

CHAPTER XXI.

WE have observed that General Fraser died on the morning of the 8th of October. Madame the Baroness de Riedesel has left, in her journal, a vivid picture of the scene, from the time when he was brought, wounded, to her place of abode, until the close of the funeral ceremonies at his burial. She also gives a spirited narrative of the sufferings and trials of Lady Harriet Ackland, who was in a tent not far from the house wherein Fraser died, and who, at about the time when that officer was brought in, heard of the wounding and captivity of her husband. To that narrative the reader is referred for details. I will only note here that, as Major Ackland was not included in the capitulation at Saratoga, he and his wife went from New York to England, so soon as he was able to travel. On their way down, they were hospitably entertained by General Schuyler and his family, at Albany.

The body of General Fraser was conveyed, at twilight, to his chosen place of sepulture, on a hill not far from the place of his death. It was followed by the faithful chaplain of the artillery, Mr. Brudenell, and the generals and their military families. In the dim light, the gathering upon the hill appeared to the Americans like a hostile movement, and they opened a cannonade upon the funeral party, but so soon as they were informed of the solemn occasion they fired minute-guns instead, in honor of the fallen brave soldier.

That funeral, alone, had detained Burgoyne, for he found a retreat to be a stern necessity. He was equally liable to be attacked in front, flank and rear. These perils gave precipitation to his flight, and he abandoned his hospital, with three hundred sick and wounded in it, and several batteaux laden with baggage and provisions, and, in a pouring rain, made a dismal retreat with half-famished horses and dispirited men. The night was so dark, and the rain was so incessant, that the royal army did not reach Saratoga until the evening of the 9th. They continually suffered annoying and exasperating attacks from the Americans, on the march, and they found a party of them in their front, casting up intrenchments on the heights of Saratoga. These fled across the river, and joined General Fellows, on the eastern side of the stream.

When the retreating troops reached the Fish Kill, they found the bridge had been destroyed. They were too much exhausted to move farther, and cast themselves down upon the wet ground, without strength to build fires. They slept soundly for several hours, and at dawn on the 10th the entire fugitive army had crossed the Fish Kill, and taken position upon the intrenched heights north of it. The storm had ceased, but the atmosphere was laden with dense volumes of lurid smoke and flame of burning houses and other buildings, which had been fired by Burgoyne's orders, on the south side of the stream, to prevent the troops being attacked while fording it. Among other buildings destroyed was the fine country mansion of General Schuyler, together with his barn, mills, storehouses, granaries, and other buildings. Burgoyne, on the floor of the British Parliament, afterward said that the value of the property of General Schuyler, then destroyed by him,

was ten thousand pounds sterling, or fifty thousand dollars. "No part of your buildings have escaped their malice," Colonel Varick wrote to General Schuyler, on the 12th, "except the necessary and your upper saw-mill, which is in the same situation we left it. Hardly a vestige of the fences is left, except a few rails of the garden." All of his grain, and hay and farming implements were destroyed, and the only subsistence for cattle was good grass in the mown meadows. "Colonel Hay told me," Varick wrote to Schuyler on the 13th, "that of the one thousand barrels of pork, not above fifty were to be found—all is robbed and plundered." This wanton destruction was condemned by everybody, but Burgoyne attempted to palliate his offence by pleading the laws of self-preservation.

The main army of Gates moved northward, too, and on the afternoon of the day (10th October) when Burgoyne crossed the Fish Creek, or Kill, they reached the high ridge on the south side of that stream. The two armies were within the sound of each other's music, and the boats with the baggage and provisions of Burgoyne were at the mouth of the creek, from which fatigue-parties commenced carrying supplies to the British camp. General Fellows, whose brigade was posted on the hills eastward of the Hudson, opened a cannonade upon them. His batteries also commanded the ford of the river, over which Burgoyne intended to cross, and retreat to Fort Edward, and the perplexed general was forced to contemplate some other route for his flight. His camp was threatened with famine because of the difficulty and danger of taking food to it from the river under the guns of the Americans. His pride of opinion was compelled to give way under the force of necessity, and he was ready to lend a willing ear to the suggestions of others.

He called in Generals Phillips and Riedesel for consultation. The conference was held on the evening of the 11th. Riedesel proposed to leave the baggage behind, and, retreating up the west side of the Hudson, cross it four miles above Fort Edward (at which place they were informed a detachment of Americans were throwing up a redoubt to dispute their passage), and make their way to Fort George, and so on to Canada. Burgoyne could not make up his mind, but the next day (the 12th), perceiving a web of great difficulties a-weaving around him, he called a council of war, which was composed of himself and Generals Phillips, Riedesel, Hamilton and Gall.

Riedesel renewed his proposition for a retreat to Fort George by night, leaving their artillery and baggage behind. This was accepted, and the plan was ordered to be executed with the greatest secrecy. Rations for six days (all they had left) were distributed, but that night the order was countermanded, for a retreat had become impossible. Word had reached the British commander that the Americans had intrenchments that commanded the fords above. In fact the American army, increased by militia and volunteers that flocked in from all quarters, had now extended itself, in strong positions, in a line three-fourths of a circle around the British.

Burgoyne now gave up all further attempts at retreat, and began to strengthen his camp, with the vain hope of receiving succor from Clinton, below, or that an attack upon him might give him an opportunity to cut his way through. Meanwhile the Americans kept up an almost continual cannonade upon his camp, making it perilous to be anywhere within it. It was equally perilous to leave it; and so sharp was the fire upon those who ventured to

go to the river, that great distress prevailed in the camp for want of water. The Baroness Riedesel gives a graphic account of her perils and sufferings at this time, when she and her children and other women were compelled, for six days, to find shelter from cannon-balls, in a cellar. There, at the risk of his life, her husband occasionally visited her. On one occasion General Phillips was with him. When that officer saw the sufferings and danger to which that noble woman was exposed, he was overcome with emotion, and said: "I would not for ten thousand guineas see this place again. I am heart-broken with what I have seen." Madame Riedesel's greatest distress arose from the fear that the army might be suddenly driven away and she and her children be left behind.

Burgoyne now despaired. On the afternoon of the 13th he called another council of war, composed of all the generals, field-officers and captains commanding troops. The council were not long in session. They agreed that it would be best to open negotiations with General Gates for a surrender on honorable terms, when the following correspondence occurred:

" October 13, 1777.

" Lieut.-General Burgoyne is desirous of sending a Field Officer with a Message to M. General Gates upon a matter of high moment to both Armies. He requests to be informed at what hour Gen. Gates will receive him to-morrow morning."

" 13th Oct., 1777.

" Major-General Gates will receive a Field Officer from Lieut.-General Burgoyne at the advanced post of the army of the United States, at ten o'clock to-morrow morning; from whence he will be conducted to Head Quarters."

At the appointed hour, Major Robert Kingston, Burgoyne's adjutant-general, delivered a message to General Gates, from Lieut.-General Burgoyne, in which he proposed a "cessation of arms during the time necessary to c

municate the preliminary terms by which, in any extremity, he and his army mean to abide.”

To this General Gates made answer in a proposal of terms of surrender, in seven sections. The sixth demanded that when the foregoing five should be agreed to and signed, the troops under Burgoyne should be drawn up in their encampment, where they would “be ordered to ground their arms, and may thereupon be marched to the river-side to be passed over on their way towards Bennington,” for a march into New England.

To this proposal Burgoyne, at sunset, replied: “If General Gates does not mean to recede from the 6th article, the treaty ends at once;” and upon the margin of the article itself, he wrote: “Sooner than this army will consent to ground their arms in their encampment, they will rush on the enemy, determined to take no quarters.”

Counter-proposals were then sent to Gates by Burgoyne, which stipulated that the British troops were to march out of the camp with artillery and all the honors of war, to a fixed place, where they were to pile their arms at a word of command from their own officers; to be allowed a free passage to Europe upon condition of not serving again in America, *during* the present war; the army not to be separated; roll-calling and other regular duties to be permitted; the officers to be on parole and to wear their side arms; all private property to be sacred; no baggage to be searched or molested; and all persons appertaining to or following the camp, whatever might be their country, to be comprehended in these terms of capitulation.”

Colonel Varick sent the glad news to Schuyler, saying:

“Burgoyne says he will send all his general officers at 10 in the morning to finish and settle the business. This, I trust, will be accomplished before 12, and then I shall have the honor and happiness of congratulating you on the glorious success of our arms—I wish to God I could say under your command. If you wish to see Burgoyne, you will be necessitated to see him here.”*

On the following day the sturdy and unselfish patriot, forgetful of all private feelings in view of the public good, and rejoicing that his rival had subdued the enemies of his country, replied: “The event that has taken place makes the heavy loss I have sustained set quite easy on me. Britain will probably see how fruitless her attempts to enslave us will be. I set out to-day.”†

Gates, who had just heard of the depredations of Vaughan and Wallace on the Lower Hudson, and the fall of Forts Clinton and Montgomery, feeling a little nervous, accepted Burgoyne’s propositions, and they were put into form for signature. Before this was done, Burgoyne, on the night of the 16th, received information concerning the success of Clinton, and the expedition up the Hudson, and believing that a British force might then be at or near Albany, he was inclined to break the treaty. He called a council of war to consider the matter, when fourteen voices against eight declared that such an act would be a violation of the public faith. The capitulation was accordingly signed, at nine o’clock on the morning of the 17th. The German troops were sadly disappointed by the event. Riedesel addressed them in manly and soothing words, and then proceeded to secretly secure their colors. He had them taken down from the flag-staff, and delivered to his wife, who had them sewed up in a sack, and, thenceforth, he slept upon them.

* Autograph Letter, Oct. 14, 1777.

† Autograph Letter, October 14, 1777.

The vanquished army left their camp at eleven o'clock, and marched down to the plain, near old Fort Hardy, on the verge of the Hudson River. There, drawn up in companies, in parallel lines, under the direction of their respective commanders, they grounded their arms, and emptied their cartridge-boxes. This was a delicate arrangement made by Gates, to save the captives the mortification of submitting, under the gaze of the exulting Americans. For this unusual courtesy, Burgoyne and all his officers expressed their gratitude and admiration. The German soldiers did not seem to appreciate it, for, in their rage, before parting with their muskets they knocked off the butt-ends of them, while the drummers stamped their drums to pieces.*

The conduct of Gates and his army at that time was in bold contrast with that of the British, who, while Burgoyne and his army were receiving the most favorable conditions, were plundering the people along the Hudson, and laying the village of Kingston in ashes.

As soon as the troops had laid down their arms, General Burgoyne proposed to be introduced to General Gates. For this purpose he dressed with the greatest care in full court apparel. His regimentals were bordered with gold, and in his hat were streaming plumes.

Led by Wilkinson, Burgoyne and his suite crossed the Fish Creek, and proceeded toward the American headquarters. Burgoyne and his adjutant, Kingston, rode

* *Brunswick Journal*, translated by William L. Stone. The *Journal* speaks of the conduct of Gates as being, on that occasion, "Exceedingly noble and generous toward the captives. He commanded his troops to wheel round, the instant they laid down their arms. He himself drew down the curtains of his carriage, in which he had driven to the ground, and in which he was then seated." This is a mistake. Colonel Wilkinson, of Gates' staff, was the only American officer present, and he was on horseback.

ahead, followed by his aides-de-camp, Captain Lord Petersham and Lieutenant Wilford. Following these, were Generals Phillips, Riedesel, Hamilton, and other officers and suites, according to rank. They were met, not far below the smouldering ruins of General Schuyler's mansion,* by General Gates and his suite. He was dressed plainly, with a blue overcoat. His officers were in full uniform. He was accompanied by General Schuyler, in citizen's dress, although he was yet an officer of the army. He had come up from Albany to congratulate Gates on his success, and share in the pleasures, if not the honors, of the occasion.

When the parties were near each other, they reined up their horses, and Colonel Wilkinson introduced Gates and Burgoyne. The latter said, as he raised his hat gracefully, "The fortune of war, General Gates, has made me your prisoner;" to which the former promptly replied, "I shall always be ready to bear testimony that it has not been through any fault of your Excellency." The whole party then repaired to Gates' head-quarters, where a dinner was spread, beneath a marquee, upon boards laid across barrels which served for a table.

Meanwhile General Riedesel had sent for his wife and children. She was treated with the greatest respect as she passed through the American camp, for the sight of a captive mother touched the tenderest sensibilities of the American heart. We will let the Baroness tell the remainder of her story herself:

* In the official record of these transactions, occurs the following passage: "Major Kingston had authority to settle the places for the meeting of the officers proposed. This was, after some conversation, agreed to by Major-general Gates. Fixed by Major Kingston to be upon the ground where Mr. Schuyler's house stood."

"I confess that I feared to come into the American camp, as the thing was so entirely new to me. When I approached the tents, a noble-looking man came towards me, took the children out of the wagon, embraced and kissed them, and then, with tears in his eyes, helped me, also, to alight. 'You tremble,' said he to me; 'fear nothing.' 'No,' replied I, 'for you are so kind and have been so tender toward my children that it has inspired me with courage.' He then led me to the tent of General Gates, with whom I found Generals Burgoyne and Phillips, who were upon an extremely friendly footing with him. Burgoyne said to me: 'You may now dismiss all your apprehensions, for your sufferings are at an end.' I answered him that I should certainly be acting very wrongly to have any more anxiety when our chief had none, and especially when I saw him on such a friendly footing with General Gates.

"All the generals remained to dine with General Gates. The man who had received me so kindly, came up and said to me, 'It may be embarrassing to you to dine with all these gentlemen; come, now, with your children, into my tent, where I will give you, it is true, a frugal meal, but one that will be accompanied by the best of wishes.' 'You are certainly,' answered I, 'a husband and a father, since you show me so much kindness.' I then learned that he was the American General SCHUYLER. He entertained me with excellent smoked tongue, beef-steak, potatoes, good butter and bread. Never have I eaten a better meal. I was content. I saw that all around me were so, likewise; but that which rejoiced me more than everything else was that my husband was out of all danger.

"As soon as we had finished dinner, he [Schuyler] invited me to take up my residence at his house, which was situated in Albany, and told me that General Burgoyne would also be there. I sent and asked my husband what I should do. He sent me word to accept the invitation; and, as it was two days' journey from where we were, and already five o'clock in the afternoon, he advised me to set out in advance, and to stay over-night at a place distant about three hours' ride. General Schuyler was so obliging as to send with me a French officer, who was a very agreeable man. As soon as he had escorted me to the house where we were to remain, he went back."

After the dinner in Gates' marquee, the American army was drawn up in parallel lines on each side of the road leading to Albany. Between these the vanquished army passed, escorted by a company of light dragoons, who marched to the tune of Yankee Doodle. Just as they were passing, the two commanding generals came out

of the marquee and gazed upon the sad procession in silence, for a few moments. Then, without exchanging a word, Burgoyne, according to a previous understanding, stepped back, drew his sword, and, in the presence of the two armies, presented it to Gates. He received it courteously, and immediately returned it to the vanquished general. They then retired to the marquee together; the British army filed off and prepared to make a march of about three hundred miles, to Boston. So ended the drama upon the heights of Saratoga. Colonel Trumbull, in his picture of Burgoyne's surrender of his sword to Gates, painted for the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington, gave the portrait of one person in citizen's dress—a dark-brown suit. It is the portrait of General Schuyler.

The whole number of prisoners surrendered was five thousand seven hundred and ninety-one, of whom two thousand four hundred and twelve were Brunswickers and Hessians. On the staff of General Burgoyne (eleven in number) were six members of the British Parliament. Besides these, there were one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six prisoners of war, including sick and wounded, abandoned to the Americans; and of deserters there were three hundred. Including the killed, wounded and prisoners at Ticonderoga and its outposts, at Hubbardton, Fort Anne, Bennington, Oriskany, Fort Stanwix, and in the neighborhood of Saratoga, the total loss of the British in that northern campaign, given in a memorandum made in the handwriting, it is said, of Governor George Clinton upon the manuscript Orderly Book of Burgoyne, was nine thousand five hundred and eighty-three.*

* Gates' trophies of victory were a fine train of brass artillery, con

The American force, under the immediate command of Gates, at the time of the surrender, was thirteen thousand two hundred and twenty-two, of which number nine thousand and ninety-three were Continentals, or regular soldiers, and the remainder were militia. Add to these the number of troops, mostly militia, subject to Gates' call, and actually under arms, made the whole number about twenty-five thousand men—a wide disparity in the strength which had been, respectively, given to Schuyler and Gates. The former, with a handful of men, composing an ever-changing army, opposed and crippled Burgoyne when his forces were in full power; while the latter, with more than thirteen thousand troops immediately in hand, and almost as many more within call, fought and conquered the British in their extreme weakness which the skill, energy and perseverance of General Schuyler had caused.

The vanquished army of Burgoyne was conducted to the vicinity of Boston. "Their march," says a cotemporary, "was solemn, sullen and silent; but they were everywhere treated with such humanity, and even delicacy, that they were overwhelmed with astonishment and gratitude. Not an insult was offered, not an opprobrious reflection cast."*

Congress ratified the generous terms made by Gates with Burgoyne, but circumstances made it apparent consisting of two twenty-four pounders, four twelve-pounders, twenty sixes, six threes, two eight-inch howitzers, five five-and-a-half-inch royal howitzers, and three five-and-a-half-inch royal mortars—in all, forty-two pieces of ordnance. There were four thousand six hundred and forty-seven muskets, six thousand dozen cartridges, besides shot, shells, cases, cuirasses, etc.

* Mercy Warren's "History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution," ii. 40.

that the vanquished army would violate the agreement at the first opportunity. So satisfied were Washington and Congress that such a course was in contemplation, that it was resolved not to allow the "convention troops," as they were called, to leave the country until the British government should ratify the treaty at Saratoga. As that government refused to acknowledge the authority of Congress, it could not be done, and so the troops were kept idle in America for four or five years. In the autumn of 1778, they were sent from New England to Virginia, where they remained two years, when they were removed to Maryland, and again into New England. It was not until in the course of the year 1782 that they were all liberated or exchanged.

General Schuyler remained at Saratoga, after the surrender, to look after his private affairs. He sent Colonel Varick to Mrs. Schuyler, in Albany, to announce the speedy coming of guests from the vanquished army. He sent thither the Baroness Riedesel and her children in his own carriage; and Generals Burgoyne, Riedesel and other officers were escorted on horseback, the latter in company with General Glover.

Mrs. Schuyler received these guests with her accustomed cordiality, and the Baroness and her daughters were treated as friends, and not as enemies.

"They loaded us with kindness," she wrote, "and they behaved in the same manner toward General Burgoyne, though he had ordered their splendid establishment to be burnt, and without any necessity, it was said. But all these actions proved that in the sight of the misfortunes of others they quickly forgot their own."

Burgoyne paid a fine tribute to General Schuyler's generosity, in a speech in the British Parliament. He said that he was one of the first persons whom he met in the

American camp, and when he attempted to make some explanation or excuse for his act in destroying his property, the general begged him not to think of it, as the occasion justified it, on the principles and rules of war.

“He did more,” Burgoyne said, “he sent an aide-de-camp to conduct me to Albany, in order, as he expressed it, to procure better quarters than a stranger might be able to find. That gentleman conducted me to a very elegant house, and, to my great surprise, presented me to Mrs. Schuyler and her family. In that house I remained during my whole stay in Albany, with a table of more than twenty covers for me and my friends, and every other demonstration of hospitality.”

Burgoyne, Riedesel, and their friends, remained the guests of Mrs. Schuyler until the 26th (October, 1777,) when the former, having completed his despatches to his government, set off for Boston, with all his people. On the previous day, Colonel Varick wrote to Schuyler:

“Burgoyne and Riedesel, with their retinue, are still here. They give Mrs. Schuyler no small trouble. The former’s despatches are not yet completed. On Saturday he mentioned to Mrs. Schuyler, with tears in his eyes, his situation—that he had received so much civility from you, and again repeated by Mrs. Schuyler, whose property he had destroyed, but pleads that it was thought necessary, to save his army. He behaves with great politeness, and seems to be more free in conversation on the subject of his campaign, which, he says, has been a very bloody one as ever he knew, considering the number of his army. He would have given all of his Indians, provincials and volunteers for fifty British troops. He values them at less than one-half a farthing per cart-load.”

De Chastellux, in his “Travels in America,” relates some incidents of Burgoyne’s sojourn at the house of General Schuyler.

“The British commander,” he says, “was well received by Mrs. Schuyler, and lodged in the best apartment in the house. An excellent supper was served him in the evening, the honors of which were done with so much grace that he was affected even to tears, and said with a deep sigh, ‘Indeed, this is doing too much for a man who has ravaged their lands and burned their dwellings.’ The next morning, he was reminded of his misfortunes by an incident that would have amused any one else. His bed was prepared in a large room; but, as he had a numerous suite, or family, several mattresses were spread on the

floor, for some officers to sleep near him. Schuyler's second son, a little fellow about seven years old, very arch and forward, but very amiable, was running, all the morning, about the house. Opening the door of the saloon, he burst out laughing on seeing all the English collected, and shut it after him, exclaiming, 'You are all my prisoners!' This innocent cruelty rendered them more melancholy than before."

Burgoyne had gayly boasted that he should eat his Christmas dinner in Albany, as a conqueror. His fate was different.