gave Sullivan permission to repair to the head-quarters of Washington, at New York.† Sullivan took a formal leave of his officers on the 12th of July, when they presented to him a most gratifying address, in which his energy, skill, watchfulness and humanity were set forth with the declaration: “It is to you we owe our safety thus far.” It was signed by twenty-seven officers, among whom were the names of Hazen, Stark, Wayne, Antill, Poor, St. Clair, and others who appear conspicuous in the annals of that war.

Schuyler was informed of the appointment of Gates on the 25th of June, the day after the arrival of Arnold at Albany with the sad news of the retreat from Canada. Unsuspicious of the designs of Gates and his friends, Schuyler was prepared to give him a cordial welcome to his Department. He immediately wrote to him, mentioning the fact that the army had left Canada, and urging him to hasten forward with all possible speed, “that we may advise together,” he said, “on the most eligible methods

* Autograph Letter, Crown Point, July 6, 1776.

† In his letter of permission, Schuyler said: “The merits of the reasons which induce you to ask leave of absence from the army, I would not, by any means, wish to enter into. It is, however, a justice I owe you, to declare that your conduct, since the command of the army in Canada devolved upon you, has been perfectly agreeable to me, and that every measure of yours, as far as they have come to my knowledge and am capable of judging, has been conducted with a prudence and discernment that leave your character, as an officer, unimpeached. Although I most sincerely wish you to remain with the army, yet as I wish to evince the utmost tenderness to the feelings of every gentleman who conceives himself injured, I cannot withhold my consent to your waiting on the commander-in-chief, with such gentlemen of your suite as you choose should follow you.”—Schuyler’s MS. Letter Books.

to be pursued to prevent an increase of our misfortunes in this unlucky quarter." In a postscript he wrote: "Be so good as to take a bed with me, that whilst you remain here we may be as much together as possible."

This letter passed Gates on the way. He left New York on the 26th of July, bearing explicit instructions from General Washington. The tenor and phraseology of those instructions, drawn under the direction of Congress, are noteworthy. Gates was thereby empowered to appoint a deputy adjutant-general, a deputy quarter-master-general, a deputy muster-master-general, and such other officers as he should find necessary for the service. He was empowered to fill all vacancies in the army in Canada, and notify the same to Congress for their approbation. He was authorized, until the first of the next October, to suspend any officers and fill up all vacancies, transmitting to Congress such order and suspension with his reasons therefor. He was directed to consult with the Commissary-general, before his departure, about supplies, and also with Colonel Knox about artillery; and on his arrival at Albany to "consult with General Schuyler in regard to the present state of provisions and stores, and fix upon some certain means of forwarding the regular supplies, in future, from that place." At the same time the instructions continued, "endeavor to learn whether supplies heretofore sent have not reached that department, and by what means such failures have happened, that a proper remedy may be provided. From General Schuyler you will also receive such advice and information respecting the operations of the campaign as may be useful and necessary." He was directed to immediately settle all accounts connected with the army in Canada. He was directed to make an accurate return of the troops, artillery, arms, ammunition, provis-

ions and stores which he might find in Canada, and transmit the same directly to Congress, and to Washington once a fortnight.

It will be seen by these instructions that General Gates was invested with a separate and independent command of the army "in Canada," and was to have Schuyler's advice and coöperation, but not be under his control while in such command "in Canada." With these instructions he arrived in Albany, and was cordially received by General Schuyler, and from him first learned, officially, that the army he was sent to command were out of Canada and his "occupation gone."

Gates was disappointed, but not disheartened. He had powerful friends in Congress, and he knew how earnestly they desired to have him in command of the Northern Department. He gave the broadest construction to his commission and the instructions of the commander-in-chief, and claimed that he had supreme control, under Congress, of the army lately in Canada, wherever it might be, and consequently was now the military head of the Northern Department. Without consulting Schuyler, he proceeded to act upon this assumption, by appointing subordinate officers. The matter was first brought to the General's notice, excepting in the form of rumor, when, on the 30th of June, two days after his arrival in Albany, Gates introduced to him a Mr. Avery, of Massachusetts, whom he had brought from New York, and who formally applied to Schuyler for money to carry on the Commissary-general's department, in Albany. Schuyler asked him for his authority, when he produced a commission from the Commissary-general, Joseph Trumbull, at New York, appointing him deputy commissary "in Canada." Schuyler remarked that his commission by no means superseded

that of Walter Livingston, the deputy commissary of the Northern Department. Avery declared that it was Trumbull's intention that he (Avery) should have sole management, and that Livingston was to be considered only as a contractor. Schuyler sent for Livingston, who showed him a letter from Trumbull dated only five days before, which flatly contradicted the assertion of Avery; whereupon Schuyler informed the latter that if he remained in the army, provided it was not in Canada, he must obey the orders of Livingston, whom he should try to keep in the office, because of his faithfulness and efficiency.* "His great family connections in this country," Schuyler said, "have enabled him to carry on the service, when others could not have done it;" and he gave instances. General Gates, who was present, acquiesced in the propriety of Schuyler's remarks, and he and Avery departed together. So soon as they had left Schuyler's presence, Gates told Avery that when he came to the army he would employ him as commissary.† The remark was

* The attention of Congress was called to the subject of the powers of the Commissary-general, in the matter of the appointment of deputies, and on the 8th of July they resolved that he should "appoint and employ such persons under him, and to remove any deputy commissary, as he shall judge proper and expedient," in any department.

† Gates did so. Avery acted under his commission from Trumbull, and refused to acknowledge Livingston, the senior officer in the Commissary Department of the Northern Army, as his superior. This gave much trouble. Finally Avery refused to make returns of provisions to Livingston, and disobeyed a positive order of General Schuyler; whereupon the latter laid the matter, in a letter, before Trumbull. The latter, with petulance, replied in an insulting manner, saying: "Sir, I have received your letter respecting Mr. Avery. I have directed him to withdraw from Ticonderoga immediately. I find he nor any other person can have anything to do in the Commissary Department in the Northern District, without a continual clashing with Mr. Livingston; and that he is supported by the commander-in-chief, therefore all must give way to him. Mr. Yancey will also withdraw.

overheard and immediately conveyed to Schuyler. He was surprised, for Gates knew that the army was not in Canada. The conviction flashed upon him that he had a rival in the Department, and he determined to have the question of a disputed command, which must evidently be raised, settled at once and definitely. He sent for Gates, when a conversation occurred in the presence of Walter Livingston, notes of which were made by General Schuyler, at the time, in the following manner :

“ General Gates observed that Mr. Lewis [whom he had appointed deputy quarter-master-general in place of Colonel Campbell, then in the service, and who had gone to Philadelphia to settle his accounts] had intimated to him, as what he had from Colonel Trumbull [the Commissary-general], that he might as well return to New York, as General Gates could not provide for him agreeably to expectations, because, the army having quitted Canada, it was now under the command of General Schuyler. General Gates declared that Colonel Campbell, deputy quarter-master-general, being ordered to Congress to settle his accounts, he should appoint Mr. Lewis.* General Schuyler answered : “ If Colonel Campbell quitted the department he would willingly appoint any person General Gates thought proper, but that the army being now out of Canada, he conceived that it was under his (Schuyler’s) command, and that he could suffer no appointment to be made by General Gates.

“ General Gates conceived the contrary, upon which General Schuyler, observing that he meant to be clear and explicit in a point of much importance, declared that he conceived the army to be altogether under his [Schuyler’s] command when on this side of Canada, subject, however, to the control of General Washington. That in his absence, General Gates would command the army in the same manner as General Sullivan did now, and only as eldest officer, who acknowledged

This I have noticed to Mr. Livingston, that he may take care accordingly. I never intended Mr. Avery should be subordinate to Mr. Livingston.”—Autograph Letter, September 5, 1776.

Schuyler’s reply was courteous and conciliatory, and no serious difficulty ensued.

* Morgan Lewis, then twenty-two years of age, who was afterward a Colonel in the service, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New York, and major-general in the war of 1812. Young Lewis was appointed by Congress, in September, 1776, deputy quarter-master-general in the Northern Department.

that General Schuyler's commands were binding on him, which he instanced in General Sullivan's last letter, and pointedly observed that if he was with the army (which he always would be whenever his health, or other indispensable public business, did not call him from it), and ordered it to move from one place to another, that he expected to be obeyed. That, upon any sudden emergency, the officer commanding the army had a right to exercise his judgment and take measures accordingly, for which he was, however, obnoxious to the censure or praise of the commander of the Department. That if Congress meant General Gates should command the army in this Department, and would resolve so, that he should most readily acquiesce, but that they could not after that imagine he would remain in it; that they had certainly a right to make what arrangements they thought proper; that he was a creature of theirs and they had a right to remove him whenever they pleased, but that they could not put him under the command of a younger officer, nor oblige him to be a suicide and stab his own honor; that he frankly confessed General Gates' superior military qualifications; that he would always advise with him and his other generals, and that if he was superseded, it would give him great pleasure to be superseded by a gentleman of General Gates' character and reputation.

"Both General Gates and General Schuyler declared they would lay the matter before Congress to prevent any evil consequences from a disputed command, in a critical moment; that for the present they would coöperate that no evil might result to the service, and that each should write to Congress to determine the matter."*

Schuyler wrote to Washington the next day, giving in detail the facts concerning this matter, and after reading his letter to Gates, wrote at the bottom of the minutes above given: "General Gates having read General Schuyler's letter to his Excellency, General Washington, agreed that the matter was fairly and fully stated, and therefore declined writing."†

"If Congress," Schuyler further remarked, "intended that General Gates should command the Northern Army, wherever it may be, as he assures me they did, it ought to have been signified to me, and I should then have immediately resigned the command to him; but until such intention is properly conveyed to me, I never can. I must therefore entreat your Excellency to lay this letter before Congress, that they may clearly and explicitly signify their intentions, to avert the dangers and evils that may arise from a disputed command; for,

* Schuyler's Autograph Notes of the Conversation. † *Ibid.*

after what General Gates has said, the line must be clearly drawn. as I shall, until then, stand upon punctilios with General Gates, that I would otherwise with pleasure waive; but that the service may not be retarded, nor suffer the least from a difference of opinion between General Gates and me, I have determined to remain here, although I had, before this affair came to light, mentioned to him my intentions of going up with him.”*

Washington sent General Schuyler’s letter to Congress, and on the 8th of July that body

“*Resolved*: That Major-general Gates be informed that it was the intention of Congress to give him command of the troops while in Canada, but that they had no design to invest him with a superior command to General Schuyler, while the troops should be on this side Canada; and that the President write to Major-general Schuyler, and Major-general Gates, stating this matter, and recommending to them to carry on the military operations with harmony, and in such manner as shall best promote the public service.”

A copy of the resolution was sent to Washington.

This action, and the politic course pursued by General Gates, quieted Schuyler’s apprehensions, and on the 17th of July he wrote from the German Flats to the President of Congress, saying:

“When gentlemen act with candor to each other, a difference in opinion will seldom be attended with any disagreeable consequences. I am happy, Sir, that I can assure you that the most perfect good understanding subsists between General Gates and me, insomuch that it gave him pain that I was under the necessity of quitting the army to repair here at this critical juncture. You will please to assure Congress that I am deeply impressed with the necessity of mutual confidence among all its officers, and that I shall never neglect any measure that may have a tendency to so desirable an end. I have seen, with the deepest affliction, the unhappy jealousy which reigned in the Northern Army, occasioned by Colonial distinctions—distinctions both injurious to the cause of America and disgraceful to the authors of them. I have pointed out to the several Colonels and commanding officers of corps, in language as pointed as I could, the pernicious consequences of such a fatal dissension, and I hope it will be soon eradicated.”

To Washington Schuyler wrote on the same day, saying: “Your Excellency’s favor of the 11th instant was

* Schuyler’s MS. Letter Books.

delivered me this morning, with the sundry papers mentioned in it. It gives me a very sincere, and a heartfelt pleasure that I can declare that the difference in opinion between General Gates and me has been simply such, unattended with that little jealousy which would have reflected disgrace upon both. Be assured, Sir, that the most perfect harmony subsists between us, and that I shall, by every attention to General Gates, strictly cultivate it, as well to increase my own felicity as to promote the public service."

So was quieted a movement on the part of the New England delegates for depriving Schuyler of the command of the Northern Department, and giving it to General Gates. It only slumbered. Commissary Trumbull wrote to Gates: "I find you are in a cursed situation; your authority at an end; and commanded by a person who will be willing to have you knocked in the head, as General Montgomery was, if he can have the money chest in his power." Governor Trumbull, the father of the commissary, wrote to William Williams: "It is justly to be expected that General Gates is discontented with his situation, finding himself limited and removed from the command, to be a wretched spectator of the ruin of the army, without power of attempting to save them." And late in August, Elbridge Gerry, of the New England delegation, wrote to Gates: "We want very much to see you with the sole command in the Northern Department, but hope you will not relinquish your exertions until a favorable opportunity shall effect it." At the same time Schuyler's public and private enemies were industriously circulating the most absurd and scandalous falsehoods concerning him, while Congress refused to comply with his repeated request for a court of inquiry.

“I find the jealousies with respect to me,” Schuyler wrote to Gates on his return from an Indian conference of some weeks, late in August, “have not yet subsided in the country. I am informed that some Committees at the eastward, in this, and the adjacent States, are trying me. I wish Congress may at last comply with my entreaties, and order an inquiry on the many charges made against me, that I may not any longer be insulted. I assure you that I am sincerely tired of abuse, that I will let my enemies arrive at the completion of their wishes, by retiring as soon as I shall have been tried, and attempt to serve my injured country in some other way, where envy and detraction have no temptation to follow me.”*

Quite different was the treatment which Schuyler received at the hands of other members of Congress, who knew him far better than did these New England politicians. The Commissioners who went to Canada in the spring of 1776, and who saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears what noble and notable services he had performed, and was continuing to perform, had been disturbed by the evident intrigues of Gates, and they rebuked him for his expressed suspicion of Schuyler, and his evidently unkind feelings toward him. So early as the 14th of June, Charles Carroll wrote to Gates, begging that his suspicions might not prejudice him against Schuyler, for he was confident he was “an active and deserving officer;” and Samuel Chase, another Commissioner, in a letter to Gates of the same date, recommended him to place “the most unreserved and unlimited confidence in Schuyler. Be assured, Sir, of his integrity, diligence, abilities, and address.” But all these things passed

* Schuyler's MS. Letter Books.

for nought in the mind of Gates, and of his friends who were bent on putting him in the place of General Schuyler. With utter duplicity did Gates receive all the marks of generous kindness which Schuyler bestowed upon him for several months, until his schemes ripened into full fruit in the spring of 1777, as we shall observe hereafter.