



Surrender of Burgoyne.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE CAMPAIGN OF 1777, UNTIL THE SURRENDER OF BURGoyNE.

THE war into which the obstinacy and stupidity of the ministers had plunged the English nation was, nevertheless, popular, and whatever money and supplies were asked for were readily granted by Parliament. It was resolved to invade the provinces from Canada, and a large force was placed at General Burgoyne's disposal for that purpose. It was also resolved to prosecute the war with vigour in other sections. Few, in England, doubted that America would be reduced before another season should close.

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The campaign opened early. In March, 1777, a detachment from New York, then occupied by the British, was sent up the Hudson to destroy the stores collected at Peekskill, the lowest point on this river held by the Americans. In consequence of this attack, which was successful, new efforts were made to strengthen the defences of the Highlands, and Putnam was sent to take the command. A month later, the town of Danbury, in Connecticut, was attacked by General Tyson, at the head of 2000 men, and the provisions there collected for the use of the American army were destroyed. Tyson then retreated, but was molested by two corps of militia, one under Wooster, and the other under Arnold; but he suc-

March.  
Opening  
of the  
cam-  
paign.

Bk. V. cceeded in reaching head-quarters, with the loss of 170  
Ch. 3. men, killed and wounded. Wooster was unfortunately  
A. D. killed, and Arnold for his bravery was made a major-  
1777. general.

Expedi- The Americans retaliated by a similar marauding ex-  
to Sag pediton under Colonel Meigs, sent against Sag Harbour,  
Har- by which twelve English vessels were destroyed, a large  
bour. quantity of provisions seized, and ninety men taken pri-  
soners. Soon after, General Prescott, being quartered  
May 24. carelessly in the vicinity of Newport, was captured by a  
Capture small party, as Lee had been the preceding year. He  
of Gen. Prescott. was afterwards exchanged for Lee.

Howe But, early in June, military operations were conducted  
marches on a great scale. Howe, being reinforced, left New York,  
into N. with 30,000 men, and advanced into New Jersey, with  
Jersey. the view of penetrating to Philadelphia, or of bringing  
Washington out of his entrenchments, and forcing him to  
a general engagement. He had then removed to Middle-  
brook, with 8000 men.

But the American Fabius was too wary to fight under  
June 30. such disadvantages; and Howe, disappointed, embarked  
His de- 18,000 men at Staten Island, with the view of approach-  
sign on ing Philadelphia by water, leaving the remainder of the  
Phila- army under General Clinton, to co-operate with General  
delphia. Burgoyne on the Hudson.

Washington, uncertain as to the destination of Howe,  
proceeded to Philadelphia, to confer with Congress; and  
there, for the first time, he met the Marquis De la Fayette,  
who had just arrived, and who had offered himself as a  
volunteer in the American service. This generous noble-  
man, influenced by zeal for the cause of liberty, had pur-  
chased a ship at his own expense, and loaded it with  
military stores for the use of the Americans. Silas  
Deane, in Paris, had promised him the commission of

Wash-  
ington  
meets  
Lafay-  
ette.

major-general, and Congress, admiring his disinterested-  
ness, readily gave it to him, without, however, any mili-  
tary command. Among other distinguished foreigners, I. R. V.  
who came with him, was the Baron De Kalb, a German Ch. 3.  
veteran, who also was commissioned a major-general. A. D.  
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In the mean time, General Howe, learning that the  
Delaware was obstructed, entered the Chesapeake Bay, Aug. 27  
and landed at the head of Elk river, in Maryland, half-  
way between the Susquehanna and the Delaware, and  
sixty miles from Philadelphia. Washington concentrated Sept. 3.  
his forces, which amounted to 15,000, at Wilmington, to  
await the British army, which was much superior. Soon  
after (September 11th), he retired behind the Brandy- Americans do-  
wine, where he was attacked and defeated, and obliged to feated,  
retreat, during the night, to Chester, and the next day to and re-  
Philadelphia. Here he remained but a few days, then treat.  
recrossed the Schuylkill, and proceeded to attack the British  
near Goshen, twenty miles from Philadelphia; but a vio-  
lent rain compelled both armies to defer the engagement.

On the 22d, Howe crossed the Schuylkill, below the  
American army, and nothing but a battle could now save Howe  
Philadelphia. Washington, with inferior forces, which occupies  
were deficient in arms and ammunition, and wearied by Phila-  
delphia.  
recent marches, did not dare to risk a battle, and suffered  
the enemy to occupy the city. Its fall had been foreseen.  
Congress had adjourned to Lancaster, and the public stores  
and private property of value had been removed.

While Howe occupied Philadelphia, his main army  
was encamped at Germantown, and Washington resolved Oct. 4.  
to attack it. The attack was unsuccessful. What pro- Defeat  
mised to be a victory proved a defeat, with the loss of the of the  
Americans at  
Germantown.  
Americans of over 1000 men, who were, after this re-  
pulse, obliged to retire twenty miles further into the  
country.

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Ch. 3. The next effort of the Americans, in this quarter, was to prevent the English fleet from ascending the Delaware to Philadelphia, and there forming a junction with the army. Accordingly, Forts Mifflin and Mercer, which commanded the Delaware, were strongly fortified. Both these defences were attacked by the enemy on the 22d of October, at first unsuccessfully; but, after a series of attacks, they were abandoned, and the navigation left open to the English.

Defences on the Delaware abandoned.

But, while the enemy triumphed in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, a series of brilliant and unexpected successes awaited the Americans in New York, and made the subjugation of the country next to impossible.

British plan of invasion.

It was the plan of the British to invade the country from Canada — capture Ticonderoga and Crown Point — take possession of the posts on the Hudson, and form a junction with the troops at New York; and thus entirely separate the Eastern from the Middle States. Accordingly, General Burgoyne, with a brilliant army of more than 8000 men, on the 16th of June, left St. Johns, established magazines at Crown Point, and proceeded to invest Ticonderoga. General St. Clair, who commanded the fortress, had only 3000 men — an inadequate force, — and hence abandoned the fort, which, of course, fell into the hands of the enemy. He had sent his baggage and stores to Skeensborough, but these were unfortunately overtaken by the enemy, and destroyed. Nor was this his only loss. The rear of his retreating army, amounting to 1200 men, against his orders, had stopped at Hubberton, six miles west of Castleton, and were attacked (July 7th) by General Frazer, and so completely were they destroyed or dispersed, that only ninety men, under Warner, joined his small army, two days after. He at first retired to Rutland; but, on the 13th of July

Retreat of St. Clair.

he made a junction with the main army, under Schuyler, at Fort Edward, on the Hudson.

The loss of Ticonderoga and all its artillery, the disaster at Skeensborough, and the defeat at Hubberton, together with the dispersion of the American troops, almost overwhelmed Congress. The English seemed to be triumphant everywhere. New York was in possession of the enemy. Philadelphia had also fallen, and was garrisoned by Howe's army. There was great difficulty in raising men and money. Want of confidence in the American generals was whispered, and nothing seemed to prevent the full realization of all the British schemes. Burgoyne was so confident of success, that he issued a proclamation for the re-establishment of the royal authority. Through the unbroken wilderness between Lake George and the Hudson he made his way — all impediments were overcome, and at last, on the 29th of July, the banks of the Hudson were reached, and he had only to penetrate to Albany, and be safe and victorious.

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Disasters of the Americans.

July 29.  
Arrival of Burgoyne on the Hudson.

But when he arrived at Fort Edward, which the Americans had abandoned to him, he found that he was deficient in provisions, nor could he advance advantageously until they were obtained. He therefore despatched a strong detachment, of 800 men, under Colonel Baum, to seize a quantity of stores which the Americans had collected at Bennington. It so happened that a party of New Hampshire militia, under the command of Colonel Stark, had lately arrived at Bennington. Informed of Baum's approach, Stark sent off expresses for the militia and the forces in the neighborhood. He was also joined by fugitives from Hubberton. Baum, not wishing to encounter these forces, entrenched himself, six miles from Bennington, and sent back to Burgoyne for reinforcements. But before these could arrive, Stark had attacked

Fort Edward abandoned.

Aug. 16.  
Stark's victory.

Bk. V. l. 16 (August 16th). "There they are!" said the gallant  
Ch. 3. colonel — "We beat to-day, or Sally Stark's a widow!"

A. D. Scarcely were the entrenchments carried and the enemy  
1777. dispersed, before the reinforcements arrived. The battle  
was renewed, and gained by the Americans, who lost only  
14 killed and 42 wounded. Of the enemy 200 were  
killed, and 500 taken prisoners, together with 1000  
stand of arms.

Success  
of the  
Ameri-  
cans.

This disaster was a severe check to Burgoyne, and  
was soon followed by the defeat of another expedition,  
which he had sent to reduce Fort Schuyler, near the  
head of the Mohawk. These successes operated like  
magic, in reviving the spirits of the Americans, and  
depressing those of their enemy. Volunteers, as well as  
regulars, daily arrived at the camp of Schuyler, amid the  
islands at the mouth of the Mohawk while the Indians  
and Canadians began to desert Burgoyne. Much, how-  
ever, to the chagrin of Schuyler, he was superseded by  
Gates, just as affairs began to turn in his favour and as  
the way for victory was prepared.

Schuy-  
ler su-  
perseded  
by Gates.

Advance  
of Bur-  
goyne  
towards  
Albany.

Gates had now a large force of 6000 strong, besides  
militia, to resist the English general, who was delayed a  
month for lack of provisions. Having, however, collected  
enough to last for thirty days, Burgoyne, about the mid-  
dle of September, crossed the Hudson to Saratoga, and  
slowly advanced on his march to Albany. Gates, mean-  
while, had left his camp amid the islands of the Mohawk,  
and occupied Behmer's Heights, near Stillwater. On the  
19th of September, Burgoyne having arrived within two  
miles of the American camp, he was attacked, but no-  
thing decisive resulted. His advance, however, was im-  
peded, and he was compelled to entrench himself, hoping  
for a relief from Clinton. But the expected aid not ar-  
riving, and suffering from want of provisions, it was

necessary for him to risk another battle or retreat. He  
preferred the former; and, on the 7th of October, another  
action occurred, in which prodigies of valour were per-  
formed on both sides. Burgoyne lost the day, and was  
forced to return to Saratoga. Here, however, his situa-  
tion was not improved. He had only three days' provi-  
sions, and was surrounded by superior forces, flushed with  
recent success. He could neither stay where he was, nor  
retreat, nor advance. Under these circumstances, he was  
compelled to surrender. 5642 prisoners, with all their  
arms and military stores, fell into the hands of the Ame-  
ricans. Ticonderoga and all the forts on the northern  
frontier were abandoned when the news of this great mis-  
fortune reached the English. Clinton, who had advanced  
with 3000 men to relieve Burgoyne, retreated to New  
York.

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Surren-  
der of  
Bur-  
goyne.

The surrender of Burgoyne indicated the fate of the  
war, since it showed that the Americans fought under  
greater advantages than their enemy, and that the coun-  
try itself presented difficulties which were insurmountable  
to an invader. It mattered but little that cities were  
taken, when the great body of the people resided in the  
country, — were scattered over mountains, valleys, and  
forests — were willing to make sacrifices, and were com-  
manded by generals whom no danger could appal, and  
no disasters could discourage. Washington, Gates, Greene,  
Putnam, Lee, and others, knew that the issue of the con-  
flict was no longer doubtful. None were blind but the  
English ministry. They alone still dreamed of achieving  
an impossibility, — for it is impossible to subdue a great  
nation, determined to be free.

Pros-  
pects of  
the war.

Lord North, however, on hearing of the total surrender  
of the great Northern army, which was to complete the  
subjection of America, was forced to propose conciliatory  
Propos-  
tions of  
concilia-  
tion.

measures. He sent commissioners to America, who offered all that the colonies had ever asked previous to the Declaration of Independence. But conciliation, without the recognition of entire independence, was now too late.

France joins in the war.

The surrender of Burgoyne had also a great effect on the French nation—ever dazzled by outward success, and easily led where glory opens the way. The government may not have sympathized with the American cause, but it hated England more than liberty, and accordingly acknowledged the independence of America, and prepared to aid it with its forces, which action of course involved the nation in a war with England. Lord North had now to contend with the most powerful nation on the continent of Europe, as well as rebellious colonies.

Condition of the American army.

Notwithstanding the probability of ultimate success, the Americans were greatly embarrassed for lack of money,—nor was the army well supplied with clothing and stores, to meet the approaching winter. Out of 11,000 men in Washington's camp at Valley Forge, near Philadelphia, nearly 3000 were barefooted, and suffering under severe privations. The officers were compelled to trench upon their private property, and made sad complaints to Congress. Moreover, a cabal was formed against Washington himself, whose late disasters contrasted unfavourably with Gates's brilliant successes. Many influential members of Congress doubted Washington's fitness for the supreme command; while a correspondence, extremely derogatory to his military character, was carried on between Gates, Mifflin, and Conway. Human nature showed its degeneracy even among patriots and heroes.

Cabal against Washington.

His vindication.

But Congress, the army, and his country in general, sustained the commander-in-chief, by whose wisdom and prudence the nation had been saved. Others, as brave as he, may have led triumphant battalions at Behmer's

Heights. But none combined those moral and intellectual qualities, which secured, to so eminent a degree, the affections and confidence of his countrymen. The perfection of character, so far as it was ever seen in revolutionary times, was exhibited by Washington alone,

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