

CHAPTER VI.

WHILE British and German troops were trying to penetrate the country northward from the sea-board, another division of British and German troops were endeavoring to penetrate it southward from Canada. The German troops in both divisions, commonly called "Hessians," formed a very important element in the campaign of that year, and were regarded by the Americans as particularly obnoxious, because they were mercenaries—fighting only for pay. They had been hired by the British government at the close of 1775 and beginning of 1776, from the reigning governors of Hesse-Cassel, Hesse-Hanau, Brunswick, Anhalt, Anspach and Waldeck. The contracting parties were governed by the common law of trade that regulates supply and demand. England needed troops; the German States needed money. The former had the money and the latter had the troops, which in time of peace were a heavy burden upon the resources of the princes. England had already been an ally of Hesse and Brunswick, and expected to be again in the event of war. These considerations made the bargain a natural one, on the principles of business, whatever may be said of the morality of the undertaking and the methods used in consummating it.

After some hasty preliminary negotiations, England

engaged sixteen thousand nine hundred German troops, the most of whom were well-trained soldiers. Hesse-Cassel, Hesse-Hanau and Brunswick concluded a common subsidiary treaty with the crown of England, which was made public in the English and German languages, at Frankfort and Leipsic. These troops were to constitute a corps made up of four battalions of grenadiers, each of four companies; fifteen battalions of infantry of five companies each, and two companies of yagers, all to be well equipped with the implements of war. Of these, three battalions of grenadiers, six battalions of infantry, and one company of yagers were to be ready on the 13th of February [1776] to begin the march to Stade, in Hanover, where the troops were to embark: the remainder were to follow four weeks later.

This treaty was signed by Colonel William Fawcet, on the part of the British crown, with the ministers of the three powers above named; that of Brunswick on the 9th of January, 1776; that of Hesse-Cassel on the 13th of January, and of Hesse-Hanau on the 5th of February. It was an offensive and defensive alliance, the King of England promising, in case of an attack upon the domains of these princes, to protect them. Similar treaties were made with the princes of Anhalt, Anspach, and Waldeck, whose troops went first to New York.

These German troops were all to take the oath of allegiance to the British monarch, without its interfering with their oaths of allegiance to their respective sovereigns. The princes were to receive for each soldier thirty thalers (about twenty-two and a half dollars) as a bounty, to be paid in two instalments—one-third of the amount one month after the signing of the treaty, and the remainder two months subsequently. The bounty was also to be

paid for those who might be killed. England agreed to make restitution for the loss of all men in engagements, during sieges, by contagious diseases, and while being transported in ships. In the agreement with the Duke of Brunswick, reinforcements were to be sent by him, and those offices which might become vacant were to be filled by him, who also retained the right of administering justice among his soldiers. To refund extra expenses, on account of the haste with which the troops had to be raised, England agreed to furnish two months' pay before the marching of the men, and also to defray all expenses of transportation from the day on which they began their march. The annual subsidy for Brunswick (and it was similar for the other states) was regulated in the following manner: "It shall begin with the day of the signing of the present treaty, and shall be simple, that is—it shall amount to sixty-four thousand five hundred German thalers, as long as these troops receive pay. From the time that these troops cease to receive pay, the subsidy shall be doubled, that is it shall consist of twenty-nine thousand German thalers. The double subsidy shall continue for two years after the return of said troops into the dominions of his Excellency."* This subsidy, together with the bounty and the subsistence, transportation and pay of the troops, amounted to a large sum. The German princes, seeing England's necessity, drove a hard bargain. Lord George Germaine and Lord Barrington, of the ministry, were compelled to admit that the terms were made by the princes themselves and the necessity compelled ministers to accept.

The German troops destined for Canada were embarked at Stade, late in March, in forty-six vessels, and

* See *Memoirs, and Letters and Journals of Major-general Riedesel translated from the original German by William L. Stone.*

were composed, according to the statement of Anthony Hasselabend, of Riedesel's dragoons (who deserted from Montreal), of two thousand Hessians, three thousand Brunswickers, and three thousand Westphalians, the latter all Roman Catholics.* As we have seen, these troops, with English soldiers, and all under the supreme command of General Carleton, had, early in June, driven the Americans out of Canada, and taken post at St. John's, on the Sorel, in July. There they found, in the nature of the country and the activity of the American troops in building war vessels on Lake Champlain, insuperable obstacles to their speedy junction with Howe, whom they supposed to be coming up from New York. They found it necessary also to build a navy before they could move forward, and for a while both parties worked most assiduously at that business, one for offensive and the other for defensive operations.

Meanwhile General Carleton employed every means in his power to entice the savages to join the British army. On the 24th of June he held a council with the chiefs of several tribes, in the old church of the Jesuits, at Montreal, wherein as great a display as possible was made. The high chair was covered with carpets, and in the centre sat Carleton in a great arm-chair, surrounded by his officers, while three hundred savages, with lighted pipes, sat upon benches near; each tribe having its own interpreter into French, and Carleton his own into English. The best of feeling was manifested, and all the Indians present engaged their people to join the British in arms for one year, and had their posts assigned them. The night was spent in a great carousal—feasting and dancing;

* MS. account of the examination of Hasselabend, Sept. 5, 1776.

and this continued several days. They decorated Generals Carleton, Burgoyne and Phillips with scalps of "rebels" whom they had killed. "I am very happy," Riedesel wrote to Duke Ferdinand, "to be under the command of General Carleton. He manifests such a contempt for the Rebels that I feel sure that we shall soon attack and get the best of them."*

To gain the supremacy on Lakes Champlain and George, and to recover the posts of Crown Point, Ticonderoga and Fort George, now became the first important business to which Carleton and Burgoyne addressed themselves. They had the advantages of good naval constructors, in the fleet at Quebec and the ship-yards there, and in the efficient aid of the home government. The admiralty contributed naval equipments and materials for ship-building in abundance; and three ships of war, fully equipped for service, were sent from British ship-yards, with the expectation that they might be dragged up the rapids of the Sorel to St. John's, where a channel deep enough for them led into Lake Champlain. And while these preparations were a-making the troops were trained in the methods of American instead of European warfare. They were taught how to fight in woods, and with savages, as sharp-shooters; and large numbers were exercised in rowing and other nautical operations, to prepare them to act as seamen in the fleet if necessary, while four hundred Indians, who were to form the van of the flotilla on the lake, were trained for that service. The three vessels were hauled on shore, to be taken around the rapids at Chamblée, but the work proving to be too slow and expensive, they were taken in pieces and reconstructed at St. John's.

* Stone's "Memoir's," etc., page 46.

The Americans, meanwhile, had been very busy. They had the advantage only in point of time, for their most expert ship-builders were employed on the sea-board constructing privateers and regular war ships for the Continental navy. A large number were thus employed under the charge of Messrs. Van Zandt and Tudor, at Poughkeepsie, about seventy-three miles up the Hudson; yet enough were spared to lead less expert workmen, and, as we have seen, the business of constructing a fleet went on with marvellous celerity in August and September. Scouts were continually out watching the progress of affairs at St. John's, and reporting instantly to Arnold upon the condition of the fleet, by which he was enabled to know how strong it would be necessary to make his own in order to cope with his enemy. These scouts were generally active and bold, and sometimes extended their operations beyond the letter and spirit of their instructions. Such was the case with Lieut. Benjamin Whitcomb, who had been sent to reconnoitre St. John, and who, from an ambush, deliberately shot Brigadier-general Gordon of the British regulars, late in July.* This act, together with a defiant document received from Congress a few days afterward, in which they declared it impossible

* Riedesel, speaking of the death of Gordon, says: "While returning, on the 25th [July], through some woods, and when but two and a half leagues distant from La Prairie, he was severely wounded in the right arm and shoulder, by two balls from a concealed foe. He fell from his horse and was afterwards found by a soldier of the 21st regiment. He was at once carried to Colonel Hamilton's, at St. Jacob, and remained there until his death, which occurred soon after. This happened in the rear of the British troops. It was never known who killed him." Benedict Arnold, in an autograph letter dated Ticonderoga, August 10, 1776, says: "Major Bigelow further advises that Brigadier-general Gordon was lately killed between St. John and Chamblée by one Lieutenant Whitcomb, who was lately sent to St. John to reconnoitre. Bigelow, also went scouting."

for the British to subdue them, so exasperated Burgoyne, who was acting for the absent Carleton, that he issued an almost savage general order, in which he said :

“ All commanders of regiments are requested to inform their officers, sub-officers and privates, that no more letters will be accepted from rebels who have taken up arms against their king ; and if any more delegates from this mob dare to approach our pickets, excepting as supplicants for mercy, they shall be at once arrested and imprisoned in order to be punished for their crime. All letters, even if directed to the commander-in-chief, shall be delivered unopened to the provost, and burned by the hangman.”

Toward the close of August, the impatient and impetuous Arnold could no longer wait for the British to advance, but went down the lake with his flotilla, under positive instructions from General Gates not to go below *Isle aux Tetes*, near what is now called Rouse's Point, close by the dividing line between the United States and Canada. Four miles above that point he halted to reconnoitre, and placed his vessels in a line across the lake to prevent any boats of the enemy passing up. He soon perceived that his position was a dangerous one, for the British and Indians were rapidly collecting on both shores, so he fell back about ten miles to *Isle La Motte*, where the lake was wider and he need not fear any attack from the main land. There he remained some time, and as we have observed, he found his fleet considerably increased early in October. Yet he was not fully informed of the strength of the enemy's flotilla at that time, and so he fell further back, and without skill or forethought he stretched his line of vessels across the channel, between the western shore of Valcour's Island and the main land, and there anchored. This absurd movement, and one which proved to be disastrous, was made with the full concurrence of Gates, who was as ignorant of nautical affairs as was Arnold himself. The latter had courage, but very little

judgment, and his egotism acting in concert with his bravery sometimes made him successful almost in spite of himself. Had Colonel Waterbury, his second in command, or even Commodore Wynkoop, been master of the expedition, they would never have committed the blunder which this anchoring of the little fleet displayed. The enemy saw it and at once took advantage of the situation. They had rebuilt the ship (the *Inflexible*) which they had taken apart at the rapids, in twenty-eight days after the keel was relaid, and she was now ready, a stately craft with three masts, and carrying twenty twelve-pounders, and ten smaller guns.

On the morning of the 4th of October Carleton began a cautious advance from St. John's, with his land and water forces. Notwithstanding his frequent expressions of "contempt for the rebels," no man was more loath than he to measure strength with them, unless he was well assured of his superiority in number and arms. It was not until the 10th that his whole fleet was in motion. The land troops, English and German, were advanced to La Colle, and General Burgoyne, with the English and German brigades, was stationed on the *Isle aux Noix*, where they established magazines and dépôts.

The British fleet was composed of the *Inflexible*, whose weight of metal has been mentioned; *Lady Mary*, of fourteen guns, the *Carleton*, of twelve guns, a gondola of twelve guns; another vessel of twelve guns, captured from the Americans; a floating battery called the *Radeau*, carrying six twenty-four-pounders and ten twelve-pounders; ten gun-boats carrying three cannons each, and numerous smaller craft. The British had twice as many vessels as the Americans could offer, and twice the weight of metal, with skilled seamen pitted against half-disciplined landsmen.

With this formidable fleet Carleton, with Captain Edward Pringle, in the *Inflexible*, as commodore, appeared off Cumberland Head on the morning of the 11th of October, and passing between Grand and Valcour's Islands, in the broader channel of the lake, soon gained Arnold's rear. The latter immediately perceived the magnitude of his blunder and the peril of his situation, but it was too late to avoid the consequences, either by a retreat or by changing his position. He, therefore, exercised that audacity which had carried him over several perils, formed a line for action, and in his flag-ship, the *Royal Savage*, supported by three row-galleys, he bore down upon his enemy with a favorable wind, which kept the *Inflexible* off beyond gunshot distance. But the *Carleton*, assisted by gun-boats, got into action by attacking the *Royal Savage* at meridian.

The American galleys were driven back; the *Royal Savage* was soon crippled, and in attempting to return to the line she fell to leeward and was stranded on Valcour's Island; where she was burned. Arnold and his crew all made their escape to the *Congress*. In the meantime the *Carleton* beat up to within musket-shot of the American line and opened fire on both her sides. She was well supported by gun-boats, one of which was soon sunk by shots from the *Congress*, on which Arnold was compelled to act as gunner, and pointed every cannon that was fired. She was terribly bruised in every part. Her main-mast and yards were splintered; she was hulled twelve times, and was hit seven times between wind and water. All the officers of the gondola *New York*, excepting her Captain, were killed or wounded; and the *Washington* was most severely handled. The *Carleton*, too, was terribly pounded. Dacres, her Captain, was felled by a blow; Brown, a lieu-

tenant of marines, lost an arm, and Edward Pellew, then only nineteen years of age (afterward the celebrated Admiral Viscount Exmouth), who succeeded to the command, carried on the fight most dexterously to prevent the escape of Arnold. Meanwhile the enemy had landed a body of Indians on Valcour's Island, which kept up an incessant but almost harmless fire of musketry upon the American vessels. The battle raged between four and five hours, when night closed upon the scene, the firing ceased, and neither party was victorious. The Americans lost about sixty men, killed and wounded, and the British about forty. The two shattered fleets anchored within a few hundred yards of each other.

When all was quiet, Arnold called a council of officers, when it was determined by himself, Waterbury and Wigglesworth, who were his chief assistants, to attempt a retreat to Crown Point. The British commander, in anticipation of such a movement, anchored his vessels in a line across the way of retreat, between Valcour's Island and the main, and felt confident that he would have in his possession every "rebel" vessel in the morning. But he had a wary, vigilant and desperate foe to deal with. It was at the time of the new moon, and a chilly wind from the north brought down a thick haze, which made the night extremely dark. At ten o'clock Wigglesworth, who commanded the *Trumbull*, hoisted anchor and led the retreat, followed by the gondolas; Waterbury, in the *Washington*, followed them, and the rear was brought up by Arnold, in the *Congress*. Having a fair wind, they slipped through an opening in the enemy's line near the left wing unobserved, and when the morning dawned the British officers could not believe their eyes when they could not see a "rebel" vessel in sight, up or down the

lake. They were at Schuyler's Island, ten miles south of Valcour's, where they were engaged in stopping leaks and repairing sails.

Carleton was greatly mortified when he found that his foes had escaped, and ordered an immediate pursuit of them. For a while the movement was active, when the wind started up from the south and retarded both pursuer and pursued. All night long the stiff southerly breeze made the flight a dubious one. At a little past noon the next day, the wind changed suddenly to the north, striking the British sails first and impelling them rapidly onward. Waterbury proposed to run the *Washington* ashore and burn her, but Arnold hoped for a chance to give battle, and refused his permission to do so. Near Split Rock the *Washington* was overtaken and captured, but Arnold, with the *Congress* and four gondolas, kept up a running fight for five hours, suffering great loss. Finally, when the *Congress* was almost a wreck, he ran his vessels into a small creek in Pantou, on the eastern shore of the lake, about ten miles below Crown Point, where he set them on fire while their flags were streaming at the mast heads. Arnold remained on board the *Congress* until driven away by the fire, when, like his companions, he waded ashore, and with the remnant of his little force marched rapidly through the woods to Chimney Point, and reached Crown Point, opposite, in safety. But for his rapid march he would have fallen into an Indian ambush, laid in his path an hour after he passed by. At Crown Point he found two schooners, two galleys, one sloop and one gondola—all that remained of his proud little fleet; and on the next day General Waterbury and most of his men arrived there on parole, when all embarked for Ticonderoga. The Americans lost in the two actions

about ninety men, and the British not quite half that number.

General Carleton took possession of Crown Point on the 14th of October, as master of the lake, and there had rumors of the result of the battle on Long Island. He was within two hours' sail of Ticonderoga, which was garrisoned by only about three thousand effective men, with twenty-four hundred upon Mount Independence opposite. It might have been easily taken by the force that Carleton then had at his command, but he was too cautious to undertake such an enterprise so late in the season, and he announced to General Riedesel, who joined him on the 22d, his intention to take the army back into Canada for winter-quarters. Riedesel, who went so near Ticonderoga as to see the post from a hill-top, and also Burgoyne, to whom Carleton had earlier given orders for withdrawing the troops, were anxious to complete the conquest of the lakes at once, by taking possession of that post. But Carleton, who had not yet received official notice of the success of the British on Long Island, and felt sure of making Ticonderoga an easy prey in the spring, and so open gloriously the next campaign, would not consent. So he abandoned Crown Point on the 3d of November, and lost the best opportunity he had been favored with for gaining renown. That opportunity was gone forever, for already the decree had gone out from the British ministry that he should be superseded in the command by Burgoyne. But with that decree went forth another from the king, giving him the honor of wearing the order of a knight of Bath. That order was presented to him by Lady Mary his wife, at Montreal, when he was on his way from St. John's to Quebec.

The British abandoned Crown Point just at the time

when the garrison at Ticonderoga was the weakest, being short of provisions, and the time of service of some of the troops was just expiring. There was not, on the day of Carleton's retrograde movement, a single barrel of flour at Ticonderoga. Now, relieved of danger, by what the Americans regarded as a shameful and unaccountable flight, the Connecticut militia soon returned home, and the garrison of Ticonderoga, left by Gates under the command of the gallant young Pennsylvanian, Colonel Anthony Wayne, consisted nominally of twenty-five hundred men. But of these a great many were sick, and perishing for want of clothing. The terms of the Pennsylvania troops would expire in a few weeks, and they would not reënlist until after they should visit their homes. So, at the end of 1776, the lakes were really at the mercy of the British, and the campaign ended with a loss of all territory acquired since Allen took Ticonderoga in May, 1775, and quite a formidable fleet. The determined courage, bravery and persistence of Arnold during his close contest with the enemy so completely covered his blunders in judgment before the action, that he was regarded as the hero of the Northern Army, while the British magnified the affair into a great naval victory for themselves. Captain Dacres, who contributed so much to the success of the British fleet, had the honor of being sent to England to carry the tidings of victory to the ears of the king; and General Carleton, who had really contributed very little personally toward achieving what had been wrought in actual conflict, was lauded as a conspicuous conqueror. He had done rare service in preparing for the result, for in three months he had, by great energy as an executive officer, caused to be built a navy from timber felled in the forest and drawn long distances, and with this the flotilla of the insurgent colonists had been destroyed or captured.

So soon as General Schuyler heard of the disasters on the lakes, he put forth all his energies to send reinforcements to Ticonderoga. He ordered the militia of New York and the neighboring states to be forthwith put in motion toward that place. He made the most patriotic appeals to conventions and committees, asking them to make immediate and strenuous exertions in behalf of their imperilled country. He advised General Gates to have a strong boom constructed across the lake, from Ticonderoga to Mount Independence, to prevent the ships of the enemy getting in his rear, a work that appears to have been immediately accomplished, for on the 24th of October Arnold wrote to Schuyler: "A boom will be laid across the lake this day, and a bridge to-morrow from Ticonderoga to Mount Independence."

In every way Schuyler labored incessantly for the cause. At that moment he was suffering severely from an attack of gout, and was smarting under the injustice of Congress, in the matter of appointing a committee to confer with General Gates instead of himself, the superior officer, upon matters pertaining to the Northern Department, to which reference has already been made. But in the presence of great public danger, he only said to Congress, after acknowledging the receipt of the resolution of the 2d of October: "At this very critical juncture I shall waive those remarks which, in justice to myself, I must make at a future day. The calumny of my enemies has arisen to its height. Their malice is incapable of heightening the injury. I wish, for the sake of human nature, that they had not succeeded so well; I wish they not been countenanced by the transactions of those whose duty it was to have supported me. In the alarming situation of our affairs I shall continue to act some time longer, but

Congress must prepare to put the care of this Department into other hands. I shall be able to render my country better services in another line, less exposed to a repetition of the injuries I have sustained."

There was a powerful faction in Congress at that time, who had resolved to place General Gates in command of the Northern Department, but who dared not openly to advocate the removal of General Schuyler, for his great usefulness was too apparent to be hidden from the public view. They knew his extreme sensitiveness to everything that touched his reputation, and hoped that the calumnies which some of them were not anxious to refute, together with inattention to his complaints, on the part of Congress, so long as it was possible for them to prevent it, might so disgust him that he would resign. They little knew the depths of his patriotic zeal who counted upon his leaving the service while his duties to his country commanded him to remain; and we have seen him at certain junctures anxious to retire, but induced to continue in the service merely from a sense of duty. But now, having just been informed of the action of Congress in August, in which that body formally declared that General Wooster, while in command of the army in Canada, did nothing blameworthy, and so gave Schuyler's enemies a license for declaring that his complaints against the veteran had been unjust, and that he was responsible for failures in Canada; and the late appointment of a committee to confer with Gates instead of himself, which gave further occasion to his enemies to declare him incompetent, appeared so much like insult to him, that Schuyler asked for permission to repair to Philadelphia to have an investigation into his whole conduct since he was appointed to the command of the Northern Department.

This request was answered on the 9th of November, when the President of Congress wrote to him, saying: "The situation of the Northern Army being at this juncture, extremely critical, and your services in that Department of the highest use and importance, the Congress wish for a continuance of your influence and abilities on behalf of your country. They have, however, agreeably to your request, consented that you should repair to this city whenever, in your opinion, the service will admit of your absence." General Gates was permitted to visit Philadelphia shortly afterward, ostensibly on account of his health, which rapidly improved after his arrival there. He was the object of much attention, and had frequent secret communications with New England delegates upon subjects whereof no revelations were made.

Meanwhile Congress continued to address General Schuyler as one whom they did not expect to leave his post, for they had too often experienced his devotion to his country to believe that he would come down to their Chambers, in person, and demand a redress of his grievances, so long as one enemy to that country demanded his attention—and such was the case. He continued to write urgent letters asking Congress to strengthen the posts on the lake not only with men, but by every measure in their power. And to Messrs. Stockton and Clymer, a committee of Congress, he made the following communication on the 8th of November:

"Agreeable to your request, I do myself the honor to communicate to you my opinion of what preparations I conceive necessary to be made the ensuing winter, and what measures to be adopted effectually to prevent the enemy from penetrating into this country by the northern or western communication. If the enemy are not able to dislodge our troops from Ticonderoga, or penetrate to the Mohawk River, this fall, they will probably attempt an expedition in the winter, Canada being able to furnish them with such a number of

sleds as will suffice to transport all their artillery and provisions, if their number should be ten thousand, nor will our garrisons of Ticonderoga or Fort George be any obstacle, as they can easily pass by the former in sleds at such a distance as to be out of reach of our cannon, and the latter is too insignificant to make any resistance, so as much to retard their progress; it is therefore of the last importance that as much of the army as can be kept together should be cantoned in the vicinity of this place, of which the enemy will be informed, and it will probably deter them from the attempt; but should they remain quiet in Canada until next spring, it is reasonable to suppose that they will then make the most vigorous exertions to penetrate either by Ticonderoga, or what is much more likely, by Fort Stanwix: both communications therefore claim our attention. The fortifications at Ticonderoga should, in my opinion, be as much contracted as possible, and a fort built on Mount Independence, to cover batteries near the lake side and the redoubt on the Ticonderoga side, so as that the pass may be defended by a few men, and the navigation should be effectually stopped by sinking Cassoons [caissons] at small distances and joined together by string-pieces, so as at the same time to serve for a bridge between the fortifications on the east and west side. This work should be executed in the winter; but as these fortifications would not prevent the enemy from drawing their small craft over land, from beyond the three mile point into Lake George, the passage of that lake should also be obstructed, either by Cassoons from Island to Island, in the Narrows, if practicable, or by floating batteries. Whilst a part of the army is employed in this service, another body of troops should be sent to Fort Stanwix to strengthen that fortification, and to make some others at such places near the Mohawk river as may be deemed best for the purpose of retarding the enemy, should they make themselves master of Fort Stanwix; and that we may be well prepared, and every department put in order, I conceive it necessary that the commanding officer of artillery should be directed to procure every necessary in his department, that we may not have to seek it when the campaign opens.

“That the chief Engineer be directed to do the like.

“That the Quarter Master General do the same.

“That the like order be given to the Commissary General.

“All the batteaux now on Lake Champlain and Lake George should be put into the best repair, as early as possible, in the months of February or March at the farthest.

“That one hundred batteaux be built in these months, at Schenectady.

“That a quantity of boards and plank should be collected at Fort George.

“That a sufficiency of pitch, oakum and whatever may be necessary for building and repairing vessels, floating batteries or batteaux, be collected and carried to Fort George, Fort Ann, Skenesborough and Schenectady, in the course of the winter.

“That provisions for five thousand men for eight months be immediately brought to Albany, and carried in winter to Fort Ann, or like quantity to remain in store at Albany to be sent to the westward if there be occasion. This is a matter that ought immediately to be attended to, and therefore a sufficient quantity of salt should directly be sent to Albany.

“That a large train of artillery, both heavy and light, should be sent in the course of the winter, part to remain at Albany, and as much as may be necessary for Ticonderoga and Fort George, to be sent there. This must be done in winter, at once to save a vast expense, and that we may not be embarrassed in the spring with the transportation of articles so extremely difficult to move.

“That a Laboratory should be established at Albany, to fix all the ammunition necessary for the campaign.

“That fifteen companies, to consist of a Captain, or overseer, and thirty men, be engaged for the batteaux service, and to be employed on the high-ways and other necessary work in the Quarter Master General’s Department. It not only ruins soldiers to employ them in such business, and is more expensive; but also weakens the army too much.

“That four companies of carpenters, to consist of an overseer and twenty-five each, be engaged to attend the army; if more are occasionally wanted they can be procured in Albany or its vicinity.”

So urgent were General Schuyler’s entreaties for an investigation into his conduct that finally, when relieved of the pressure of anxiety occasioned by the events in New York, and connected with Washington’s retreat to the Delaware, Congress took measures to gratify him. They had already, so early as the 3d of October, before the battles on Lake Champlain, directed him to take such steps as he might think proper for providing “a sufficient number of as large vessels as the navigation of the lake would admit of, for the service of the States the next campaign.” Now (late in December) they urged the New England States to send four thousand men to take the place of the Pennsylvania and other troops about to retire from Ticonderoga, and authorized the erection of a fort, and the establishment of a general hospital on Mount Independence. They ordered cannon and other materials

of war to be sent thither with all possible dispatch, and authorized Schuyler to employ extraordinary means for contravening the wily Tories and Indians, who were threatening a winter incursion into the Mohawk Valley, by way of Oswego. Schuyler himself, ever vigilant, kept an eye constantly open in that direction. Sir John Johnson he knew was keeping up a continual communication with his wife, who yet remained in Albany, to whom permission to return to Johnson Hall, on the plea that she was far advanced in pregnancy and required the conveniences of her house for lying in, had been refused by the Albany committee of safety, with his sanction, for he was satisfied that she, as a sort of hostage, kept the baronet and his followers from sweeping down from the St. Lawrence and attempting to drive the Republican forces out of the valley.

During the summer and autumn of 1776 the Committee of Safety of New York had been assiduous in efforts to obstruct the navigation of the Hudson River, so as to prevent British ships from ascending it. They had been unsuccessful in these attempts at Fort Washington, and turned their attention to points in the Highlands. So early as July they had applied to General Schuyler for the chain that had been made for obstructing the navigation of the Sorel, which had been stretched under logs that served as floats, and so formed what is called a "boom," but was no longer needed after the army had been driven out of Canada. Early in August he ordered it to be sent down to Poughkeepsie, to the care of Van Zandt, Lawrence and Tudor, the naval constructors in the Continental ship-yards there; and a little later he was consulted about the best method for producing some obstructions in the river.

For a while the secret committee having the matter in charge, composed of Robert Yates as chairman, assisted by John Jay, R. R. Livingston, Gilbert Livingston, and Peter Tappen, could not determine whether to lay the obstructions at Fort Montgomery, at the lower entrance to the Highlands; at West Point in their midst, or at Pollo-pell's Island, at a wide place just above the upper entrance. They finally fixed upon Fort Montgomery, and their plan was to stretch a chain across, supported by timbers, in a measure similar to that on the Sorel, and so form a boom. They appointed Van Zandt, Lawrence and Tudor, at Poughkeepsie, to superintend the construction and fixing of a chain at Fort Montgomery, or "if it should be found impracticable at or near the said Fort, then to fix the same at or near Fort Constitution," and West Point opposite.

A little later the committee modified their instructions and ordered rafts of logs also to be made as floats for the chain, and as forming a part of the boom. This work was accomplished in October, but failed in consequence of the strong currents in the river producing a damming up of the waters above the boom and breaking the chain with their weight. In a letter to Schuyler, written from Peekskill in November, James Duane said: "One word *entre nous*; the chain has been twice stretched across the river at Fort Montgomery, and broke very soon. It raised a considerable fall in the river, and accumulated such an immense weight of water, that I despair of its answering the purpose in its present construction. A heavy weight of iron and double saw-logs fastened to each other, opposing continually an impetuous tide, seemed in speculation to promise little security. Now it has failed in experiment, how is it to be remedied? Let me have your opinion, on which, without compliment, we much rely."

The Committee of Safety also referred the matter to Schuyler's judgment, and on the 2d of December he wrote as follows, evidently preferring the shallower and wider part of the river at Pollopell's Island as the place for the boom :

“ Experience has taught us that a chain sufficiently long to reach across the river ought to have better supports than floating logs. Perhaps cassoons [caissons] from thirty to forty feet square, according to the depth of the water where they are to be sunken, might answer this end.

“ At the place in question the river is about six thousand feet wide. If, therefore, twenty-five such cassoons were sunk at a nearly equal distance the intermediate spaces between each would be about two hundred feet. The tops of the cassoons might come up to within two feet of the surface of the water at ebb tide, and the chain run through them at about six feet below the upper part of the cassoon, but as the chain might not be sufficiently strong to withstand the great force of a ship coming against it under sail and with the tide, a number of floats, each composed of six large pine logs of fifty feet long, might be made, the logs fastened to each other with strong chains eight or ten feet long, with an eye bolt at each end thro' the log, forelocked and keyed. The two extremes of these six logs to be fastened by a chain to two of the cassoons; these thus fastened and let go with the tide of ebb will form the two sides of a triangle, the angular point of which will be about one hundred and twenty feet from the line of the cassoons, and there they should be kept by anchors. If a ship should come against these logs the anchors will probably drag, may prevent the logs from breaking, and deaden the ship's way so much that the chain will not break.

“ It is evident, I suppose, that we shall have batteries on the Island, and western and eastern shores, to prevent the enemy from laying alongside of the cassoons in order to cut the chain. One cassoon might be so constructed as to serve for a battery *en barbet*, and the guns being so near the surface of the water would make it extremely dangerous for a ship to come within reach of them. The greatest danger and difficulty we have to dread in sinking cassoons is from large rocks in the bottom of the river; but that may also be overcome.

“ I cannot at present think of a better plan, and if the committee approves of it, no time should be lost in procuring the timber, which must be got in the vicinity of Fishkill, as the season is so far advanced that what might be got here cannot be carried down until the winter breaks up. If the timber cannot be procured below, I could wish to be advised of it immediately that I might employ people about Albany

not only to prepare the timber, but to frame it so as that the cassoon may be expeditiously sunk in the spring; about two thousand pieces of thirty feet long and not less than ten by twelve inches square, and five hundred pieces of fifty feet long, twelve inches square, will be wanted, and about ten thousand inch and half plank.

"I hope, in fourteen days from this, to do myself the pleasure to pay my respects to Convention on my way to Philadelphia."

At about the same time General Arnold, who had been informed that Schuyler had been requested by the Committee of Safety to advise and assist them, wrote to him, saying:

"I have taken the liberty of enclosing you a draft of a boom and chain, and run buoy," which, in the drawing, he described as follows: "No. 1. A strong chain sufficiently long to form a deep curve when it is laid, so that the current or ship will strike it obliquely, and of course with less force.

"2. Large pine logs fifty feet long made fast to each other by a strong chain ten feet long, with an eye bolt at each end thro' the log, forelocked and keyed.

"3. Small chains made fast at or near the ends of the logs, by which the large chain is suspended at any depth under water.

"4. A buoy, six feet long, two and a half feet diameter, in the middle, one foot at each head, made of thick oak staves full hooped, to buoy up the boom, or five rafts as occasion may require."

The chain at Fort Montgomery was mended, strengthened and better laid under the superintendence of Brigadier-general George Clinton, to whom Schuyler, on the 7th of December, had communicated his plan for building the caissons. But as Fort Montgomery, and not PolloPELL's Island, continued to be the place chosen for the obstructions, the use of caissons, on account of the deep water, could not be entertained. Late in March the chain was again stretched across the river at Fort Montgomery, and no further difficulty with it appears to have been experienced until its removal by the British nearly seven months afterward, when they captured Forts Montgomery and Clinton, and sailed up the river almost unopposed.