



Signing of the Treaty with England.

CHAPTER V.

THE TWO LAST CAMPAIGNS OF THE WAR.

THE campaign of 1781 did not open with encouraging prospects to the Americans. Their means of resistance were becoming more feeble; their resources were nearly exhausted; their patience nearly wearied out. The Pennsylvania troops, amounting to 1300, abandoned the camp at Morristown. Both officers and men were getting wearied of a contest in which they were acquiring neither fortune nor fame. On all sides, the British were in the ascendant. They still occupied New York, and had reduced South Carolina to subjection. Their troops ravaged the South without resistance.

In this last crisis, Congress and the States made extraordinary exertions. Taxation was resorted to, and, in the exigency of affairs, was acquiesced in. But the most efficient aid was derived through Robert Morris, of Philadelphia, by whose financial genius the treasury was replenished, and the troops kept from disbanding.

But the campaign of 1781 was, nevertheless, virtually the last. It was commenced by the ravages and depredations of Arnold in Virginia. Anxious to signalize himself by a brilliant exploit, he ascended James river, with 900 men, and entered the town of Richmond without resistance, burned many of the buildings, and seized valu-

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1781.
State of
affairs.

Taxa-
tion re-
sorted
to.
Morris's
finan-
cial aid.

Arnold
ravages
Virginia.
Jan. 4.

Br. V. able stores — those which he could not carry away, he
Ch. 5. destroyed.

A. D. Baron Steuben was in Virginia at the time, organizing
1781. recruits for Greene's army; with a few hundred of these
and a body of militia, who rallied around him — assisted,
Design also, by Nelson, who had collected another corps — he
to cap- advanced to watch the traitor, hoping eventually to cap-
ture Ar- ture him. Washington, also, was very desirous to secure
nold. his person, and accordingly sent Lafayette, with 1200
men, to assist Steuben; and, a French fleet, at the same
time, co-operating, the plan seemed not unfeasible.

March. But the English general, apprized of this project, sent
Admiral Arbuthnot to attack the French fleet; and Ar-
nold, soon after, being joined by 2000 men, under Philips,
who took the command of the united forces, the Ame-
ricans were thwarted, and Arnold escaped; the British,
His meanwhile, contenting themselves by levying contribu-
escape. tions on all places through which they passed, and, among
Contrib- tions levied.
utions
levied.

Hostili- In another section, further south, hostilities were fur-
ties fur- thier
tiner south.
Hostili-
ties fur-
tiner
south.

Morgan sent to harass the enemy

Morgan sent to harass the enemy

In another section, further south, hostilities were carried on early in the season. Greene commanded the Americans, and Cornwallis the English. The former did not attempt to engage the latter in a pitched battle, being greatly inferior in strength; but resolved to harass the enemy he despaired to conquer. Accordingly, he sent Colonel Morgan to the western part of South Carolina, to check the devastations of the English and the loyalists. Cornwallis, then advancing against North Carolina, was unwilling to leave Morgan in his rear, and therefore despatched Colonel Tarlton, with a superior force, to drive him away. Morgan retreated before his enemy, until he had selected a strong position, at a place called Cowpens, near Broad river, where he entrenched himself, and prepared to face his pursuers. Tarlton came up to him on

the 17th of January, and, confident of victory, made an impetuous charge. But his men were weary from rapid pursuit, while the Americans were fresh. At the first assault, the Americans fell back, but suddenly facing round, charged, and broke the British line, which was followed by the complete defeat of Tarleton. Closely pursued, he lost 600 men, with all his baggage, while Morgan lost but 80. Tarleton then joined Cornwallis, who marched, the next day, in pursuit of Morgan, after destroying all superfluous stores. But Morgan escaped, and joined Greene (January 31st). Greene, however, was still inferior to the enemy advancing to attack him, and hence he continued to retreat. On the 14th of February, he crossed the Roanoke, and entered Virginia. Soon after, he recrossed into North Carolina, and surprised a body of Tories, who were on the march to join the enemy. These he cut to pieces, as a warning to others, and then took a new position. Still unable to contend with Cornwallis in a pitched battle, and unwilling to risk an attack, he changed his encampment every day, acting as his own quarter-master, and never telling any one what position he should occupy next. Like Cornwallis, he was obliged to live at free quarters.

Nothing could be more destructive and harassing than this warfare in the Southern States. One army was in constant pursuit of the other, and both armies could subsist only by levying contributions, as injurious to friends as to enemies. Both armies had to be perpetually on guard against surprises. Advantages were nearly equally balanced.

At last, by the middle of March, Greene's army was so far reinforced, that he, in his turn, assumed the offensive; and Cornwallis, as his troops were better disciplined, did not decline an engagement. Accordingly, an action

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1781.

Defeat
of Tarle-
ton.

Greene
retreats.

Surprise
of a body
of tories.

Charac-
ter of
the war-
fare.

Greene
assumes
the of-
fensive.

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Ch. 5. took place near Guilford Court-house (March 15th), and Greene was compelled to retreat. He was not pursued, on account of the severe loss the enemy had sustained, and his want of tents to receive the wounded, and provisions to refresh the soldiers. About 500 men were lost on each side. Though the victory nominally belonged to Cornwallis, his army was so much weakened that he was compelled to fall back to Fayetteville (then Cross creek), and, being disappointed in not finding provisions there, still further towards Wilmington.

Battle at Guilford.

Movements of the armies. Greene then marched into South Carolina, with a view of driving away Lord Rawdon, who, with 900 men, was posted at Camden; and Cornwallis, finding it impossible to send succour in season, proceeded to Virginia, to join the British forces under Arnold and Philips.

Forts taken by Greene. Greene was sufficiently fortunate to take a few of the forts which the British had established, from the sea-coast to the western frontier; but he was defeated (25th of April) in an attack on Rawdon, although the loss on both sides (250 men) was nearly equal. Greene then occupied a strong position, twelve miles distant, and Rawdon, reinforced, sought to engage him in another battle, which Greene declined. On the 10th of May, Rawdon, finding that some forts in his rear were attacked by Lee and Marion, abandoned Camden, and retreated to Monk's Corner. Then, reinforced, he again assumed the offensive; and Greene, in his turn, withdrew (June 18th).

Defeat of his attack on Rawdon.

Results of the campaign. Though defeated twice, the Americans, in this active campaign of seven months, had reaped the fruits of victory. A part of South Carolina was recovered, and the English were confined to a narrow district, between the Santee and the Lower Savannah. Both parties carried on the war with great cruelty — shooting, as deserters, those who had ever acknowledged the protection of the triumphant

Cruelty of the war.

army — stealing each other's slaves — burning houses, and plundering private property. It was a predatory war, calculated to harass and irritate, rather than to conquer. But mutual exhaustion and mutual barbarities led necessarily to this savage mode, which, though not creditable to the commanders, was perhaps scarcely controllable by them. It was not by such a course that America could be subdued, or the English driven away.

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1781.

While these events occurred in North and South Carolina, Cornwallis overran Virginia, the defence of which was entrusted to Lafayette. But, with his small force of 3000 men, principally militia, he could do little more than watch the enemy. Unable to force Lafayette to a battle, Cornwallis employed himself in destroying property. Petersburg and Richmond fell into his hands, and were plundered; while Tarleton penetrated to Charlottesville, and seized several members of the House of Delegates.

Cornwallis overruns Virginia.

Soon after, Cornwallis received orders to send part of his troops to New York, Clinton having feared an attack from Washington. On the 5th of July, he crossed James river, and was then attacked by Lafayette; but no decisive results followed. At Portsmouth, whither he had retired, the British general recalled the troops who had just embarked for the aid of Clinton, and proceeded to occupy Yorktown and Gloucester — two peninsulas, projecting into York river. Thither he removed with his whole army, amounting to 8000 men, attended by several large ships of war. This post was deemed desirable, being very easily defended, very central, and favourable for ulterior operations. From this place he sent out detachments which committed great depredations. During his invasion to the occupancy of Yorktown, he had destroyed property to the amount of ten millions of dollars.

Bk. V. Soon after the arrival of Cornwallis in Virginia, Wash-
Ch. 5. ington received intelligence that the Count de Grasse, the
A. D. new French admiral in the West Indies, would soon ar-
1781. rive in Chesapeake Bay. At first, he contemplated an
 arrival of the French admiral. attack on New York, but Rochambeau, the commander of
 the French forces stationed at New York, was opposed
 to it, as too great an undertaking for their united forces.
 Wash- The commander-in-chief then resolved to take advantage
 ington of the promised aid of De Grasse in Virginia, and strike
 contem- a blow at Cornwallis. Accordingly, advices were sent to
 plates an at- the French at Newport, where they had remained idle for
 tack on eleven months, to join Washington in the Highlands, —
 Corn- also, to Lafayette, to take up a strong position in Virginia,
 wallis. so as to cut off the retreat of Cornwallis to North Caro-
 lina. Every effort, of course, was made to conceal from
 Clinton the intended measures, and keep up the idea that
 the attack on New York was still contemplated.

Discon- As the American troops passed through Philadelphia
tent of in the middle of August, uncertain as to their destination,
the Ame- they evinced considerable dissatisfaction. But Washing-
rican ton was enabled to pacify them by a partial discharge of
troops. their arrears, in consequence of the timely arrival of Lau-
 Arrival of money, &c. from France. rens from France, with half a million of dollars, besides
 arms and ammunition. Rochambeau had also advanced
 \$20,000 from the French military chest. Had it not
 been for this supply, the expedition might have failed;
 for American credit was then at the lowest point of
 depression, and the old continental bills were worth next
 to nothing. One dollar in specie would purchase \$1000
 in bills — so extreme was the depreciation — so low the
 credit of the nation.

Advance As Washington, now furnished with the means of ope-
of Wash- rating with energy, advanced towards Virginia, leaving
ington. fourteen regiments, under Heath, to defend the High-

lands, Greene, with the Southern forces, kept the British **Bk. V.**
 in check in South Carolina. A battle was fought, on **Ch. 5.**
 the 8th of September, at Eutaw Springs, fifty miles from **A. D.**
 Charleston, on the Santee, and the victory was claimed **1781.**
 by both parties. The Americans, however, were the **Battle of**
 chief gainers, since the English were now obliged to re- **Eutaw**
 turn to Charleston and the neighbouring islands. The **Springs.**
 forces of Greene, however, were too much exhausted to
 continue active operations, and therefore he retired to the
 hills of the Santee.

Meanwhile, the French fleet made its promised appear- **The**
 ance on the American coast, and was joined by the French **French**
 ships from Newport; so that the combined fleets num- **fleet.**
 bered twenty-four ships of the line — a considerable force
 in those times. The French and American army, also,
 effected a junction, at Williamsburg, with Lafayette, and
 immediately advanced to invest Cornwallis. The invest- **Corn-**
 ing army amounted to 16,000 men, 7000 of whom were **wallis**
 French. The British force, chiefly posted at Yorktown, **invest-**
 numbered 8000. Cornwallis was hemmed in on all sides **ed.**
 by superior forces. York and James rivers were blockaded
 by French ships, which De Grasse had despatched from
 Chesapeake Bay; so that the British could not escape by
 sea.

An attack on the camp of Cornwallis, which was **Attack**
 strongly defended, was made on the 18th of October — **on his**
 his redoubts were taken, his guns dismantled, and his **camp.**
 ramparts rapidly crumbled down before the fire of the
 besiegers, who were posted so as to prevent his retreat to
 North Carolina. A sally was attempted, and failed.
 Nothing then remained but to cross the river to Gloucester **His po-**
 Point, and force a passage through the troops there **sition.**
 stationed, and push on to New York, pursued by a
 victorious and overwhelming enemy, and through a hos-

Bk. V.
Ch. 5. tile country. But that desperate scheme was abandoned, in consequence of a storm, which drove the boats down the river.

A. D. 1781. Under these circumstances, Cornwallis was obliged to

Surrender of Cornwallis. surrender, and 7000 British troops were made prisoners of war (October 17th). The shipping was allotted to the French. Lincoln, who had given up his sword, eighteen months before, to Cornwallis at Charleston, was appointed to receive the surrender of the British army.

Its effects. This great disaster to the British not only settled the issue in the Southern States, but virtually closed the war. It diffused, of course, universal joy throughout the States, and produced a corresponding depression among the English people. So soon as the news arrived, Clinton was superseded by Carleton.

Disposition of the American forces. After the fall of Cornwallis, Wayne, with 2000 men, was sent to South Carolina, for the assistance of Greene. The French army, under Rochambeau, encamped, for the winter, at Williamsburg. The main body of the continental army returned to their old position near the Highlands. Washington spent much time in Philadelphia, urging speedy preparations for the next campaign. Lafayette returned to France. Wilmington was evacuated, and North Carolina regained. Charleston alone, in South Carolina, remained in the hands of the British. The war languished—for all could now see that peace would soon return.

1782. Military operations during the campaign of 1782 did not exhibit any brilliant action, although the forces of both parties still kept the field. The year was most marked by negotiations for peace, and the strategy of diplomatists. The war was chiefly confined to the Southern States, and but to small sections of these. The British were chiefly confined to New York, Charleston, and

Savannah, which posts they held, and from which they occasionally issued on marauding expeditions, without the least expectation of conquering the country.

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Ch. 5. Lord North still manifested a disposition to prolong the contest, with the hope of embarrassing the Americans, rather than of finally subduing them; and it was too humiliating for George the Third to acknowledge the great errors he had committed. But an indignant nation, groaning under the weight of taxes, and still more, deprived of a market for their goods, expressed at length the desire for peace in a way not to be misunderstood. The minister, rebuked by the vote of the Commons on the 4th of March, by which it was declared that whoever should advise his majesty to any further prosecution of offensive war against America should be considered a public enemy, soon after resigned. Lord Rockingham, inclined for peace, succeeded him, but shortly after died, and Lord Shelburne became premier.

A. D.
1782 Negotiations for peace were then opened in earnest. Richard Oswald, a British merchant, who had been sent to Paris to confer with Franklin, returned to London, with the information that nothing less than the acknowledgment of independence, a satisfactory boundary, and a participation in the fisheries, would suit the Americans. These terms, however unpalatable, were accepted as the basis of a treaty. John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and Henry Laurens, were appointed commissioners on the part of the United States; and Mr. Fitzherbert and Mr. Oswald, on the part of Great Britain. They met in Paris, and fought the battle of diplomacy; the result of which was the signing, on the 30th of November, of preliminary articles of peace.

Public feeling in England. By this great treaty American independence was unreservedly acknowledged, together with the right of the

Bk. V. Americans to fish, to an unlimited extent, on the banks
Ch. 5. of Newfoundland. Great difficulty was experienced re-
A. D. specting boundaries, which were finally fixed nearly as
1782. they have since remained. No restitution was made, as
was strongly urged, to the American loyalists whose prop-
erty had been confiscated.

Cessa-
tion of
hostili-
ties.

Soon after this treaty was signed, and before the news
of it had reached America, Charleston was evacuated (De-
cember 14th). On the 19th of April, the cessation of
hostilities was proclaimed from the camp at Newburg,
the head-quarters of the American army, just eight years
after the battle of Lexington. On the 25th of Novem-
ber, the British departed from New York, which they
had held so long; and a few days after, Long Island and
Staten Island were given up, and the Americans took full
possession. On the 4th of December, Washington made
his farewell address to his brother-officers, and then, after
taking them all affectionately by the hand, departed to
Annapolis, to resign his commission into the hands of
Congress. On the 23d of December, in presence of a
numerous company of spectators, he, with mingled dig-
nity and simplicity, expressed his congratulations on the
successful termination of the war, and thus concluded his
remarks to Congress: "Having now finished the work
assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of action;
and, bidding an affectionate farewell to this august body,
under whose orders I have so long acted, I here offer up
my commission, and take my leave of all the employments
of public life."

Wash-
ington
resigns
his com-
mission.

His cha-
racter.

Thus spake the modern Cincinnatus, the most justly
venerated personage connected with American history,
or the history of latter times — venerated, not merely be-
cause he was great, but because he was good — a man
who had the rare magnanimity of resigning, with cheer-

Bk. V. fulness, great power, at the summit of his fame, and
Ch. 5. whose character shines brighter and more glorious with
A. D. the progress of ages, defying the most searching criticism
1782. to reveal any defects which can tarnish the uniform
beauty of his public and private life. He was equally
great, in victory or defeat; ever mild, conciliatory, gene-
rous, prudent, wise, dignified, not unmindful of his high
station, and acting, at all times, in accordance with his
high sense of the responsibilities which that station im-
posed.

But, before the retirement of Washington to the tran-
quil pursuits of a Virginia planter, great embarrassments
had occurred as to finances, and the officers as well as the
privates of the army were with difficulty appeased. The
commander-in-chief, happily, was exposed to no tempta-
tion of a pecuniary kind, since he was one of the richest
citizens in Virginia or the Union. But the officers ex-
pected, as they had been promised, half-pay for life, as
well as a compensation for the depreciation of what they
had already received. The magnanimity of Washington
was rarely copied by his brother-officers, and still less by
private soldiers, who manifested the usual infirmity of
human nature. Still, it was but natural, that men who
made such sacrifices to defend their country should wish
those sacrifices to be appreciated, as, on the whole, they
doubtless were. In the main, the conduct of the army
was worthy of all praise, both for bravery and for endur-
ance — the heroism of action and the heroism of suffer-
ing; and we should render injustice to those who bled
or died for the future greatness of America, if we do not
honour their memory, and perpetuate their fame. Of all
the contests of modern times, the American revolution
was the most glorious in its principles, its actions, and
its results. No great and brilliant victories, indeed,

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1782.

Dissatis-
faction
of the
army.

Charac-
ter of the
army
and the
war.

BR. V.
Ch. 5. crowned the arms of our countrymen, when they fought pitched battles, like those of Napoleon and Wellington; for they had not the discipline of European veterans, nor were their commanders extraordinary for military genius. A. D. 1782. But, when all their circumstances are duly considered, — their inexperience, their poverty, and the difficulties they had to surmount, — their success was wonderful, and has been universally acknowledged and honoured, even by their enemies, and to such a degree, that we are compelled to feel that they were specially aided by a superintending arm. He who cannot see a Providence in that contest, surely, will acknowledge no connection between the destinies of nations and the will of the Sovereign of the universe.

Cost
of the
war.

But, while we acknowledge the aid of Providence, let it also be remembered that the cause of liberty was achieved only by desperate struggles, and by the complete exhaustion of the country. Considering its resources at the time, and still more the fact that men and money were not extorted by the unrelenting arm of despotism, but were voluntarily granted as a free-will offering, we are astonished at the magnitude of the sacrifices, — that so many were willing to enlist with such inadequate pay, and that they persevered in warfare when its ultimate result was no longer doubtful. No less than 231,791 soldiers were furnished to the continental ranks during the war, of whom more than 57,000 were supplied by Massachusetts. To say nothing of the various calamities of war, not ordinarily mentioned by historians — such as, the suspension of commerce and manufactures, the destruction of private property, and the sufferings of the camp and the hospital — a large national debt was created, since, indeed, easily paid off, but seemingly enormous at the time. Besides this federal debt, each individual

State had a debt of its own, and all the debts together amounted to seventy millions of dollars. BR. V.
Ch. 5.

It is difficult to tell how much Great Britain expended and lost by the war. Nor does an estimate of the sums expended, or the debts incurred, give us an adequate idea of the results of the contest, among either of the belligerent parties. The moral results are ever greater than the physical, great as these may be. Whatever loss was suffered, either in money, men, or fame, Great Britain was the heavier loser. She lost the possession of a continent and of a nation of freemen. She had the mortification of losing the American colonies by negligence, extortion, and pride, which undermined affection, and cut the cords of mutual interest. Nor could she regain them by the exercise of any skill, courage, or strength. It must be allowed that the British fought bravely, and persevered so long as a shadow of hope remained. They were conquered, not by superior strength or skill, but by the impediments which nature presented — by mistakes of their own which no sagacity could have prevented, and by the invincible will of a nation determined to be free, and persuaded that no expenditure of treasure and blood was too great for the attainment of such an invaluable blessing as national independence. A. D. 1782.
Moral
results.