

ber of the same year Washington took an affecting leave of his army and retired to Mount Vernon.

He was summoned thence to take the chair of chief executive of the nation, which for eight years he filled with honor, not without detraction and slander, but yet winning love and respect in peace as he had done in war.

After his return to Mount Vernon he led the most delightfully peaceful domestic life, entertaining many who turned aside to visit this remarkable man.

In December, 1799, he took a sudden cold which resulted fatally. Cheerfully, in full possession of his faculties, he laid aside the garments of the flesh, "as one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him and lies down to pleasant dreams."

CHAPTER XIX.

ISRAEL PUTNAM.

Ancestors—Early Life—In the French and Indian War—Reconnoitring Crown Point—Narrow Escape—Promoted—Disobeying Orders at Fort Edward—Moonlight Fight on the way to Ticonderoga—Prisoner—Exchanged—Expedition to Havana—Conferring with Governor Fitch—From Plow to Sword—At Bunker Hill—Narrow Escape at West Greenwich—Attacked by Paralysis—Observations on Character—Death.

ISRAEL PUTNAM was born in Salem, Mass., in January, 1718. His father was a farmer, and the boy from his earliest years took a part in the work of the farm. He received only the rudiments of education—reading, writing and arithmetic—in the common school of the district. Strong and healthy, he surpassed all his companions in athletic feats and sports. His boyhood passed in this alternation of hard work and vigorous play. At twenty years of age he married a Miss Pope, of Salem, and removed to a farm in Pomfret which he had acquired. Here he carried on his occupation with fair success. He had a considerable flock of sheep, of which no less than seventy were destroyed by a wolf in one night. Israel followed the wolf to its den, and, holding a blazing torch in one hand, he succeeded in killing the furious animal with the other.

Putnam's life flowed on in peaceful avocations for a

quainted with the country, and so was outflanked and beaten on all sides.

He accompanied Washington in his retreat through New Jersey, until they arrived on the banks of the Delaware, and was then sent to Philadelphia to defend that city. There he constructed fortifications, and put every part of the city in a complete state of defence. Soon afterwards he was ordered to hold Princeton, which he did, with a very small number of troops, for the whole winter. He was very desirous that the British should not know how slender were his resources in means and men. A wounded prisoner, an English officer, was very desirous to have one of his former comrades aid him in drawing up his will. Putnam disliked to refuse the request of the wounded man, and therefore despatched a flag of truce with a request that the Englishman should be permitted to come over to his lines after dark. In the meantime he caused lights to be placed in all the windows; called out all the musicians he could summon, and kept his force of fifty men marching and countermarching the whole evening. When the English officer returned to his quarters he reported that Putnam had at least 5,000 men under his command.

In the fall of 1777 Putnam made preparations to attack New York, but was compelled to abandon the design, because Washington withdrew 2,500 of his troops. Soon after he received a large reinforcement, and when Burgoyne surrendered, Gates' army joined Putnam's, making the force at his disposal over 11,000 men. Washington sent to him for 5,000 of these troops, but Putnam declined, on the ground that the orders were not sufficiently explicit. Washington

reprimanded Putnam for his disobedience, knowing that the alleged reason was not the true one. In fact, Putnam was unwilling to lose so heavy a reinforcement until he had made an effort to retrieve his losses in the previous campaign.

He descended the Hudson and established himself at New Rochelle, where he continued to harass the enemy until he was ordered to take up winter-quarters in the Highlands. This was the winter in which Washington and his army were encamped at Valley Forge. It was the gloomiest period of the revolutionary struggle. The army was so destitute that it suffered severely from cold and privation. Putnam wrote to the commander-in-chief: "Many of my regiments have not a blanket among them. Very few have either shoes or shirts."

There had been some dissatisfaction with Putnam in the mind of Washington since the occurrence as to the sending of the troops to Philadelphia. In the spring of this year Putnam was relieved of his command, which was transferred to General Macdougall. The reason assigned by Washington was Putnam's unpopularity with the inhabitants of the section of country where his troops were encamped. Without entering into the causes of this unpopularity, he considered it advisable to transfer Putnam to some other field of operation. He accordingly deputed him to go to Connecticut and engage in raising new levies of troops. In this Putnam was very successful, and he sent on reinforcements to Washington as rapidly as Congress permitted. That body by its slowness in proceeding, and the grudging manner in which it voted supplies, seriously impeded the operations of the army through

a great part of the war. When Putnam had forwarded the new levies he rejoined Washington, arriving at headquarters shortly after the battle of Monmouth. He was assigned to the command of the right wing. In the next winter he was placed at Danbury, Connecticut, in charge of three brigades. Here his men, discouraged by much hardship, and believing that the struggle for independence would finally end in failure, organized a somewhat extensive mutiny. Putnam quelled it by bold and determined punishment of the ringleaders, and an earnest appeal to the patriotism of the other men concerned in it.

During this winter he performed that daring feat of horsemanship which is familiar in picture and story as Putnam's ride down a precipice. He had established some outposts at West Greenwich, Connecticut, and was visiting them when he received information that a column of British soldiers, 1,500 in number, and commanded by Governor Tryon, was advancing on the place. He had but 150 men and two guns to meet this force. He posted them near the meeting-house, on a hill, of which the slope was so steep as to be almost perpendicular. Here he ordered the two guns to open on the enemy, and for some time the well-directed fire kept the British soldiers at bay. Soon, however, Tryon ordered his dragoons to charge, and Putnam decided to place his men in some swampy ground near by, while he himself waited until the troop was close upon him. The dragoons, thinking their prey secure, rode across the ground, but reined up on the edge of the cliff, and, to their utter astonishment, saw Putnam riding down the steep side of the hill, on which it seemed almost impossible that a horse

could find a foothold. Putnam reached the bottom safe and sound and galloped away. He rode on to Stamford, and met some companies of militia. He hastily explained the position of matters to the officer in command, and induced him to turn back with him. Together they rode back to Greenwich, attacked Tryon and drove him back, capturing over fifty prisoners.

In 1779 he was stationed on the border of Maryland, and remained there several months without being called on for any decisive action. During the winter he asked and obtained permission to visit his family in Connecticut. In spring he started to rejoin the army, which was then at Morristown, New Jersey. While riding along near Hartford he was suddenly prostrated by a shock of paralysis. After some hours of unconsciousness he recovered his senses, but learned with horror that for the rest of his life he must submit to be a crippled invalid. He had faced death in all shapes without dismay, but was appalled at the blow that fell on him when this terrible disease forced him into inaction and obscurity. He made a violent effort to shake off his sickness; insisted that he could walk and ride, and only yielded when the paralyzed muscles absolutely refused to move at the bidding of the strong will. His intellect was not impaired in any degree, and when peace was declared the invalid warrior rejoiced over the enfranchised country, and welcomed back many of his old companions-in-arms.

He retired to his farm, but was never able to take up active occupation again. He lived seven years after the declaration of peace, and died in Brooklyn, Connecticut, 1790, being then seventy-two years old.

Putnam was a man of dauntless courage and wonder-

ful endurance. By sheer force of these qualities he fought his way up from captain of a militia company to the position of major-general in the army of the United States. He had not, however, the ability to plan and direct movements at a distance, which is so necessary a quality for a commander-in-chief. His military education fitted him for sudden onsets and for determined conflict with small bodies of men. In this sort of warfare he had no superior. On the very edge of defeat, he made so fearless and resolute a resistance, that his enemies fell back cowed and beaten, leaving him the honors of victory. His personal courage was something wonderful. Literally, he did not know what fear was. In battle he seemed absolutely unconscious of the balls that rained around him. But he had a fiery temper, which was roused to fury by any display of cowardice on the part of his troops. When they failed him, he fairly exploded with wrath, and poured forth a torrent of fiery invectives. Yet he was kindly and generous, as well as truthful, and of unblemished integrity. A man of the people, his manner was that of the farm and the camp, and he remained rough and unpolished even after he had attained a high position. He won respect from all, however, and remains on record as one of the most brilliant examples that history can show of the citizen-soldier.

CHAPTER XX.

NATHANIEL GREENE.

Character—Birth—Early Life—The Whip and the Shingles—Member of General Assembly—Married—Warrior Spirit Aroused by Invaders—Appointed Major-General—Sick—"Gracious God, my Poor Soldiers!"—In the Saddle again—With Washington in his Retreat through Jersey—At Germantown, Monmouth, etc.—Presiding at the Court-Martial of Andre—Called South—Race with Cornwallis—Battle of Guilford—Retreat of the Enemy—Battle of Eutaw Springs—Entering Charleston—Farewell to his Army—Removed to Georgia—Projecting a Challenge—Sunstroke—Death.

IN the subject of this sketch we find one of the most remarkable characters developed by the war of the Revolution. A self-made man, he rose from the ranks to the position of major-general solely by his own force and talent. He became the ablest commander of the army next to Washington, and there are those who believe that in mere military skill the subordinate surpassed the chief. Brave and self-possessed, his mind remained as clear and his judgment as correct in the midst of disaster and difficulty as when he was planning his campaigns in his headquarters. He bore exposure, privation, toils, and suffering with a patience that caused his soldiers to regard him with wonder and admiration. His energy was marvellous; he never seemed to take repose, nor to allow it to others. When

period of sixteen years, when war broke out against the French and their Indian allies. He enlisted at once under Sir William Johnson, who appointed him to the command of a company and commissioned him to reconnoitre Crown Point. With another officer, Major Rogers, he moved in the night close to the fort and made a very thorough reconnoissance. When they emerged, they found to their dismay that the sun had risen, and the soldiers were issuing from it over the fields. They dared not attempt to cross the open ground, and remained concealed for two hours, when a soldier discovered them. He was about to give the alarm, when Putnam, with a blow from the butt-end of his gun, laid him dead at his feet. The two friends then rushed across the plain and reached their comrades in safety.

In the following year he was stationed at Ticonderoga, and, while reconnoitring the French camp near a place called the Ovens, he had a remarkable escape from death. He had made his way into the heart of the enemy's camp, when he was discovered. He ran from the camp, at the top of his speed, while a hundred muskets were levelled at him. He took refuge behind a fallen tree and remained there until morning. No less than fourteen bullets had pierced his blanket, and one had passed through his canteen, but he was himself untouched.

In 1757 he was raised to the rank of major, and was stationed at Fort Edward. He discovered and reported that the French were marching on Fort William Henry. He volunteered to go to the relief of the garrison there, when the fort was invested by a force of nine thousand French and Indians. His com-

manding officer refused to permit him to go, although a considerable number of his rangers were anxious to go to the relief of the beleaguered troops. The fort was taken and the garrison massacred. Putnam visited the scene of the massacre, and was furious that he had been prevented from attempting the relief of the unfortunates who had met a horrible death at the hands of the Indians. Shortly afterwards a company of men, who had been sent to cut down timber for camp use, were attacked by a party of Indians. They fled towards the fort, but the commanding officer called in the outposts and shut the gates. Putnam and his rangers, who were stationed on an island near the fort, went to the assistance of the distressed company. The officer ordered him not to go, but the bold ranger briefly told him that no power on earth would again prevent his helping any white man threatened by Indians, and rode on. In a few minutes he and his gallant followers dashed on the Indians and drove them off. Putnam was never called to account for this disobedience of orders, and never was heard to express any regret for it.

In the following winter the barracks of Fort Edward took fire, and the flames, spreading rapidly, had almost reached the magazine, which contained 300 barrels of powder. Putnam sprang on the roof of the barracks, and ordered a line of soldiers to be formed between him and the water. Buckets of water were passed along to him, which he poured on the flames until, after nearly two hours of exhausting toil, he succeeded in extinguishing the fire. Smoke and flame were around him, and the magazine was but five feet distant during all this time. So fierce was the heat to which he

had been exposed, that when he removed his clothing the skin came off with it, and he was covered with blisters and burns for many weeks.

During the campaign which ended so disastrously at Ticonderoga, he was sent by Abercrombie to make a reconnoissance. He took with him thirty-five men, and they made for themselves a place of concealment on a high rock projecting over the river. Here they lay one night, when suddenly they saw a fleet of canoes on the stream below them, containing over 500 men. The click of a musket in the hands of one of Putnam's men gave the alarm to the enemy, and the next moment our hero and his companions were greeted with a double volley of bullets. The enemy's bullets were mostly flattened against the rocks, while those of Putnam's men did deadly execution. In the morning the boats drew off, leaving a crowd of dead floating on the river.

During the Ticonderoga campaign, while he was making his way to Fort Edward with 500 men, he was captured by a party of French and Indians, who came up with him and his men in the forest. The two parties engaged in a furious contest, while Putnam was bound to a tree which stood in the centre of the field of combat. The bullets of both sides flew thick around, but none struck him. The Americans were victorious, but as the Indians retreated they managed to carry off their prisoner. They took off his shoes and piled burdens on him, and thus, with his feet bleeding and his whole frame exhausted, he was compelled to travel through swamps, forests, and brushwood. A savage laid open his cheek with a blow from a tomahawk, and when night came on Putnam, re-

leased at last from the load he had been carrying, fell on the ground more dead than alive. They then prepared to torture him by slow burning, and for this purpose built a fire around the tree to which he was bound. A sudden shower of rain extinguished it, but they built it up again, and at length, as the flames began to curl around, causing him to writhe in the torture, they danced and yelled in hideous glee. Putnam longed for death to end his sufferings. Suddenly a French officer dashed through the ring of Indians, released him, and sent him as a prisoner of war to Montreal. It was often said that Putnam bore a charmed life, but in all his adventures death had never come so near nor in so horrible a shape as during that night among the redskins.

In 1759 he was promoted to a lieutenant-colonelcy, and joined the English army in the invasion of Canada. He served to the close of the war; and in 1762, when war was declared between England and Spain, joined in the expedition against Havana. He had a narrow escape from shipwreck off Cuba, the vessel in which he and his men were embarked having gone to pieces on a reef. The expedition was successful, but hundreds of Americans died of diseases induced or aggravated by the heat of the climate. Putnam escaped, however, and, reaching home safely, commanded a corps in an expedition against the Indians in the following year. Scarcely was this over when the first threatenings of war with England were heard. Putnam had just started on his farm-work, and had established an inn besides, expecting to make a comfortable living between tavern and farm. He was ploughing a field with a yoke of oxen when news of the fights

at Concord and Lexington reached him. Without even waiting to unyoke his oxen or to change his dress, he leaped on his horse, and, riding to Cambridge, joined in the council of war which was being held there.

It is difficult to estimate at this distance of time the circumstances under which the men of the revolutionary period took up arms. They were emphatically a peaceful people. They had no military training; no idea of order or discipline. One purpose animated them—the determination to be free, and on the day of the battle of Bunker Hill no less than 30,000 men came pouring into Boston resolved to fight for liberty, but with only the slenderest resources to meet the power opposed to them. They had but sixteen cannon in all, and of these only six were fit for use. They had but forty-one barrels of gunpowder; no provisions, no uniforms, no leaders. It was on the day that Bunker Hill was fought that Congress voted to appoint Washington to the chief command. Later they created four major-generals, of whom Putnam was one. He was then fifty-seven years old; had gained experience in the French and Indian war, and had won a reputation for military skill as well as for dauntless courage.

His first object was to prevent the British from moving into the open country, and for this purpose the American leaders decided to fortify the peninsula of Charlestown, and prevent the egress of the British by intrenching themselves at Bunker's Hill, and if necessary by meeting them in battle there. Colonel Prescott took up the position with 1,000 men, who proceeded to construct a redoubt during the night. The commander of an English ship of war perceived them, and ordered a cannonade. In a short time all

the artillery in the city, as well as the floating batteries and ships of war, were pouring a heavy fire on the works. Putnam galloped off to Cambridge for reinforcements, and met the troops of Stark and Reed on their way to the scene of action. He rode back with them, and found that the English were moving to assault the works on Breed's Hill and Bunker's Hill. They advanced in two dense columns. Putnam rode along the lines encouraging the men; he ordered them to hold their fire until the enemy was within eight rods, and then aim at their waist-bands. They followed his order, and their fire mowed down the British ranks so that the troops broke and retreated down the hill to the shore. This was repeated three times during the day; toward evening the British formed for a bayonet charge. This was successful, for the Americans had fired their very last round of ammunition, and had no bayonets. Putnam was enraged that the battle so desperately contested should be lost at last, but without cartridges or bayonets the troops were powerless and retreat was inevitable. But though obliged to leave the field, 1,500 British soldiers had fallen, while the Americans had lost less than 500. So skillful and heroic had been the defence that the English commander-in-chief actually offered Putnam the position of major-general in his army. Putnam treated the proposal as an insult.

He remained with the army around Boston that winter, and in spring took charge of the forces of General Greene, who was at that time disabled by sickness. In this campaign he was very unfortunate. He had but 5,000 men with which to contend against twice that number of British soldiers. He was unac-