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CHAPTER XXIII.

SCOTT ORDERED BACK TO BRITISH FRONTIERS—TURMOIL
RENEWED—MAINE BOUNDARY.

It has been said that the autobiographer had intended to accompany the emigration farther west than the Ohio, to help it through any unforeseen difficulties on the route; but short of that point he received despatches from Washington telling him that the *Canadian patriots* (taking advantage of his absence in the South) had, in great numbers, reorganized their secret lodges all along the frontiers, and would renew their attempts to break into the Canadas on the return of frost, and he was directed to hasten thither, arranging with the Governors of Kentucky and Ohio, in route, the supply of such uninfected volunteers as might be

needed to maintain the obligations of neutrality toward Great Britain.

Accompanied by Captain Robert Anderson, Scott rapidly visited Frankfort and Columbus; made contingent arrangements for volunteers that might be wanted, and also with the United States' District Attorney of Ohio for the assistance of his deputies and marshals in the arrest of leading offenders. Several of these, accompanied by a deputy marshal, he pursued for days. Though he lost not a moment on the route, he arrived but in time at Cleveland, Sandusky, and Detroit, respectively, to stop and disperse multitudes of frenzied citizens, by the means used in the previous winter, and thence proceeded down the frontiers *via* the places named, to Buffalo, Oswego, Sackett's Harbor, Ogdensburg, and Plattsburg, to the northern frontier of Vermont—meeting like assemblages and successes everywhere.

At the point farthest east he heard of the forward movement of the State of Maine on the Aroostook question, and fortunately was sufficiently out of work to hasten to Washington for instructions on this new difficulty—one entirely independent of Canadian patriots and sympathizers.

The autobiographer reported himself in person to the Secretary of War, without having been in a recumbent position in eighty hours. Every branch of the Government felt alarmed at the imminent hazard of a formidable war—but little having been done in a twenty-four years' peace to meet such exigency.

Though the moments were precious, Scott was detained several days to aid by explanations and arguments the passage of two bills—one to authorize the President to call out militia for six, instead of three months, and to accept fifty thousand volunteers; the other to place to his credit ten millions of dollars *extra*. For that purpose, he (Scott) was taken into conference with the chairmen of the committees on foreign and military affairs, of both Houses of Congress, and he may add, excusably, he hopes, that but for his expositions, and the known fact that the whole management of the difficulty in question would devolve on him, the bills would not have become laws; for, besides a hesitancy in the House of Representatives, a decided majority of the Senate was opposed to the Administration.

In taking leave of Mr. Van Buren and Mr. Secretary Poinsett, in order that there might be no "unto-

ward" mistake, Scott respectfully said: "Mr. President, if you want *war*, I need only look on in silence. The Maine people will make it for you fast and hot enough. I know them; but if *peace* be your wish, I can give no assurance of success. The difficulties in its way will be formidable." "Peace with honor," was the reply; and that being Scott's own wish—looking to the great interests of the country—he went forward with a hearty good will.

Always accompanied by the gallant Captain Robert Anderson, and now rejoined by Lieutenant Keyes, Aide-de-Camp, the autobiographer, with *carte blanche*, hastened toward Maine—stopping in Boston long enough to arrange a contingent call for militia and volunteers with the patriotic and most accomplished Governor—Edward Everett—who, at the presentation to the executive council overwhelmed the sleepless general by this address:

"GENERAL:

"I take great pleasure in introducing you to the members of the Executive Council of Massachusetts; I need not say that you are already known to them by reputation. They are familiar with your fame as it is

recorded in some of the arduous and honorable fields of the country's struggles. We rejoice in meeting you on this occasion, charged as you are with a most momentous mission by the President of the United States. We are sure you are intrusted with a duty most grateful to your feelings—that of averting an appeal to arms. We place unlimited reliance on your spirit, energy, and discretion. Should you unhappily fail in your efforts, under the instructions of the President, to restore harmony, we know that you are equally prepared for a still more responsible duty. Should that event unhappily occur, I beg you to depend on the firm support of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

The general replied most respectfully, and concluded with assuring the Governor and council that the Executive of the United States had full reliance on the patriotism and public spirit of Massachusetts, to meet any emergency which might arise.

From that scene Scott was next taken to the popular branch of the legislature, where he was also handsomely received—another life-long, valued friend, Robert C. Winthrop, subsequently distinguished in both Houses of Congress, in the chair.

Arriving at Portland, Scott met his first difficulty. The whole population, it seemed, had turned out to greet him. All being in favor of war, or the peaceful possession of the Aroostook, the "disputed territory," all looked to him to conquer that possession at once, as they had become tired of diplomacy, parleys, and delays. Many of his old soldiers of the last war with Great Britain were in the crowd; and although no man is a hero in the estimation of his *valet de chambre*, the feeling is quite otherwise with a commander's old brothers in arms. These now exaggerated Scott into the greatest man-slayer extant;—one who had killed off, in the Canadas, more men than Great Britain had there in that war.

Loud calls were made for a speech, *a speech!* But, too young in diplomacy to have acquired the art of using language to conceal his thoughts, the missionary of peace took refuge in silence, being, really, much oppressed with a cold and hoarseness. The word *peace* he had to hold *in petto*, to be suggested in the gentlest and most persuasive accents to the hostile ears of the Governor and his council at Augusta, the capital of Maine.

Scott found a bad temper prevailing at Augusta.

The legislature was in session, and the Democrats dominant in every branch of the Government.

In the legislature the weight of talent and information, however, was with the Whig minority. Hence they were much feared; for, having recently been in power, the least error on the side of the Democrats, might again give them the State. The popular cry being for war, the Whigs were unwilling to abandon that hobby-horse entirely; but the Democrats were the first in the saddle and rode furiously.

The State of Maine and the Province of New Brunswick were fast approaching actual hostilities, and if Scott had been a few days later in coming upon the scene, the troops of the two countries would have arrived, and crossed bayonets on the disputed territory—a strip of land lying between acknowledged boundaries, without any immediate value except for the fine ship-timber in which it abounded. The cutting of these venerable trees by British subjects led Maine to send a land agent, with a *posse*, to drive off the trespassers. The agent was seized and imprisoned, for a time, in the Province. Much angry correspondence ensued between the two Governors, followed by ominous silence and war preparation.

Scott soon perceived that the only hope of pacification depended on his persuading the local belligerents to stand off the territory in question for a time, and to remit the whole question in issue to the two paramount Governments at Washington and London, from which it had been improperly wrested, by the impatience of Maine at the dilatoriness of American diplomacy.

He took up his quarters at the same house, in Augusta, with His Excellency and other leading Democrats, and sat in the midst of them three times a day at the same public table. By degrees he won their confidence. He was known to them as the representative, in the special matter, of their friends of the same party at Washington.

The intrinsic difficulties to be dealt with in the mission were much aggravated by a new element just thrown in by federal authority and published at the time in all the papers, viz. :

“MEMORANDUM.

“Her Majesty’s authorities consider it to have been understood and agreed upon by the two Governments, that the territory in dispute between Great Britain and

the United States, on the northeastern frontier, should remain exclusively under British jurisdiction until the final settlement of the boundary question.

“The United States’ Government have not understood the above agreement in the same sense, but consider, on the contrary, that there has been no agreement whatever for the exercise, by Great Britain, of exclusive jurisdiction over the disputed territory, or any portion thereof, but a mutual understanding that, pending the negotiation, the jurisdiction then exercised by either party, over small portions of the territory in dispute, should not be enlarged, but be continued merely for the preservation of local tranquillity and the public property, both forbearing as far as practicable to exert any authority, and, when any should be exercised by either, placing upon the conduct of each other the most favorable construction.

“A complete understanding upon the question, thus placed at issue, of present jurisdiction, can only be arrived at by friendly discussion between the Governments of the United States and Great Britain; and, as it is confidently hoped that there will be an early settlement of the question, this subordinate point of difference can be of but little moment.

"In the mean time, the Governor of the Province of New Brunswick and the Government of the State of Maine, will act as follows: Her Majesty's officers will not seek to expel, by military force, the armed party which has been sent by Maine into the district bordering on the Aroostook River; but the Government of Maine will, voluntarily, and without needless delay, withdraw beyond the bounds of the disputed territory any armed force now within them; and if future necessity should arise for dispersing notorious trespassers, or protecting public property from depredation by armed force, the operation shall be conducted by concert, jointly or separately, according to agreements between the Governments of Maine and New Brunswick.

"The civil officers in the service respectively of New Brunswick and Maine, who have been taken into custody by the opposite parties, shall be released.

"Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to fortify or to weaken, in any respect whatever, the claim of either party to the ultimate possession of the disputed territory.

"The Minister Plenipotentiary of Her Britannic Majesty having no specific authority to make any ar-

rangement on the subject, the undersigned can only recommend, as they now earnestly do, to the Governments of New Brunswick and Maine, to regulate their future proceedings according to the terms herein set forth, until the final settlement of the territorial dispute, or until the Governments of the United States and Great Britain shall come to some definite conclusion on the subordinate point upon which they are now at issue.

"JOHN FORSYTH, *Secretary of State*
of the United States of North America.

"H. S. FOX, *H. B. M. Envoy*
Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary.

"WASHINGTON, February 27, 1839."

This *memorandum* gave great offence to the authorities and people of Maine. They were required to withdraw their forces from the territory in dispute simply on the promise that British officers would not *seek to expel them by force!*—without any reciprocal obligation;—the other party being left free to remain; to fortify themselves; to continue their depredations, undisturbed, and for an indefinite time! This bungle Scott had first to adjust between Democratic authorities

—State and Federal—he being himself a Whig! It was no easy thing to find a solvent for such knarled perplexities, foreign and domestic. Fortunately accidental circumstances in his history supplied the *desideratum*.

The Governor of the Province, New Brunswick, was, at the time, the distinguished Lieutenant-General, Sir John Harvey, of the British army, the same who in the campaign of 1813 was adjutant-general in Upper Canada with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. (See above, p. 99 and note.)

The report of Colonel Harvey's kindness to such American officers and men as fell into the hands of the enemy, made him an object of respect and kindness throughout our ranks. Harvey and Scott being leaders, and always in front, exchanged salutes several times on the field, and once, when out reconnoitring, Scott's escort cut off the Englishman from his party. A soldier, taking a deadly aim, would, certainly, have finished a gallant career, if Scott had not knocked up the rifle—saying, *Don't kill our prisoner!* But though a prisoner for a moment, Harvey, by a sudden movement, spurred his charger and escaped into a thicket, unhurt, notwithstanding the many rifle balls hastily

thrown after him. This was the second time that he had escaped from captivity, and Scott now gave strict orders never to spare again an enemy so active and dangerous.

It so happened that in leaving the Cherokee country, the *major-general* received a friendly letter from the *lieutenant-general*, which, from the want of time, remained unanswered when the former arrived at Augusta.

The reply to that letter, semi-official, was followed by a rapid interchange of like communications, the Governor of Maine reading all that was written by the correspondents. By degrees Scott won over to his pacific views the dominant party—only that it hesitated lest the Whigs should shift about, agitate against any compromise and thereby regain the State. This apprehension was mentioned to Scott by the Governor, in the presence of the aged treasurer, an honest man, but a bigot in politics. Scott, who had not approached the Whigs in the Legislature, who, indeed, had shunned him as a Democrat;—nor had he expressed a party sentiment to anybody after his leaving Washington—now asked permission of Governor Fairfield to speak to his leading opponents in that body—adding that he him-

self being a Whig, might bring them out, openly, in support of pacific measures. At this declaration of party bias, the good old treasurer was thrown into a most ludicrous attitude of surprise and consternation, which caused his Excellency, though himself, at first, a little startled, to laugh most heartily. This burst of good humor, in which the treasurer eventually joined, was a positive gain in the right direction. (All the details of this negotiation cannot yet be given. There was, however, no bribery.)

To bring those leading Whigs and Scott together required dexterous management; for if that had happened without the presence of leading Democrats, a suspicion of foul play would have been excited. Scott, therefore, induced Senator Evans, just from Washington, to invite them, the Governor and several State Councillors to sup with him at Gardiner, a little below Augusta. The envoy took charge of his Democratic friends in a government sleigh. All the topics he intended to urge upon the Whig leaders were given and discussed in the vehicle. The night was brilliant, and so was the entertainment. Mr. Evans—a distinguished Whig, as everybody knew—placed his Democratic guests at his end of the table, and Scott, with the

Whigs around him, at the other. The latter were sulky, and Scott's blandishments, in doing the honors of his position, failed to open the way to the main business of the evening—next to the supper—when, on a beckon, the master of the feast came to the rescue, and whispered to the Whigs (capital fellows!) that the representative of President Van Buren, near them, was as good a Whig as the best of them! Another ludicrous surprise! Compliments and cordiality ensued at once, and viands and business were discussed together to the content of all parties. The Governor understood the object of the Senator's whispers, and plainly saw that Scott had succeeded. A feast is a great peacemaker—worth more than all the usual arts of diplomacy. Scott had also, from the first, received good assistance from the Honorable Albert Smith, of Portland, afterward a member of Congress, who, happening to be in Augusta, gave him the temper and bias of many particular Democrats whom it was necessary to conciliate.

The work was done. Virtually nothing remained, but the synthetic process of gathering up all the particular results into one general act of amnesty and good will. Sir John Harvey was of a too elevated character

to be fastidious about non-essentials. On being sound-
ed, he had concurred at once with Scott on all essen-
tials, and Governor Fairfield and council having no
longer anything to fear from perversity on the part of
the Whigs, now sent in a message, March 12, to the
Legislature, of which this is an extract:

"What then shall be done? The people of the
State surely are not desirous of hurrying the two na-
tions into a war. Such an event is anxiously to be
avoided, if it can be without dishonor. We owe too
much to the Union, to ourselves, and, above all, to the
spirit and principles of Christianity, to bring about a
conflict of arms with a people having with us a common
origin, speaking a common language, and bound to us
by so many ties of common interest, without the most
inexorable necessity. Under these circumstances I
would recommend that, when we are fully satisfied,
either by the declarations of the Lieutenant-Governor
of New Brunswick, or otherwise, that he has abandoned
all idea of occupying the disputed territory with a mili-
tary force, and of attempting an expulsion of our party,
that then the Governor be authorized to withdraw our
military force, leaving the land-agent with a posse,

armed or unarmed, as the case may require, sufficient
to carry into effect your original design—that of driving
out or arresting the trespassers, and preserving and
protecting the timber from their depredations."

The Legislature, on the 20th of the same month,
passed an act in accordance with the message, and the
next day Scott despatched by his line of couriers,
to meet Sir John's line at the border, the following
papers:

From the Augusta (Me.) Journal, March 26, 1839.

"The War Ended.—Important Correspondence.

HEADQUARTERS, EASTERN DIVISION
U. S. ARMY, AUGUSTA, ME.,
March 21, 1839.

"The undersigned, a Major-General in the Army
of the United States, being specially charged with main-
taining the peace and safety of their entire northern
and eastern frontiers, having cause to apprehend a col-
lision of arms between the proximate forces of New
Brunswick and the State of Maine on the *disputed*

territory, which is claimed by both, has the honor, in the sincere desire of the United States to preserve the relations of peace and amity with Great Britain—relations which might be much endangered by such untoward collision—to invite from his Excellency Major-General Sir John Harvey, Lieutenant-Governor, etc., etc., a general declaration to this effect:

“That it is not the intention of the Lieutenant-Governor of Her Britannic Majesty’s Province of New Brunswick, under the expected renewal of negotiations between the cabinets of London and Washington on the subject of the said disputed territory, without renewed instructions to that effect from his Government, to seek to take military possession of that territory, or to seek, by military force, to expel therefrom the armed civil *posse* or the troops of Maine.

“Should the undersigned have the honor to be favored with such declaration or assurance, to be by him communicated to his Excellency the Governor of the State of Maine, the undersigned does not in the least doubt that he would be immediately and fully authorized by the Governor of Maine to communicate to his Excellency, the Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, a corresponding pacific declaration to this effect:

“That, in the hope of a speedy and satisfactory settlement, by negotiation, between the Governments of the United States and Great Britain, of the principal or boundary question between the State of Maine and the Province of New Brunswick, it is not the intention of the Governor of Maine, without renewed instructions from the Legislature of the State, to attempt to disturb by arms the said Province in the possession of the Madawaska settlements, or to attempt to interrupt the usual communications between that Province and Her Majesty’s Upper Provinces; and that he is willing, in the mean time, to leave the questions of possession and jurisdiction as they at present stand—that is, Great Britain holding, in fact, possession of a part of the said territory, and the Government of Maine denying her right to such possession; and the State of Maine holding, in fact, possession of another portion of the same territory, to which her right is denied by Great Britain.

“With this understanding, the Governor of Maine will, without unnecessary delay, withdraw the military force of the State from the said disputed territory—leaving only, under a land agent, a small civil *posse*, armed or unarmed, to protect the timber recently cut, and to prevent future depredations.

“ ‘Reciprocal assurances of the foregoing friendly character having been, through the undersigned, interchanged, all danger of collision between the immediate parties to the controversy will be at once removed, and time allowed the United States and Great Britain to settle amicably the great question of limits.

“ ‘The undersigned has much pleasure in renewing to his Excellency Major-General Sir John Harvey, the assurances of his ancient high consideration and respect.

“ ‘WINFIELD SCOTT.’

“ ‘To a copy of the foregoing, Sir John Harvey annexed the following :

“ ‘The undersigned, Major-General Sir John Harvey, Lieutenant-Governor of Her Britannic Majesty’s Province of New Brunswick, having received a proposition from Major-General Winfield Scott, of the United States’ Army, of which the foregoing is a copy, hereby, on his part, signifies his concurrence and acquiescence therein.

“ ‘Sir John Harvey renews with great pleasure to

Major-General Scott the assurances of his warmest personal consideration, regard, and respect.

“ ‘J. HARVEY.

“ ‘GOVERNMENT HOUSE, FREDERICTON,
NEW BRUNSWICK, March 23, 1839.’ }

“ ‘To a paper containing the note of General Scott, and the acceptance of Sir John Harvey, Governor Fairfield annexed his acceptance in these words :

“ ‘EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
AUGUSTA, March 25, 1839. }

“ ‘The undersigned, Governor of Maine, in consideration of the foregoing, the exigency for calling out the troops of Maine having ceased, has no hesitation in signifying his entire acquiescence in the proposition of Major-General Scott.

“ ‘The undersigned has the honor to tender to Major-General Scott the assurance of his high respect and esteem.

“ ‘JOHN FAIRFIELD.’

“ ‘We learn that General Scott has interchanged the acceptances of the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor,

and also that Governor Fairfield immediately issued orders recalling the troops of Maine, and for organizing the civil *posse* that is to be continued, for the time, in *the disputed territory*. The troops in this town will also be immediately discharged."

With Sir John's acceptance came this letter:

"MY DEAR GENERAL SCOTT:

"Upon my return from closing the session of the Provincial Legislature, I was gratified by the receipt of your very satisfactory communication of the 21st instant. My reliance upon *you*, my dear General, has led me to give my willing assent to the proposition which you have made yourself the very acceptable means of conveying to me; and I trust that as far as the Province and the State respectively are concerned, an end will be put by it to all border disputes, and a way opened to an amicable adjustment of the national question involved. I shall hope to receive the confirmation of this arrangement on the part of the State of Maine at as early a period as may be practicable."

Dr. W. E. Channing, a leading philanthropist

scholar, orator, and divine, of his day, in the preface to his *Lecture on War* (1839), devoted two paragraphs to the honor of the autobiographer's peace labors, in these words:

"To this distinguished man belongs the rare honor of uniting with military energy and daring, the spirit of a philanthropist. His exploits in the field, which placed him in the first rank of our soldiers, have been obscured by the purer and more lasting glory of a pacificator, and of a friend of mankind. In the whole history of the intercourse of civilized with barbarous or half-civilized communities, we doubt whether a brighter page can be found than that which records his agency in the removal of the Cherokees. As far as the wrongs done to this race can be atoned for, General Scott has made the expiation.

"In his recent mission to the disturbed borders of our country, he has succeeded, not so much by policy as by the nobleness and generosity of his character, by moral influences, by the earnest conviction with which he has enforced on all with whom he has had to do, the obligations of patriotism, justice, humanity, and religion. It would not be easy to find among us a man

who has won a purer fame; and I am happy to offer this tribute, because I would do something, no matter how little, to hasten the time when the spirit of Christian humanity shall be accounted an essential attribute and the brightest ornament of a public man.

"He returns to Washington, and is immediately ordered to the Cherokee nation, to take charge of the very difficult and hazardous task to his own fame of removing those savages from their native land. Some of his best friends regretted, most sincerely, that he had been ordered on this service; and, knowing the disposition of the world to cavil and complain without cause, had great apprehensions that he would lose a portion of the popularity he had acquired by his distinguished success on the Canadian frontier. But, behold the manner in which this last work has been performed! There is so much of noble generosity of character about Scott, independent of his skill and bravery as a soldier, that his life has really been one of romantic beauty and interest."

CHAPTER XXIV.

POLITICS—GENERAL-IN-CHIEF—STOPS UNLAWFUL PUNISHMENTS—ATTEMPTS TO ABOLISH HIS RANK AND TO REDUCE HIS PAY—MR. ADAMS AND MR. C. J. INGERSOLL.

It was about this time that the autobiographer was, without wish or agency on his part, brought into the arena of party politics, although long before a quiet Whig. A convention of delegates of that party met early in December, 1839, at Harrisburg, to select candidates for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency at the election in November of the following year.

Mr. Clay, the head of the party, and General Harrison were the principals before the convention. Scott had also a respectable number of supporters (the dele-