

CHAPTER X.

AT the close of June General Schuyler was no longer left in doubt as to the real intentions of Burgoyne. It was then evident that the expected invasion was actually begun. The whole force of the invaders was composed of three thousand seven hundred and twenty-four British, rank and file; nearly four thousand Germans, mostly Brunswickers; two hundred and fifty Canadians, four hundred Indians, and four hundred and seventy-three artillerymen; in all between eight thousand and nine thousand men. That army was admirably equipped and officered. Its train of brass artillery was equal to any ever furnished to an army of like size, and were under the direct control of General William Phillips, who had been distinguished in the late wars in Germany.

What had Schuyler wherewith to oppose this formidable force? Only two thousand five hundred and forty-six Continentals and nine hundred militia (of the latter not one-tenth had bayonets), entrenched behind pretty strong works at Ticonderoga and Mount Independence. The former was composed of the old Fort which Ethan Allen and his men had captured on the morning of the 10th of May, 1775, and the latter was a star-fort chiefly constructed in 1776. These posts, on opposite sides of a narrow place in the lake, were connected by a floating bridge supported by twenty-two sunken piers in caissons. Between the piers were separate floats fifty feet in length

and twelve feet in width, connected by iron chains and clevises. On the north side of the bridge was a boom composed of heavy timbers, secured by riveted bolts, and a double iron chain with links an inch and a half square. The bridge and the boom were four hundred yards in length, and were covered by a battery at each end.

It was expected that these obstructions would be an effectual bar to the passage of vessels up the lake. There were also extensive outworks connected with Fort Ticonderoga, but there were not men enough to man them. There were eminences near, such as Sugar Loaf Hill and Mount Hope, which commanded Ticonderoga and its approaches, and which the Americans ought to have occupied, but could not on account of paucity of numbers; and Schuyler had only a few gathering militia below—too few to allow him to send a reinforcement to St. Clair without exposing points at which the enemy might pass to the rear of the Lake fortresses. At the same time he was compelled to make precautionary provisions for the expected invasion from the west, and he instructed General Nicholas Herkimer, who lived near the Little Falls of the Mohawk, to keep the Tryon County militia, of which he was the commander, in readiness to move for the protection of the western frontier. The general defences of the Americans at Ticonderoga and Mount Independence would have been ample in this emergency had Congress and the States furnished them with a sufficiency of men, materials of war and provisions: lacking them, they were weak.

At Crown Point, Burgoyne, who had left General Riedesel in command for a few days, resumed his position, and sent forth a pompous proclamation, intended by its menaces to awe the Americans into passiveness, and to

confirm the adherents to the crown in their position by a sense of the presence of overshadowing power. He claimed to speak "in consciousness of Christianity and the honor of soldiership," and began his manifesto in these words: "By John Burgoyne, Esquire, Lieutenant-General of his Majesty's forces in America, Colonel of the Queen's regiment of Light Dragoons, Governor of Fort William, in North Britain, one of the Commoners of Great Britain in Parliament, and commander of an army and fleet employed in an expedition from Canada," et cetera. "The pompous manner," wrote Dr. Thatcher, "in which he arrayed his titles, would lead us to suppose that he considered them as more than a match for all the military force which we can bring against him." Then he uttered threats like these: "Let not people consider their distance from my camp; I have but to give stretch to the Indian forces under my direction, and they amount to thousands, to overtake the hardened enemies to Great Britain. If the frenzy of hostility should remain, I trust I shall stand acquitted in the eyes of God and man in executing the vengeance of the State against the wilful outcasts. I consider them the same wherever they may lurk." Instead of frightening the people, the proclamation was treated with contempt, for it was felt that Burgoyne would have done, as he afterwards said he did, when apologizing for the employment of Indians, "talked daggers but did not use them."*

* The following poetical paraphrase of this proclamation, in Hudibrastic rhyme, was attributed to the witty Francis Hopkinson:

"I will let loose the dogs of hell,
Ten thousand Indians, who shall yell,
And foam and tear, and grin and roar,
And drench their moccasins in gore:

On the last day of June, in a general order, Burgoyne said: "The army embark to-morrow, to approach the enemy. The services required of this particular expedition are critical and conspicuous. During our progress, occasion may occur in which nor difficulty, nor labor, nor life are to be regarded. This army must not retreat." On the same day, St. Clair, to whom Schuyler had written hopefully on the 29th, with a prospect of moving up with some Continental troops and militia so soon as he could possibly set them in motion, and told him that he "hoped to have the pleasure of seeing him in possession of his post," wrote confidently to his chief, saying: "Should the enemy attack us, they will go back faster than they came." Also, on the same day, Major Henry Brockholst Livingston, Schuyler's aid-de-camp, who had been detained at Ticonderoga by sickness when his commander left for Albany, wrote to the General, saying:

"The enemy, after giving us several alarms, made their appearance early this morning, off Three-Mile Point, in eighteen gunboats, and, about nine, landed a party of two or three hundred Indians and Canadians. These soon fell in with a scout from us, but, being superior in number, obliged them to retreat, though without any loss on our side. The Indians then marched to the front of the French lines, drove in a

To these I'll give full scope and play
From Ticonderog to Florida.
They'll scalp your heads and kick your shins,
And up your—, and flay your skins,
And of your ears be nimble croppers,
And make your thumbs tobacco stoppers.
If after all these loving warnings,
My wishes and my bowels' yearnings,
You shall remain as deaf as adder,
Or grow with hostile rage the madder,
I swear by St. George and by St. Paul,
I will exterminate you all.
Subscribed with my manual sign,
To test these presents.—JOHN BURGOYNE."

picket guard, and came so near as to wound two men who were standing behind the works. They have stopped the communication between this and Lake George.

“ We have a fair view of their boats, but cannot see that they have brought many regulars with them. At least, the number of red coats in them is very small. The wind having been contrary for several days, has prevented their fleet from coming up. The first fair breeze, I shall expect to see them. Many bets are depending that we shall be attacked in the course of this week. Our troops are determined, and in great spirits. They wish to be permitted to drive the savages from Three Mile Point, but General St. Clair chooses to act on the sure side, and risk nothing. The few alarms we have had have been of great service in making the men alert and vigilant; but I am afraid the enemy will repeat them so frequently as to throw them into their former indolence and inattention. General St. Clair has taken the precaution to move most of the stores to the mount [Independence]. This moment two ships, and as many sloops, have hove in sight. The spirits of the men seem to increase in proportion to the number of the enemy.

“ I cannot but esteem myself fortunate that indisposition prevented my returning with you, as it has given me an opportunity of being present at a battle in which I promise myself the pleasure of seeing our army flushed with victory.”

But Schuyler could not repress his apprehensions about the safety of the post. To Colonel Varick he wrote on the 1st of July :

“ The insufficiency of the garrison at Ticonderoga, the imperfect state of the fortifications, and the want of discipline in the troops, give me great cause to apprehend that we shall lose that fortress, but as a reinforcement is coming up from Peekskill, with which I shall move up, I am in hopes that the enemy will be prevented from making any further progress.”*

At this time Schuyler had some domestic annoyance that disturbed him. His eldest daughter, Angelica, a beautiful and brilliant girl, had married against his wishes and his desires expressed to her lover, that he should cease paying his addresses to her. In a letter to his friend, William Duer, written on the 3d of July, he said : “ Carter and my eldest daughter ran off and married on the 23d inst. Unacquainted with his family, his connections and situation

* Autograph letter.

in life, the match was exceedingly disagreeable to me, and I had signified it to him. But as there is no undoing this gordian knot, I took what I hope you will think the prudent part: I frowned, I made them humble themselves, forgave, and called them home.”*

The bright expectations of St. Clair and others were soon disappointed. On the morning of the first of July, the beginning of a brilliant hot day, the whole invading force, excepting a guard left to protect Crown Point, moved up the lake in perfect order, in two divisions, with the fleet between them. The corps of General Phillips composed the right wing, moving on the west side of the lake, and the German troops of General Riedesel formed the left wing, moving on the east side. The dragoons formed the advanced guard of the whole. Toward evening both wings halted within about three miles of Forts Ticonderoga and Independence, while the fleet anchored between them just out of the range of the American guns. From the flag-ship *Royal George*, on which was General Burgoyne, it was easy to survey the position of the patriots at the two forts.

* His name was John Carter Church. He came to this country from England under the name of Carter, and married as such. Why he dropped his family name, is not known. He appears to have been a man of large wealth and good social standing in England. He returned to England some time after his marriage, and resumed his family name. He was a member of Parliament, and was intimate with the Prince of Wales and his party friends. I have seen a letter from Mrs. Church to her brother, describing a ball given at her house in London, at which the Prince Regent and all notabilities were present. They returned to New York, where they lived in grand style for those days. There Mrs. (Carter) Church died, and her husband returned to England. His son, Philip Church, owned a beautiful seat called Belvidere, about three miles from the village of Angelica, in Alleghany county, New York. The village was so named in honor of his mother.

At the halting-place Burgoyne began to throw up intrenchments and to construct a boom across the lake. The latter movement, when reported to Schuyler by St. Clair, gave him hopes that the enemy was not as strong as had been represented, nor were intending to make a serious attack. "The enemy," he wrote to General Heath, on the 3d, "have approached to within three miles of Ticonderoga, where they are intrenching themselves, and also are throwing a boom across the lake. This does not convey with it an idea that they have any great force;" and to the President of the State of Massachusetts, he wrote on the same day: "The enemy, from late manœuvres, do not appear to be in any great force." General Schuyler was then in great perplexity. His hourly expectation of the arrival of reinforcements was almost continually disappointed. News had come that savages had been attacking and scalping settlers in the vicinity of Fort Schuyler; that Indians and Tories were harassing the settlements on the upper waters of the Susquehanna; that Brant, a young and powerful Mohawk Chief, had threatened much, and that the prospect of a near invasion by a motley horde of British, Canadians and Indians, by way of Oswego, had spread great terror throughout Tryon County, the inhabitants of which were calling to him most piteously for protection, and had said: "If not succored, the well-affected people of these frontiers will be left in such a dilemma that will render them obliged either to abandon their habitations or submit to the terms of the friends of Great Britain, *seeing themselves out of the protection of the States of America.*" He immediately wrote to the committee of Tryon County, entreating them to keep up the spirits of the people and encourage them to act promptly

when called upon, and their enemies would be baffled. "Do not suppose," he said, "that the United States of America will not afford you protection. I am sure I have been always ready and willing to afford every assistance in my power, and hitherto it has been effectual, for no mischief worth mentioning has, as yet, been perpetrated in any part of your county, and you may depend upon it that upon no necessary occasion will you be left without support." To George Clymer, in Congress, he wrote: "The enemy are harassing us in every quarter of this department. They have begun their scalpings at Fort Schuyler and at Ticonderoga. I am, however, happily, thank God, in full health and spirits to enable me to extend my attentions to the various quarters, and hope we shall do well." Colonel Van Schaick, then in Tryon County with a regiment of Continental troops, was directed to remain there; and he exhorted Herkimer to keep up the spirits of the people. "If we act with vigor and spirit," he said, "we have nothing to fear; but if once despondency takes place the worst consequences are to be apprehended."

Meanwhile Schuyler was awaiting with impatience and anxiety the arrival of promised troops from Peekskill, for whom he had sent down sloops. They had not yet arrived on the 5th, when he wrote to Congress: "If they do not arrive by to-morrow I shall go on without them and do the best I can with the militia." Pursuant to this resolution, he set out on the morning of the 7th without the Continentals, and with only a handful of militia, and at Stillwater he was met by the most astounding news from Ticonderoga. Burgoyne's army had been exceedingly active. On the morning of the 2d the right wing was pushed forward, and St. Clair hoped and believed they

were about to make a direct attack on his position. The small American detachments at the outposts toward Lake George made a feeble resistance and then abandoned their works and fled to Ticonderoga. This was followed by the swift advance of Generals Phillips and Frazer with a corps of infantry and some light artillery, not against the fort, but to take possession of Mount Hope, that commanded the road to Lake George. This they accomplished, and so cut off all supplies for the garrison from Fort George. This movement was followed by the most active exertions of the enemy in bringing up their artillery, ammunition and stores, to fortify and maintain their new position; and on the 4th, Frazer's whole brigade occupied Mount Hope, the name then given to it by that general, in allusion to the hopes its possession gave them of dislodging the Americans. Meanwhile the whole left wing had been pushed forward to the advanced camp of Colonel Breyman, in front of Fort Independence, where they were cannonaded by a water-battery attached to that fortification.

All was quiet on the 3d, excepting the sounds of an occasional cannon shot, or the distant sputtering of musketry in short conflicts between pickets, and in the afternoon the floating battery arrived.

On the 4th, General Phillips seized the mills at the falls of the outlet of Lake George, and hemmed in Ticonderoga on that side, and the *Thunderer* arrived and landed heavy guns at Three Mile Point.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Twiss, Burgoyne's chief engineer, had reconnoitred Sugar Loaf Hill, and reported that it not only commanded the whole of the American works at Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, but that a road

to the top, suitable for the conveyance of cannon, though difficult, might be made in the space of twenty-four hours. It was at once resolved to erect a battery on its summit, and, by arduous and continued labor, a road was cleared on the night of the 4th of July, and heavy guns were placed there. Then the British gave the name of Mount Defiance to Sugar Loaf Hill, for from that height they might defy the guns of the Americans.

All this was done so secretly that the first intimation St. Clair had of it, was the startling sight, at dawn on the morning of the 5th, of that lofty summit glowing with the scarlet uniforms of British troops, surrounding heavy artillery, that stood threateningly there. It was an appalling sight to the Americans below. It seemed more like the lingering apparitions of a night vision than the terrible reality they were forced to acknowledge it to be. From that height the enemy could look down into the fortress, count every man, inspect all the movements, and with eyes and great guns command all the works of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence.

St. Clair immediately called a council of war. The state of the case was laid before them. The garrison then consisted of only thirty-three hundred men, with only two-thirds of them effective. They were not sufficient to man one-half of the works; General Schuyler had not sufficient troops to reinforce or relieve them; the enemy's batteries were nearly ready to hurl shot and shell down upon them from the height, seven hundred feet above them, and a complete investment of the place would be accomplished within twenty-four hours. He thought nothing could save the little army from destruction or capture. So thought all his officers, and it was agreed to fly. It was a critical

moment in the life of St. Clair. To remain, would be to lose his army; to retreat, would be to lose his character. He was willing to sacrifice himself for his troops, and at about two o'clock on the morning of the 6th of July the garrison were put in motion. As every movement might be seen in the daytime from Mount Defiance, nothing was done to excite the suspicions of the enemy until after dark. Nor was the determination of the council made known to the troops until that hour, and the evening order was given.

One regiment of invalids, and such baggage, ammunition and stores as there was time to place in two hundred batteaux, were sent up the lake to Skenesborough, now Whitehall, under a convoy of five armed galleys, while the main army was to pass on, by land, for the same place, by way of Castleton. The cannon that might not be taken away, were spiked. Each soldier was furnished with provisions for several days; and, previous to striking their tents, every light was extinguished, as if the garrison had gone to its night's repose. To allay all suspicion, a continued cannonade was kept up on Mount Independence. These arrangements were all completed in the space of a few hours, but not without a good deal of confusion.

At about three o'clock on Sunday morning, the 6th of July, the garrison of Ticonderoga crossed the bridge to Mount Independence. The waning moon was too pale, even in her unclouded brightness, to betray the fugitives in the toils of their preparations, or in their flight, and they felt certain that before daylight should discover their withdrawal, they would be too far on their way to make pursuit hopeful. But their hopes were blasted by General De Fermoy, the commander on Mount Independence, who,

in violation of express orders to the contrary, set fire to the house he had occupied, just as the troops left. The light of that conflagration revealed the whole scene and movements to the enemy, the consciousness of which heightened the confusion and disorder among the retreating patriots.

The rear-guard of the fugitives, commanded by Colonel Francis, left the Mount at about four o'clock in the morning, and the whole body pressed forward in regular order toward Hubbardton, in Vermont, where, after two hours halting, they were pretty well organized. The main army then marched into the forests, for Castleton, six miles further. The rear-guard and stragglers picked up by the way were placed under the command of Colonel Seth Warner, and remained at Hubbardton, awaiting the arrival of some who were left behind.

So soon as the British discovered the retreat of the Americans from Ticonderoga, General Frazer began an eager pursuit of them from Mount Hope, with only his pickets, leaving orders for his brigade to follow. At the dawn of day he unfurled the British flag over Ticonderoga, and before sunrise he had passed the bridge and Mount Independence, and was in hot pursuit of the fugitives. Riedesel, with Breyman, who were on that side of the lake, joined in the chase with the German troops, while Burgoyne, who was yet on the *Royal George*, prepared for an immediate pursuit of the batteaux and convoy. The Americans supposed their boom would effectually bar the passage of the enemy's fleet; but it was soon cleft asunder, and long before noon a free passage was made for the British gunboats and frigates, and the whole flotilla were crowding sail before a favorable breeze to overtake the fugitives. They were successful. Bat-

teaux and galleys, baggage and stores, with which the Americans left Ticonderoga, were all destroyed at Skenesborough, by the armies, who set fire to them, excepting two batteaux that were burned before the sun went down behind the mountains that border Lake George. The troops under Colonel Long finding themselves unsupported at Skenesborough, fired the vessels, fort, mills, and block houses there, and made their way to Fort Anne. General Schuyler was informed that "not one earthly thing was saved."

The astounding news which reached Schuyler at Stillwater (or rather between Stillwater and Saratoga) was that of the evacuation of Ticonderoga, so unexpected, and entirely unauthorized by him. He met Colonel Udney Hay, deputy quartermaster-general, who was on his way with the intelligence. At his home, at Saratoga, he immediately dispatched an officer with orders for General St. Clair, wherever he might be, to march by the nearest route for Fort Anne or Fort Edward. He also directed him, "or officer commanding the troops from Ticonderoga," to "send out strong parties to bring away the inhabitants to the north and northeast of Skenesborough." If that should not be practicable then, he positively ordered all their cattle of whatever kind, together with wheel carriages, to be brought away or destroyed, to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy. Then he wrote a brief letter to General Washington, announcing the disaster. He had then too little information upon which to form a resolution as to future movements. "It is impossible," he wrote, "to say what post we shall take. It depends upon the route the enemy mean to pursue. My prospect of preventing them from penetrating is not

much. They have an army flushed with victory, and plentifully provided with provisions, cannon, and every warlike store; our army, if it should once more collect, is weak in numbers, dispirited, naked, in a manner destitute of provisions, without camp equipage, with little ammunition, and not one single piece of cannon."

Such was the truthful and sad picture which Schuyler drew of the garrison just driven from Ticonderoga—a picture of which Congress and the New England States ought to have been heartily ashamed. Day after day, week after week, and month after month, Schuyler had been calling anxiously upon these authorities for strength in men and supplies to resist the inevitable invasion from the north, but almost in vain, for faction in and out of Congress was then sadly interfering with the generous impulses of patriotism. A few more men and munitions of war would have allowed him to fortify and garrison the commanding points around Ticonderoga, to strengthen that post and Mount Independence, and their revetments, and made it impossible for all the forces in Canada to move beyond Crown Point. But these were withheld until the last moment, and this sad disaster was the consequence.

Yet Schuyler did not complain nor despair, but set himself at work more vigorously than ever to repair the mischief, or, at least, to prevent any more and greater disasters. In the letter to Washington, above mentioned, he added to his account of the condition of the army the following requisitions:

"In this situation it is of the most urgent necessity that your Excellency should afford me a very respectable reinforcement besides that now coming up [from Peekskill] under Brigadier-general Nixon, for it will be impossible for me to keep the militia together any time in a country very thinly inhabited, in which they cannot find shelter and must be exposed to the weather.

“As the Continental troops have lost everything, your Excellency will please to order up to me, the soonest possible, tents for four thousand men, five hundred camp-kettles, a quantity of fixed musket ammunition, cartridge paper, twelve pieces heavy cannon with travelling carriages, sixteen field-pieces, and a considerable quantity of ammunition for them. A competent number of artillerymen in addition to Major Steven’s corps, so as to be sufficient to manage the artillery. All the implements necessary to the artillery, horses, harness and drivers, with about six hundred intrenching tools sorted, excluding pick-axes, of which we have a considerable number. Please to send me a good Engineer or two.”

To the Council of Safety of New York, he wrote :

“I have not above seven hundred Continental troops and twice that number of militia to oppose the enemy, and not a single piece of artillery. In this situation my prospect is not very agreeable. I wish for all the militia, from every quarter, to come up with all expedition. If the Council of Safety, or at least part of it, were immediately to repair to Albany, it might have a good effect, as I have hardly anybody to help me.”

To other local authorities General Schuyler wrote on the same day, and that night he pushed on to Fort Edward. There he could hear nothing concerning the whereabouts of General St. Clair and his army. To General Washington he communicated this alarming fact, and added :

“I am here, at the head of a handful of men—not above fifteen hundred—without provisions, very little ammunition—not above five rounds to a man—having neither balls, or lead to make any ; the country in the deepest consternation. No carriages to move the stores from Fort George, which, I expect to learn every moment, is attacked, and what adds to my distress is that a report prevails that I had given orders for the evacuation of Ticonderoga, when not the most distant hint of such an intention can be drawn from any of my letters to General St. Clair, or any other person whatever. I am informed, from undoubted authority, that the garrison was reinforced with twelve hundred men, at least two days before its evacuation, and that eighty head of cattle had got in and a number of sheep. What could induce the general officers to a step which has ruined our affairs in this quarter, God only knows.”

It was not true that the garrison had been reinforced, nor that beeves and sheep had gone into the fort, as related. But, under this erroneous impression, Schuyler wrote to

the Council of Safety of New York, on the same day: "What could induce General St. Clair and the general officers with him to evacuate Ticonderoga, God only knows; not a battery, as I am well informed, was opened against it. The garrison amounted to about five thousand men, in high spirits, healthy, sufficiently supplied with provisions, plenty of ammunition, and the Eastern militia in full march to its aid." He then spoke of the evacuation being imputed to his orders, and made a most emphatic denial of the truth of the allegations. Pierre Van Cortlandt, the President of that Council, immediately wrote to General Putnam, enclosing extracts from Schuyler's letter, and assuring him that they would promptly transmit to him whatever intelligence they might receive from the North. "The evacuation of Ticonderoga," Mr. Van Cortlandt proceeded to say, "appears to the Council highly reprehensible, and it gives them great pain to find that a measure so absurd, and probably criminal, should be imputed to the direction of General Schuyler, in whose zeal, vigilance and integrity the Council repose the highest confidence."