

## CHAPTER XII.

It was late in July when Burgoyne again moved southward. Carleton, pleading his instructions to remain in Canada, refused to comply with Burgoyne's request for him to hold Ticonderoga with a part of the troops left with him in the province, and the latter was compelled to furnish a garrison from his own army. His supplies of provisions came in slowly; his wagons, made of green wood, were not very serviceable, and not more than one-third of the horses he had contracted for in Canada were brought to him in good condition. His savages plagued him not a little. In a letter to Lord George Germaine, he wrote: "Were the Indians left to themselves, enormities too horrid to think of would ensue; guilty and innocent, women and infants, would be a common prey." Yet he kept them as a terror to the Americans, but they knew them too well to be much afraid of them; and he promised to send them toward "Connecticut and Boston," after his arrival at Albany.

After debating for nearly a fortnight, what he should do next, Burgoyne moved directly upon Fort Edward from Skenesborough, by the way of Fort Anne, through a thickly wooded country furrowed by many a running stream and made difficult even for light travellers, on account of numerous morasses. The journey was made tenfold more difficult by Schuyler, who had caused trees to be cut down and cast into the navigable waters of Wood Creek; the

roads between Fort Anne and Fort Edward, as we have observed, to be broken up; the cattle to be driven beyond the reach of the invaders, and all the forage to be destroyed. In proper time he drew the garrison from Fort George, who left it in flames,\* and counted upon them as valuable accessories to his force.

\* Washington's ears were now continually assailed by cavillings concerning the mismanagement of affairs in the Northern Department, and every art was tried to weaken if not destroy his faith in General Schuyler. Gates had lately been ordered by Congress to leave Philadelphia, go to head-quarters, and follow the directions of Washington [Journals of Congress, iii. 224.]; and his voice was loudest and most authoritative on the subject. The Commander-in-chief was told, when Schuyler first mentioned the evacuation, that it would be a great blunder; that it was "extremely defensible," and very important; that a spirited and judicious officer with two or three hundred good men, together with the armed vessels on Lake George, would retard Burgoyne's passage up that lake for a considerable time, if not render it impracticable, and oblige him to make a much more difficult and circuitous route. Washington listened to these suggestions, and mentioned them to Schuyler, saying: "I only mean to submit it to your consideration, hoping that whatever is best will be pursued, in this as in every other instance." To this Schuyler replied: "If these gentlemen ever were at Lake George, the most favorable supposition I can make of their extraordinary assertions is that they were blind, or that it is so long ago, that the size of the Fort, its situation, and every other circumstance is eradicated from their memories. The fort was part of an unfinished Bastion of an intended fortification. This Bastion was closed at the gorge. In it was a barrack capable of containing between thirty and fifty men; without ditch, without well, without cistern, without any picket to prevent the enemy running over the wall; so small as not to contain above one hundred and fifty men; commanded by ground greatly overlooking it, and within point-blank shot, and so situated that five hundred men may lie between the Bastion and the lake without being seen from this *extremely defensible* Fortress. Of the vessels built there, one was afloat and tolerably fitted, and the others still upon the stocks, but if the two had been upon the water they would have been of little use, without rigging or guns."

Schuyler desired Washington to send a copy of his observations on this point to Congress, but the chief said: "There will be no occasion. The gentlemen who mentioned the holding of the post, had taken up the idea that it was defensible with the assistance of the vessels on



“Strengthened by that garrison, who are in good health,” he wrote to Washington, “and if the militia who are here, or an equal number, can be prevailed on to stay, and the enemy give me a few days more, which I think they will be obliged to do, I shall not be apprehensive that they will be able to force the posts I am about to occupy.” But the militia could not be prevailed upon to stay. They were impatient of being kept there in the time of their harvest, and many left and went home.

Washington often gave Schuyler words of cheer, as well as of caution, at this critical juncture. He had the most unbounded confidence in Schuyler’s judgment and patriotism. “I trust,” he wrote to him on the 22d of July, “General Burgoyne’s army will meet, sooner or later, an effectual check, and, as I suggested before, that the success he has will precipitate his ruin. From your accounts, he appears to be pursuing that line of conduct which, of all others, is most favorable to us; I mean acting in detachment. This conduct will certainly give room for enterprise on our part, and expose his parties to great hazard. Could we be so happy as to cut one of them off, supposing it should not exceed four, or five, or six hundred men, it would inspirit the people, and do away with much of their present anxiety. In such an event they would lose sight of present misfortunes, and, urged at the same time by a regard for their own security, they would fly to arms, and

the Lake, which were supposed to be better equipped; and what gave countenance to the idea was, that the bastion was erected under the direction of British engineers, and was intended as a part of a very large, strong and extensive work. I thought it expedient to submit the matter to your further consideration, wishing you at the same time to pursue such measures respecting it as your judgment should advise and direct.”

afford every aid in their power." He urged the importance of bringing the people of the country exposed, to view things in their proper light, and to impress them with some of the fatal consequences that would result to themselves and families from their taking part against their country. He urged the necessity of counteracting Burgoyne's schemes for winning the people to the side of the crown by threats and promises, and to keep them steady in their attachment. "You have already given your attention to this matter," he said, "and I am persuaded you will omit nothing in your power to effect these great and essential points ;" and he commended his measure of bringing away the cattle and stopping the roads. He closed by *warning* Schuyler against putting too much confidence in intrenchments he was then erecting at Moses' Creek. "I begin to consider lines," he said, "as a kind of trap, and as not answering the valuable purposes expected from them, unless they are in passes that cannot be avoided by an enemy."

Schuyler's friends now began to tell him what his personal enemies were doing. John Jay wrote to him from the Council of Safety, sitting at Kingston, on the 21st of July, repeating to him the injurious assertions and absurd rumors about his being privy to the evacuation of Ticonderoga, already alluded to. "In one of your letters to the Council," he said, "was this sentiment—'you wished the evacuation might not be too much depreciated,' and your reasons for this caution may have weight, but, sir, a certain gentleman at that board, whom I need not name, and from whom I do not desire this information should be concealed, is, in my opinion, your secret enemy. He professes much respect, etc., for you ;



he cannot see through the business; he wishes you had been nearer to the fort, tho' he does not doubt your spirit. He thinks we ought to suspend our judgment, and not censure you rashly; he hopes you will be able to justify yourself, etc., etc. Observe so much caution, therefore, in your letters, as to let them contain nothing which your enemies may wrest to their own purposes." To these remarks, as to all others of a similar import, Schuyler expressed his thankfulness that such enemies could do him no real harm, for he had it in his power to fully vindicate his character.

In a letter written by Jay, from the same place, on the 26th of July, in reply to one from Schuyler, written on the 24th, in which he expressed his determination to call for a court of inquiry, that gentleman said:

"This attack on your reputation will, I hope, do you only a temporary injury. The honest, tho' credulous multitude, when undeceived, will regret their giving way to suspicions which have led them to do you injustice. I have no reason to suspect that the Council of Safety believe Ticonderoga was left by your direction or advice, or with your knowledge. They appear fully satisfied to the contrary."

He advised Schuyler to wait patiently the course of events.

"The evacuation of Ticonderoga," he said, "will naturally bring about an inquiry. The country will not be satisfied without it. You will then have a fair opportunity for vindicating your conduct."

William Duer, in a letter written from the hall of Congress, on the 29th of July, said:

"Your enemies in this quarter are leaving no means unessayed to blast your character, and to impute to your appointment in that department a loss which, when rightly investigated, can be imputed to very different causes. The friends of truth find it an extreme difficulty to stem the torrent of calumny.

"Be not surprised if you should be desired to attend Congress, to give an account of the loss of Ticonderoga. With respect to the result of an inquiry, I am under no apprehensions. Like gold tried in the fire, I trust that you, my dear friend, may be found more pure and

bright than ever. There is but one thing for you to do to establish your character on such a basis that even suspicion itself shall be silent, and, in doing this, you will, I am conscious, follow the impulse of your own heart. From the nature of your department, and other unavoidable causes, you have not, during the course of this war, had an opportunity of evincing that spirit which *I* and your more intimate friends know you to possess. Of this circumstance prejudice takes a cruel advantage, and malice lends an easy ear to her dictates. A hint on this subject is sufficient. You will not, I am sure, see this place till your conduct gives the lie to this insinuation, as it has done before to every other which your enemies have so industriously circulated."

Schuyler took no public notice of these assaults upon his character, but went forward cheeringly and untiringly in the performance of his duties, satisfied that at the proper time he could fully vindicate his conduct. St. Clair, with that truth and manliness which always characterized him, assumed the whole responsibility of the act of evacuating Ticonderoga, and the general officers who formed his council which decided to do so, insisted, in a letter to General Schuyler, on declaring that if the evacuation of that post was a reprehensible measure, they only were guilty.

This seemed to be a sufficient defence for General Schuyler against the chief accusations of his enemies, but it did not silence their slanders. "Since it has been discovered," he wrote to Washington, "that I gave no orders for evacuating Ticonderoga, and that I could not be attacked with success on that head, they propagate that I, at least, connived at it, with full as little truth as the other. I wish there was less calumniation, and more vigor. I wish the regiments to the northward had been complete, or, at least, something more so than they are. I wish one-third of them had not been little boys and negroes—perhaps the disasters we have experienced would not have happened, or, if happened, they would have been less fatal. I will, however, go on, smiling with contempt on



the malice of my enemies, doing my duty, and attempting to deserve your esteem, which will console me for the abuse that thousands may unjustly throw out against me.”

But Schuyler soon began to feel the effects of the slanders of his enemies so industriously circulated, in the growing indifference of the people, and the independence, and even insubordination, of the Eastern militia. It was therefore a great relief to his mind when he received a letter from Washington, written at Ramapo, on the 24th of July, telling him that he had ordered General Lincoln to repair to his Department and take charge of that militia. It was New England men, in and out of Congress, who were most assiduous in striving to weaken his influence and compel him to leave the command of the Northern Department to another; and among all the leaders of public sentiment in that section during this fearful crisis, only that magnificent old patriot, Governor Jonathan Trumbull, seems to have stood by Schuyler, and believed in his ability and fidelity. The two patriots were constantly in friendly official communication; and while the Governor's son, the Commissary-general, was one of the foremost in the faction against Schuyler, the Governor himself was foremost among his friends.

Congress, at this juncture, appears to have paid very little attention to the repeated and urgent appeals from Schuyler for reinforcements. During the whole of that eventful month of July their journals afford no evidence that anything was attempted for the benefit of the Northern Department, excepting the passage of a resolution on the 7th (before they had heard of the evacuation of Ticonderoga), by which the president was directed to write to the Council of Safety of New York, informing them of

the distress which the troops were in at Ticonderoga for want of blankets, and requesting them to send to that garrison one thousand five hundred, at the expense of Congress; and the assurance of President Hancock, given in a letter to Schuyler, on the 14th, that Congress had strongly recommended to the State of New York and to the Eastern States to send such reinforcements of militia to his assistance, and to the assistance of General Washington, as might from time to time be requested. But the reinforcements did not come, and many of the militia already in camp were so discontented and almost mutinous, that he felt compelled to allow about one-half of them to return home, that he might keep the remainder for a short time. This condition of things was most discouraging, yet Schuyler kept a cheerful and hopeful heart, and sent out words of encouragement everywhere, excepting to the Commander-in-chief and the Council of Safety of the State of New York, who were entitled to a knowledge of the actual state of affairs at that juncture. To them he unburdened himself freely; and to that Council of Safety he laid bare the true condition of his situation, in the following letter, written on the 24th of July:

— “It is with great pain that I am under the disagreeable necessity of advising you that our affairs in this quarter daily put on a more gloomy aspect. It was evident that if we had not consented to suffer part of the militia to return to their habitations, in all probability we should have lost the whole. It was therefore resolved in full council of general officers that half should be permitted to leave us, provided the others would remain three weeks. These conditions were accepted by them, and one thousand and forty-six, officers included, of the militia of this State remained; but not above three hundred out of twelve of those from the County of Berkshire, in the State of Massachusetts, and out of about five hundred from the County of Hampshire, in the same State, only twenty-nine commissioned and non-commissioned officers, and thirty-four privates are left, the remainder having infamously deserted, and out of one hundred from Connecticut,



who had, like those from Hampshire, just arrived here, very few, if any, remain, and part of that half which remained from this State, so that we have not now above thirteen hundred militia on the ground. I wish we had the most distant prospect to detain one-half of these above five or six days. Our Continental force is between twenty-seven and twenty-eight hundred. With this small body we have to encounter a much more numerous body of enemy, well appointed, flushed with success and daily increasing by the acquisition of Tories. Happy I should still be, in some degree, if I could close the melancholy tale here; but every letter I receive from the County of Tryon advises me that the inhabitants of it will lay down their arms unless I support them with Continental troops. From what I have said, you will see the impossibility of my complying with their request. The district of Schoharie has also pointedly intimated that unless Continental troops are sent them, they will also submit to the enemy. Should it be asked what line of conduct I mean to hold amidst this variety of difficulties and distress, I would answer, to dispute every inch of ground with General Burgoyne, and retard his descent into the country as long as possible, without the least hopes of being able to prevent it, ultimately, unless I am reinforced from General Washington, or by a respectable body of militia. The former, I am advised, I am not to have, and where to procure the latter I know not. I have written to the Eastern States but do not expect timely succors from thence. I must therefore look up to you, but tho' I am under the fullest conviction that you will readily afford me every aid in your power, yet, I fear, it cannot be much. In this situation, you will please permit me to observe, that I think the Council of Safety ought to press General Washington for an immediate reinforcement of, at least, fifteen hundred good Continental troops. Those from our own State, if possible. If not, from any of the Southern Colonies. One thousand to reinforce me and the remainder to be sent into Tryon County. That the most immediate and pressing application should be made by you to the Eastern States (Connecticut in particular, from which we have not had above one hundred) for a respectable body of militia. That part of what militia may come from thence be also sent into Tryon County and part here. That the greatest number possible of the militia of this State should be sent both ways, and that it should be in the strongest terms recommended to the gentlemen of easy fortune to turn out. It is not only mortifying but extremely discouraging to the poorer class, and prejudicial to the public, to see so few men of note step forth, when their country is in danger.

“ I may seem to labor under ideal apprehensions. I believe they are not so; they are founded on a reflection that if General Burgoyne can penetrate to Albany, the force which is certainly coming by the way of Oswego will find no difficulty in reaching the Mohawk river;

that being arrived there they will be joined, not by Tories only, but by every person that finds himself incapable of removing and wishes to make his peace with the enemy, and the whole body of the Six Nations. These forming a junction with Burgoyne at Albany, whilst General Howe presses up the river, it will either put General Washington between two fires or drive him into the necessity of filing off into New England. These, sir, are my conjectures. I sincerely wish they may never be realized, altho' I cannot think they are ill founded. I have thus ventured freely to give my sentiments. I hope they will not be thought to arise from a principle which would disgrace a soldier. I assure you they do not, and I hope my countrymen will never have occasion to blush for me, whatever may be the event of the campaign."

In this situation he appealed again to Washington for reinforcements from below. After telling him, in substance, what he had told the Committee of Safety of the State of New York, he said: "As the Continental troops are so few in this quarter, I leave your Excellency to reflect on what will be the consequence if a superior body of troops, well disciplined, flushed with victory, daily augmenting with Tories, with plenty of military stores, attacks the few naked, dispirited, ill-provided troops under my command, without cannon, for if even ten pieces of artillery should arrive in time, they will be of very little use to us without artillerists. The enemy will be with us in a few days."

On receiving this letter, Washington wrote to Schuyler, expressing his surprise that so few militia had joined him, and his regret that he had been compelled to dismiss any of them already there. "I hope, however," he said, "that your situation will soon be far more respectable; as I cannot but think the Eastern States, which are so intimately concerned in the matter, will exert themselves to throw in effectual succors to enable you to check the progress of the enemy, and repel a danger with which they are so immediately threatened."



In the same letter, he informed him that he had ordered General Lincoln to repair to his department immediately. He spoke of him in high terms, and as one so popular in Massachusetts that his influence over the militia from the East would be very advantageous.

This letter was followed by an order to General Glover to go up to Peekskill with his brigade, to the aid of Schuyler. That order was scarcely given when the riddle of Howe's movements was partially solved by an intercepted letter, written by him to General Burgoyne, which was sent to Washington by General Putnam. It was dated the 20th of July, and told Burgoyne that Boston, instead of up the North River, was his destination, and that he was making feigned demonstrations to the southward. It was so evident that the letter was intended to be intercepted, as it was sent out of New York in the care of a young American prisoner, who, he said, had been offered a heavy reward for carrying it to Burgoyne, that Washington at once interpreted it as an evidence that Howe's "demonstrations southward" were real, and that he intended to attack Philadelphia.

This interpretation was correct, for a few days later Washington wrote to Governor Trumbull, who had urged him to send reinforcements to Schuyler, from Peekskill: "No more can be detached from thence to the northern army, than have already gone. Two brigades, Nixon's and Glover's, have been ordered from thence to their aid. Not a man more can go, as all the Continental troops at that post, excepting two thousand, are called to join this army, for I am to inform you that General Howe's object and operations no longer remain a secret. At half after nine o'clock this morning I received an express from Con-

gress, advising that the enemy's fleet, consisting of two hundred and twenty-eight sail, were at the Capes of the Delaware yesterday in the forenoon. This being the case, there can be no doubt but he will make a vigorous push to possess Philadelphia, and we should collect all the forces we can to oppose him."