



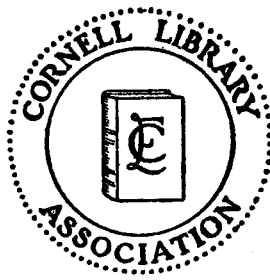
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"MRS. EYRE TOOK HER PLACE AT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE."

# THE PATHFINDERS OF THE REVOLUTION *Q2*

*A Story of the Great March into the  
Wilderness and Lake Region  
of New York in 1779*

BY

WILLIAM E. GRIFFIS

AUTHOR OF "THE ROMANCE OF AMERICAN HISTORY  
SERIES," "THE MIKADO'S EMPIRE," "BRAVE  
LITTLE HOLLAND," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY W. F. STECHER

THIRD THOUSAND.



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THE PATHFINDERS OF THE REVOLUTION.

## PREFACE

Who has done justice to Major General John Sullivan and to his Continental soldiers? These, in their great expedition of 1779 into the lake region of central and western New York, broke completely the power of the Iroquois Confederacy. Why did the Congress and Washington think it necessary to detach on this perilous expedition, into an unmapped wilderness, one-third of the whole army of the United States? Why is the whole subject so slurred over or ignored by the average historian?

Had Sullivan been "Braddocked," or met with disaster in battle, by ambushade, by pestilence, or starvation, he would have been better known. In truth, he did his work so well that those who write history, and love too much its merely dramatic side, have been unfair to this able officer. Though poorly provisioned and equipped, he led five thousand men, with artillery and stores, into the river valleys and pathless forests of western New York, fought a great and decisive battle, destroyed the granaries of King George and his allies, paralyzed the power of both Tory and savage, avenged Wyoming and Cherry

Valley, rendered New York for the time uninhabitable by the red man, ended the dangerous attacks on Washington's flank and rear, satisfied Congress and the American people, and came back with his triumphant veterans for the work of Yorktown. All this he did with the loss of only forty men, or one per cent of his force.

It is not the business of the story-teller to satisfy fully the questioners, to whom the historian should make answer, but to tell how the army went and came, and how the Continentals marched, fought, made paths and bridges, enjoyed themselves amid their toils, told stories around the camp-fire, and drew out from the friendly Oneidas the myths and lore of the Iroquois. Of the excitement of battle and how Claes Vrooman rescued the captives, his sister and betrothed, it has been his pleasant task to narrate. Utilizing the local traditions of New York's lake region, many old letters, and local and ancestral traditions, he has shown also how the pathfinders of the Revolution opened the way for the civilization of the Empire State and the development of the great West. May we never forget the fathers of the Revolution and the days when they were young!

W. E. G.

ITHACA, N.Y.,

March 24, 1900.

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# THE PATHFINDERS OF THE REVOLUTION



## CHAPTER I

### AN INTERRUPTED TEA-PARTY

THE year 1779 was the darkest in our war for freedom. Popular interest was at low tide. The Continental army numbered only fifteen thousand men. The treasury was nearly empty. The bright hopes awakened by the French alliance had given way to disappointment and chagrin, for the great fleet sent by the Bourbon king had accomplished nothing. The patriots were irritated. Those who were loyalists at heart longed to go back to their allegiance to King George, while gloating Tories actually entered the camps of the Continental army and persuaded the soldiers to desert.

All along the frontier, bands of savages ravaged the settlements, burning the houses and killing the farmers. Dashing out the brains of those who were too young to walk, they tomahawked, scalped, or led into imprisonment the women, the boys, and the girls.

The Indian valleys in western New York were gay with plunder and populous with captives. The bark houses of the Iroquois were everywhere decorated with scalps. Stretched on hoops, dried or painted, these represented every age in life and all colors of hair. One could see the golden ringlets of the little child, the long auburn tresses of maiden or mother, the short stubby growth and the eelskin queue of the stalwart man. Here and there hung the white and gray locks of an old man's scalp that was bald in the centre. Many of the great apartment houses of the Iroquois, in 1779, were museums of plunder. They showed that neither age nor sex had been spared, and that the last count in the indictment against King George in the Declaration of Independence was correct.

What with the conglomerate British forces — Canadian, Iroquois, Irish, Scotch, Welsh, English, and Hessian — largely reënforced, new supplies voted by Parliament to continue the war, with mighty fleets blockading our harbors, British armies holding the coast cities, and the Indians desolating our frontier, besides making central New York a granary of supplies for "King George and all his host," it looked indeed as if our fathers were "between the devil and the deep sea," and that the war must stop. This would mean that the thirteen states must once more become colonies, and the members of the Continental Congress, who had once by signatures in Indepen-

dence Hall "held together," as Franklin hinted, must now on the gallows "swing separately."

At such a time it was like a light shining in a dark place to see smiling folks who never doubted for a moment the success of the Continental army. It was a bright party that assembled in the two-story brick house in Kensington, Philadelphia. There Colonel Eyre, once boat-builder to his Majesty King George III., later naval constructor to the Continental Congress, and then chief of a regiment of artillery in the Pennsylvania line, had his home. The two brothers, Jabez and Emmanuel, had years before left their kindred at Burlington, in New Jersey, to make their fortune in the great city founded by William Penn, then containing twenty-five thousand souls. Not far away from the house stood the great treaty tree under which the son of his Dutch mother, William Penn, the hat-wearer with the hatless, as the wampum belt still shows, had made that famous covenant with the Indians, "Never sworn to and never broken." In front flowed the Delaware River, already beginning to hold upon its bosom the shadows of late afternoon. All around stretched those green and flower-dotted acres now covered by houses and docks, railways and machinery foundries, forges and trip-hammers, mighty chimneys and derricks, where are built and launched the mighty steel battle-ships of the United States navy.

The perfume of spring blossoms was in the air.

The day was so warm that Colonel Eyre's wife and their daughter Margaret had spread the table out in the garden under the apple trees. In those days the places of home and business were not far apart. In the city the great ships at the wharves almost poked their bowsprits into the second-story windows of the owners or consignees, whose offices were on the ground floors below. In front of the Eyre home in Kensington, just across the road and gently sloping down to the river side, was the shipyard whence had been launched many a gallant vessel of war floating the thirteen stripes, even before there was a star in that blue field which was yet to come.

It was a daintily set table which mother, daughter, and maid had arrayed. On the snowy cloth fell from time to time petals from the apple blossoms above, while all around nest builders were calling to their mates, making sweet music, and one or two, bolder than others, seemed inclined to vary a diet of worms with a taste of bread crumbs. The silver tea-service and a few choice bits of china porcelain from Canton were their special pride. The Eyres had brought across sea from England not a few heirlooms from their old home in Nottinghamshire. Indeed, Margaret, encouraged by her father, had even embroidered the napkins of Irish linen with the decussated and armored leg belonging to the Eyre coat of arms. One can still see the same blazon on both the gates of the manor at Rampton

in England, the one of Tudor and the other of Jacobean times. Indeed, save for the cruel war, which had changed the garb of Jabez Eyre from plain drab to buff and blue, and from a passive Friend to a free and fighting Quaker for liberty's sake, the father had hoped to visit dear old England to see the ancestral homes. Now, however, while Hessian and savage allies of King George had to be fought, Jabez Eyre's chief items of care were his cannon and his comrades.

"All ready, Margaret; call the gentlemen."

Thereupon issued from the house and took their places around the table, the host and his friends, who, as they sat down, made a party of nine in all, two of whom wore the uniform of officers in the Continental army, while Colonel Eyre had on the full regimentals of the Pennsylvania Line, for he was no less than a colonel of artillery. On his right hand sat Colonel Edward Hand, just arrived from Fort Pitt, now Pittsburg, in western Pennsylvania. Only thirty-two years old, he had once served his king as a surgeon, but, resigning his commission, had settled in Pennsylvania five years before and was an ardent patriot. He was one of the best horsemen in the army and always superb in appearance.

The other guests were Captain Adam Vrooman, of Schenectady, New York, a middle-aged, well-knit man. By his side sat his stalwart and handsome son Claes, whose sunburnt face and appearance of being

always alert told of his long service in the forest. He, like his father, carried a cross in his heart, for his sister was captive among the Seneca Indians. Yet his was a double burden, for his wife, the bride of a fortnight, was a captive also, she with his sister having been seized, while on a visit to Cherry Valley the year before, by the savages. Father and son had come from Schenectady and had gone in the service, as riflemen, to Fort Pitt, in Pennsylvania, hoping to join the expedition organized under Colonel Broadhead. With better prospects of rescuing sister and wife, they had returned with Colonel Hand.

Young Vrooman was happy in his appointment as guide to General John Sullivan's "Western Expedition into the Seneca Country," for the long-talked-of project of destroying the Iroquois power was now an official fact. Vrooman had lived in hopes of rescue, for he had heard that instead of a tomahawk sinking into their skulls, his sister had been adopted by the Tuscaroras of Lake Cayuga, and that his wife was living in the same region of lakes and waterfalls.

There were present, also, a gentleman, John Harby, and his daughter Henrietta, formerly living at Harris Ferry, — now Harrisburg, — but, since the outbreak of the war, at Barren Hill, not far from Valley Forge. This was not her first visit to the city founded by Penn. Formerly a pupil in the Moravian school at Bethlehem, and called home by the outbreak of war, she was now going back there to help the surgeons who



cared for, and the Moravian "nuns" who tended, the wounded. Her happy disposition and continuous brightness made her a favorite in the Eyre home.

The ninth person at the table was a sad-faced young widow lady, one of nearly four hundred made at Wyoming on June 30, 1778, by the redskins and redcoats. She was a cousin of Mrs. Eyre, who since the slaughter of her husband, a boat-builder on the Susquehanna and previously foreman in Colonel Eyre's shipyard, had found a home in his family. He, the victim, was one of the fourteen men compelled to kneel in a circle on the ground, while the Seneca Queen Esther, whose castle was at Tioga Point, infuriated because of the death of her son, brained one after the other with a tomahawk, until the last one of the fourteen was a bloody corpse. The Philadelphia home was like a haven of peaceful comfort, after her weeks of wandering and semi-starvation in the woods.

Mrs. Eyre took her place at the head of the table, and was soon serving the fragrant tea, with "trimmings" to suit each taste, for the first patriot tabooing of the leaf of China in 1774 was a thing of the past. Through St. Eustatius, in the Dutch West Indies, with which port Colonel Eyre was in frequent communication, the Amoy tea, though a luxury somewhat more expensive than formerly, was not extra hazardous in obtaining. The swift ships built by the Eyres ran with comparative ease the blockade of the

heavy British frigates off the capes of the Delaware and the Chesapeake.

As ever, the fragrant beverage lubricated the tongue, and conversation flowed easily.

"I do not see that the ladies have changed since I last saw your household, Colonel Eyre, except that your daughter is taller and more womanly, but as to yourself, in your military uniform, a stranger would hardly recognize the Friend in drab of ten years ago. Did you know your own husband, Mrs. Eyre, when he put on soldier clothes?" asked Colonel Hand of the hostess.

"Oh, yes; it was hardly a surprise, for I knew it would come. From the very first, although most of the city Friends held to the king's side, those in the country all through Pennsylvania and New Jersey favored the cause of liberty. Then, my husband is 'Quaker,' as the world calls us, with only a half a generation of Friends' doctrines and light behind him, for my father-in-law belonged, when at home across sea, to the Church of England. He entered the congregation of Friends when he married his sweetheart in Burlington."

"Oh, then it was Cupid, rather than original convictions, that caused the Churchman to become 'Quaker'; for, as you say, the world prefers to use the term, and I am very much of the world. What a fascinating Diana, or shall I say Minerva, your sweetheart must have been," and the gallant Irish-

man, who was fond of classical allusions, glanced roguishly at Colonel Eyre.

“Yes, Colonel; and my husband, when he took that trip to Fort Pitt before his marriage, was so long away from the Meeting-house, and so much with the officers of the garrison, that I think he became much more than half a soldier even then. Is it not so, husband?”

“Well, I confess it, that after the first pressure of work, having plenty of leisure at times, I studied the handling of artillery.”

Colonel Eyre had, in 1760, travelled to “the far West,” through Pennsylvania, taking with him ship carpenters and blacksmiths engaged by his future father-in-law. He went to Fort Pitt, after George Washington had done his pioneer work in that direction, to build the boats which should take King George’s soldiers down the Ohio River and there assert his Majesty’s rights.

“I judge, by the way your eye brightens, that you rather enjoyed it,” remarked Captain Vrooman.

“True, I acknowledge it; even on First Day, after the chaplain was through his sermon, I improved time getting the theory, while on other days, as I had opportunity, I practised the real thing with the drill squad.”

“Yes,” joined in Mr. Harby; “I remember when you spent the night with me at my house at Harris Ferry, how you told me you had not only learned to

make and equip gun carriages but could load, sight, and fire siege guns, and even handle a battery in the field."

"Oh, yes," said Colonel Eyre; "I drilled regularly with the field gun force too. Indeed, I may say that Fort Pitt was my military college in which I trained for Princeton and Brandywine. As I could not go to Flanders or Woolwich, I learned at home."

"Good," said Colonel Hand; "but I regret that you didn't train further by making at least one trip with field guns into the wilderness. If you could be transferred from the Pennsylvania to the Continental line, I should persistently urge your appointment for the expedition into the Seneca country, which his Excellency General Washington has planned. Personally, I would rather have you than Colonel Thomas Proctor, who is more likely to be chosen. By the way, where is he now with his regiment?"

"Most of his men are garrisoning the forts on the Delaware, especially at Billingsport and Fort Mifflin. I expect I shall be ordered with my companies to relieve him. Some of my men are at Easton now, but return as soon as General Sullivan starts westward. I confess I should like to try the hazard of battle with Brant and Butler in that beautiful lake region of New York, of which I have heard so much."

"Would to God it might be so, cousin," broke in the Wyoming widow, who was at times assisting

the maid and Margaret in the courtesies of the supper. Then, blushing at her apparent haste and presumption, she added, with a look at Mrs. Eyre, in which gratitude and even sympathy were blended, "Pardon me, I am glad enough that duty does not call my friend into those dark swamps and gloomy woods of New York, to fight enemies whose method of warfare seems to be first ambuscade and then massacre. Oh, mercy! what's that?" she exclaimed.

All arose and listened to the alarming cries which seemed to issue from the stable, some distance in the rear of the house.

"Help! help! The British! Injuns! Tories! Murder-r-r-r!"

They rushed out to see what was the matter, when a sight greeted their eyes which, as soon as they understood the situation, called for roars of laughter. There was a little door within the big stable door, which a man could unlock and get in or out, without opening the big double-leaved door that opened for carriage and horses. Wedged into this space of less than two feet square were two fellows, one fat and the other lean. Only their heads and half their bodies were out, the other halves of their physical economy, including legs, being inside the stable. Squeezed tightly together, face to face, and a black to a red head, they were puffing and blowing, their faces making alternately the colors of their hair.

They were clamorous for help, but were unable to get out. One was Colonel Eyre's coachman and the other his hostler.

Whether to saw out another board of the door, or to pull them out, was the question. If the latter, should it be by the legs or by the shoulders? One way seemed better for the stout man and the other for the thin. In either case, coats, spines, or shoulders must suffer. Suddenly, as the rescuers, willing but uncertain how to act, hesitated, the door was swung open and "Jeremiah Grumps," as the Colonel had nicknamed him, a middle-aged and half-hearted patriot, a shoemaker, who was always predicting the success of the enemy, appeared in view. Seizing the hostler's legs he pulled lustily inward, young Vrooman reinforcing him to extricate the coachman. The others outside pushed. After about as much traction and hauling as would suffice to get a camel through "the needle's eye" of an oriental caravansary, the rescue was accomplished. The two men, now no longer twins, with spines slightly scraped, and the hostler with cheek barked, stood apart and perpendicular again. They had had five minutes or so of involuntary horizontal balancing by their ribs on an inch width of deal board, and were now glad to assume the use of their legs.

The fat man, suffering most from both loss of wind and personal dignity, disappeared to refit. So the thin hero, the hostler, was called on to tell the

story, for "Jeremiah Grumps" had quickly made himself invisible.

It seems that "Pud" and "Spider," as the two men of the stable, though chums, called each other, had been discussing war matters and Continental money. Discouraged at the dark state of affairs on our side, in this gloomy year of 1779, they feared lest the British might, after all, win. Indulging in the most gloomy reflections and wondering whether the Revolution would be a failure and the country be ruined, a third friend, "Jeremiah Grumps," the dyspeptic shoemaker, stepped in with a big powder-horn in his hand and for a while uttered even more dismal prophecies. There was a little portable earthenware furnace, on which glowed a few lumps of charcoal, for drying out the stable. Grumps proceeded to amuse them, from time to time, while they were so dejected, by pulling out the plug from the powder-horn and throwing a pinch of powder on the fire to see it flash up merrily. Now, this third party, despite his dyspepsia, was a wag and a confirmed player of practical jokes. Nevertheless, the pair did not suspect what he was at.

Increasing in doleful predictions, so as to utterly outdo the others, Grumps finally declared that they had better, then and there, all commit suicide by blowing themselves up. Whereupon, pulling out the plug and throwing it away, he cast the hornful of rifle powder, as they supposed, into the open fire.

In an instant the two terrified patriots rushed to save their lives by getting out of the stable. The gate being locked, they wasted no time in trying to open it, but both seeing that the small square entrance, or manhole, usually called "the needle's eye," had been left open by Grumps, they attempted simultaneously to leap through. There and then, the brace got hopelessly jammed together. The result was that they stuck fast with their legs inside and their heads and half their bodies outside. While the fat man yelled murder and cried for help, the thin hostler, being less squeezed, thought that silence was golden.

Yet, after all, there was no explosion. The jolly joker, after nearly splitting himself with laughing, had found the key, unlocked and swung the door open. After assisting to get his friends on their feet again, he disappeared, as we have seen. The powder-horn had had real powder only toward the tapering end, which was plugged up inside. The chief contents were several pounds of black sand. The wrath of the two victims at the roughness of the joke was tempered by their gratitude at being rescued.



## CHAPTER II

BY THE BANKS OF THE DELAWARE

AFTER the funny episode, which interrupted the flow of conversation but for a few minutes, the party took their places again at the table under the apple trees, and a fresh relay of hot tea set the stream of talk flowing again. All agreed that the Wyoming widow, to whom the mystery of ambuscades was not fully solved, should have it explained just how and why neither the cunning nor the castles of the Iroquois would avail against an expedition planned by Washington and led by Sullivan.

“We do not want another Braddock’s defeat, to say nothing of Wyoming,” said Mrs. Eyre to her kinswoman; “and I do not think there will be either ambush or massacre, if there be riflemen enough” — and here she handed to Vrooman, senior, with smiling approval, his third cup of fragrant Amoy tea.

“No, wife, and cousin, too; nor shall we have any, if Colonel Hand with his light troops leads the advance. If I took lessons in handling cannon at Pitts-

burg, he learned to fight Indians in that same region. He knows just how the redmen think and act, and he knows well the superior skill and valor of the riflemen. How delightful, too, Colonel Hand, it must have been to mingle among your warm-hearted fellow Irishmen in western Pennsylvania. For real comradeship give me a jolly man from the Emerald Isle."

"Thank you, Colonel Eyre," said Hand, blushing. "We Irishmen are, it is certain, treated better here than in the old country by king and Parliament. We cannot help supporting Congress. But, concerning the Indians, in these many months of service I not only saw how the redman hides in ambush, sneaking up to kill the men first, and then tomahawk the family and set the home on fire, leaving a blazing ruin where before was peace and comfort, but I know how the red demons act when obliged to stand up and fight when pursued. My experience in western Pennsylvania gave me some knowledge which I have gladly placed at the disposition of General Washington, himself once a frontiersman of skill, and I hope to be appointed to lead a brigade of light infantry. Yet I wish you were going, with your guns, for the redmen have not moral courage to stand against artillery."

"Moral courage? How does that differ from the muscular sort, colonel?" asked Mrs. Eyre.

"Well, the Indian is brave enough physically,"

replied Colonel Hand. "It is astonishing what hunger, discomfort, and privations he can bear, and what bodily tortures he will submit to for the sake of his religion, or, as I should call it, superstition. I am not certain, however, that he can stand getting a tooth drawn any better than we white men, whom he jeers at, because we do not bear torture, as prisoners, like savages. Certain it is that he has not the mind to look into the cannon's mouth. He cannot face a howitzer, and nothing can induce him to keep his ground when bombs are flying round or balls are tearing the trees to pieces. I hope that General Washington will certainly order the artillery to go with us. I am still fresh from Wyoming and its awful scene of blackness, ashes, and skeletons. Pardon me, madam, I see you turn pale," Colonel Hand interjected, as he saw the widow lady's change of countenance; "but let me say that if two or three well-served field guns, or coehorns, with Colonel Eyre's artillerists, had been there, the story of June 30, 1778, might have been different."

"Yes," said Colonel Eyre; "you know that though Braddock took his artillery with him, it was of no use, when no enemy was in sight, for he let them surround him and make themselves invisible. Indeed, I saw one tree on Braddock's field, two and a half feet thick, cut in halves by cannon balls; but firing at the invisible did no good. I do not suppose anything could have saved his men

when the general was determined to fight in solid platoons, as if he and they were on the flat fields of Flanders."

"By the way," said Mr. Vrooman; "that disaster in Virginia had a terrible effect, even up in northern New York, in emboldening the savages. I hope, if our army goes into the Seneca country, they will not be 'Braddocked.' There are many dangerous places through which an army must defile in a long, narrow line, and where even a small band of red-skins could ambuscade whole regiments or stãmpede the pack-horses and throw everything in confusion, making short work even of the Continental veterans."

"Yes," replied Colonel Hand. "With men drilled only in ordinary European tactics, there is grave danger in a march of three hundred miles through woods, in which are only Indian trails. But give me a few companies of 'Virginia riflẽmen,' — who come chiefly from Pennsylvania," said he, laughing, "such as Colonel Morgan has trained and General Washington thinks so much of; or, still better, those Pennsylvanians, Germans, Irishmen, or sons of Swiss chamois-hunters whom I have had under my command, and I'll guarantee immunity from a disastrous ambuscade. These hardy fellows have grown up in the forests. Having lived all their lives among the Indians, they have learned their tricks of wood-craft and added thereto the superior intelligence of the

white man. Give us enough of these, and instead of being 'Braddocked,' we shall drive the Iroquois to Niagara and into Canada."

"Was General Braddock really ambuscaded, Colonel Hand?" asked Vrooman, senior, with a look of doubt and incredulity.

"No, on my reputation, no. The French and the redskins met the king's troops face to face in the comparatively open forest, and the one side was as much surprised as the other. But, while the British sat down, with napkins on, to a well-cooked dinner, to eat leisurely first and then go to battle, in the correct style of the Low Countries, the Indians simply scattered themselves in cover, and enjoyed an afternoon of target practice. Even when the army had formed, the men and their officers, knowing how to fight only in platoons according to the European method, were quickly slaughtered. The soldiers were not used to firing into bushes, or aiming at invisible foes. A Frenchman I met and talked to told me that he went over the field after the battle and saw that most of the dead British officers had napkins pinned on their breasts. The white linen had in each case made a superb target for the Indians, and most of the napkins had bullet holes in them. It was the redskins that did the bloody work, however, for the Canadians had run away."

"Well, colonel, you will not take many city cooks into the New York wilderness, will you? Napkins

and table luxuries will be left at home?" queried Mrs. Eyre.

"No, we expect neither to fall into ambush, nor walk into a trap with our eyes open, and then call it an 'ambuscade.'"

"By the way, Colonel Hand," asked Mr. Harby, "did you ever visit the actual place of Braddock's defeat?"

"Yes, more than once; but it is now, after twenty years or more, so overgrown that, except for an occasional bone washed out here and there, or some mark on the trees or branches, which only a woodman's eye can detect, there are no signs of that awful day, which would have been utterly lost except for Washington. Nature has kindly covered up the marks of slaughter."

"Ah, that reminds me," said the host; "I saw Braddock's field when all the bones of his men were lying white on the soil. With some comrades in Fort Pitt, I went out to see that little amphitheatre which the Indians had used as a shooting gallery. I believe that the redskins surprised themselves fully as much as they did the redcoats, at the amazing ease of their victory. It was simply a case of a martinet general setting up a target for an enemy he could not understand. All around were old logs and trees and the underbrush in the forest, undisturbed for a thousand years. On the hill slope the savages hid themselves and simply blazed away. If the

Virginians lay down behind rocks or stood behind trees to circumvent the Indians, the demoralized British infantry fired into their backs. This was simply because they had something to see and to fire at.

“Down in the low-lying portion, in a parallelogram only half a mile long and about one hundred yards wide, I saw the white bones of enough victims to remind me of Ezekiel’s vision. They lay thick as leaves, one over the other. It was five years after the sad event that I looked upon the scene. It only shows how hard it is for our British friends to learn from Americans. Why, King George himself, young and headstrong, given to governing too much, seems to be no better than Braddock in refusing to learn from those who could teach him better.”

“Well, I feel sure,” continued Colonel Hand, “that with some light guns and howitzers, and our skilful axemen, we can chop our way into the Indian country, demoralize the Indians, and blow to pieces their strongest castles. Even though they have the Tories of Canada, and the Butlers and Johnsons from the Mohawk Valley to help them build entrenchments, we can do it. Give us a few companies of riflemen, scouts, and skirmishers, and some guides like our young friend Vrooman here, and I can assure General Washington that there will be no ‘Braddock’s field’ along our route.”

“Thank you, colonel, and God grant us the op-

portunity," said young Vrooman. "We young men of the Mohawk Valley are all ready to march. While you and Pennsylvania remember Wyoming, we have Cherry Valley and Springfield to avenge. The plots are all hatched, and the forays all planned at Kanadasaga,<sup>1</sup> at the head of Seneca Lake. In one of my trips, I went there with Domine Kirkland and his Oneida friends. Furthermore, we'll be doing the patriot cause a good service to destroy all the corn-fields. I have been out in the region of those pretty lakes in western New York, where the Indians have raised grain and vegetables for a good many years past. On my last scout, just before the Oriskany campaign, I found hundreds of braves girdling and deadening the trees in scores of patches in the forest, for new maize fields, and thousands of squaws planting the seed, or at work with the hoe. I hear that both this year and last the Tories have been by the score among the Indians, helping them in their farming and building operations. Along the river bottoms and in the open inter-lake country there must be many tens of thousands of fresh acres of corn planted. Many of the fields are fenced, and live stock, cattle, hogs, chickens, and horses are common. Hundreds of new bark houses have been built to store the crops, and it is even proposed to feed a large part of the British army,—not only those that come down from Canada, but those in

<sup>1</sup> Geneva, New York.



New York and along the coast. Light boats and canoes can be floated down the Susquehanna and the Delaware, so that the main forces can thus be provisioned."

"Indeed!" said Colonel Hand, with true Irish impetuosity, bringing his fist down on the table so violently as to rattle the gilt-rimmed china cups and saucers, and upset a pile of caraway-seed cakes. The ladies looked at him almost with alarm, as he blurted out, "An idea strikes me."

"As hard as you hit the table?" queried Colonel Eyre, merrily.

"Well," said the light infantry commander, laughing, "I can see now why delay to General Sullivan's expedition will do no harm. Even if beef, boats, and flour are slow in coming, and we start late in the season, we shall be in the nick of time, for then the crops will be ripe and their destruction will be surer and more disastrous to our enemies."

"I fear from the opposition of the Quakers, who think the poor Indians are more sinned against than sinning, and from the usual dilatoriness of the Board of War, that there will be tardiness," said Colonel Eyre. "Even if after the supplies are delivered they are found to be worth using, then the contractors in east Pennsylvania are more honest men than their fellows in New York or Massachusetts."

"Do you understand, colonel, that the expedition

is to start from Pennsylvania?" asked Adam Vrooman.

"Well, yes; the main body will, in all probability, move from Easton, while the New York troops set out from Schenectady. But that is a matter to be settled at the council board with the commander when we meet him next week at Middlebrook, in New Jersey, where he is now."

By this time the table began to look very empty. The third cup of tea had been enjoyed by nearly every one, and the party seemed ready to adjourn. The only ones who had not spoken were the demure maidens, Margaret Eyre and Henrietta Harby. The former, looking at young Vrooman, seemed to wish to speak.

"What is it, daughter?"

"Well, father, you know how I love rare flowers, and Mr. Bartram, our botanical friend, tells me there is a wonderful little pink primrose, quite unlike anything in our region, that grows only in the cool gorges of that wonderful land of lakes, in which Mr. Vrooman has travelled with Domine Kirkland, and especially at the foot of Lake Cayuga. I wonder if he would get one of the plants, for it is too late for the blooms, and press it for me. Here is a picture of the leaf, flower, stalk, and root, with a sketch of its surroundings. I should prize it more than edelweiss, of which the Swiss men in Colonel Hubley's Pennsylvania regiment talk."

“I will, fair lady; you can count on me,” said young Vrooman.

“Thank you, and may you find and bring back your wife and sister too.”

“God grant it!” The words and prayer sounded like a chorus from a sextette of voices.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FRONTIERSMEN AT THE CAPITAL

THE gentlemen rose and walked down through the garden into the shipyard, where were stored boxes of "hardware," or cannon, for which carriages were then being built, the sheds seeming more like wheelwrights' shops than a ship-builder's work place. The three Eyre brothers, Emmanuel, Jabez, and George, had built many gallant craft in time of peace, with such names as the *Truelove*, the *Three Brothers*, etc. The *Bull Dog* was a specimen name of the war-ships launched for the Congress. The party took bateaux, and rowed over to pay a short visit to the Continental brig *Andrea Doria* which then lay out on the bosom of the stream at anchor.

Colonel Eyre was proud of this craft, for he had seen it built. John Adams had named it after the famous Italian admiral, whose name is linked with the story of Italian liberties. Having conquered a city, Andrea Doria gave the inhabitants their choice of government. On their choosing a republic, he helped maintain for them this form of order. Colonel

Eyre felt a peculiarly patriotic, as well as a personal, interest in this ship, because it was the first war vessel of the United States carrying the American flag that ever gave and received a salute from a foreign magistrate.

On the 16th of November, 1776, under command of Captain Patterson, the *Andrea Doria* sailed into the harbor of St. Eustatius with its then unstarred flag of thirteen stripes flying apeak. Captain Ravené, in command of Fort Orange, by order of the governor of the island, Johannes de Graeff, fired, with his Dutch artillery, in honor of "the flag of the Continental Congress," a salute of eleven guns.

Colonel Eyre now told the story of the salute, how given and returned, and of the dinner tendered by Governor de Graeff to the officers of the *Andrea Doria*, and enjoyed by them, and how they presented, and he read, the document of July 4, 1776.

The ladies were still chatting in the parlor, as the party were returning from the ship to the house, the walls of which were hung with prints representing scenes in England. These were the market road or cross in the town of Worksop; the ruins of Newark Castle, where Colonel Gervaise Eyre, ancestor of Colonel Eyre, had served King Charles against the Parliament troopers, often gallantly leading his own cavalymen against Cromwell's Ironsides; and the little parish church at Rampton, where the Eyres of several generations lie buried. Over the mantel-

piece was draped the original American flag of thirteen stripes, red and white, without stars.

"Well, Colonel Hand," said Mrs. Eyre, as he stepped across the threshold, "did you see the ship that drew forth the first salute ever fired in honor of the American flag?"

"Yes, thank you; and the colonel, your husband, tells me you have the identical bunting in your house."

"True, sir; here it is," and she pointed to the as yet starless flag gracefully fastened over the mantelpiece. "This drew the thunders of Fort Orange in the West Indies. Captain Patterson himself gave it to me as a souvenir of his voyage and of the first foreign salute to the flag of the Continental Congress and of our country."

"Good; but it seems to me the Eyres possess a monopoly of famous flags. The colonel tells me that Mrs. Betsey Ross, now Mrs. Claypole, who made the first flag with stars in it, has married an artilleryman once in his regiment."

"True, sir. The lady is fair and young, and we do not wonder she has taken a third husband to herself. Her second was prisoner in the old Mill prison near Plymouth in England. He sent his dying messages to his wife by the man, also an American prisoner, formerly in my husband's regiment, and he carried them to her. Evidently he was a diligent lover, for in eight months they were married."

“How about the proverb, ‘Don’t trust a pigeon to carry grain’?”

“But he, the third, carried the grain and won a nest too,” laughed Mrs. Eyre; “and here is one of the first, though not the very first, flags she made, which she kept many months as a pattern. Mr. Claypole himself, her husband, gave it to Colonel Eyre.”

Colonel Hand examined it and then looked up into the matron’s eyes with mute appeal. There was a prayer in his eyes, but no word was spoken.

“Enough, Colonel Hand; it is yours. Carry it in the forefront of General Sullivan’s army. Bear it to the point farthest westward ever to be reached by the regular Continental soldiers, and then return it to me, — if God will.” Mrs. Eyre looked upward, bowed, courtesied, and then handed the silken symbol to the colonel of the light-armed troops who were to be ever in the van of Sullivan’s avengers of Wyoming.

“My life is consecrated to my adopted country,” said the gallant Irishman. “I promise nothing. Let deeds tell.”

Yet though there were leaking vessels, and a blue coat wet on the breast where tears had fallen, there was silence, while Colonel Hand wrapped up the flag and put it inside his bosom.

The three days which Colonel Hand and the Vroomans had to spend in Philadelphia before joining the army at Middlebrook, New Jersey, were spent in seeing the sights of what was then the capital of the

United States and the largest city in America. The gentlemen rose from their beds in time to see the Jersey crows fly in black clouds over the city to their daily feeding grounds in Pennsylvania. In the "West End," at Sixth Street, toward the Schuylkill, apparently on the edge of the town, or at least the main part of it, stood the State House, while Carpenters' Hall was in the heart of the city, eastward and nearer the Delaware. The streets between the rivers were numbered First, Second, Third, etc. Those between Kensington and Southwark were named after trees such as Walnut, Spruce, Pine; or, after bushes, Mulberry, Raspberry, etc. Colonel Hand was reminded of London by the names of the wards, Southwark, Northern Liberties, Kensington, etc. Vrooman, senior, noted many Dutch names of families from the Netherlands who had come over with William Penn, whose mother had also come from Rotterdam.

There were many other things which seemed very fine and grand to those who had spent most of their lives in the backwoods, or at frontier settlements. Indeed, when walking along Second Street, some of the houses seemed so high and close together that at one point Vrooman the younger wished to walk in the middle of the street.

"Where are you going, my friend?" asked Colonel Eyre, as Vrooman stepped off the curb and on to the cobbles.



"Why, sir ; I am afraid these high houses will fall on me. They really seem to bend and frown at me."

"Ha, ha ! you are like sailors I have heard of. Well, you will get more light and air. I like the latter, for I take my name from this necessity of existence."

"A story, Colonel Eyre. Tell it, or I shall not order my pet scout and rifleman back on the curb. How did you get your family name?" asked Colonel Hand.

"Well, I'll tell it, to account for fighting blood being in a Quaker, though I warn you it is legend, and not down in the documents. At the battle of Hastings, William of Normandy, stunned by a missile, was knocked off his horse. There he lay in his iron harness, and, with visor down, might have died for want of air. A soldier from the ranks, stepping forward, made bold to raise and open wide the helmet of the Conqueror and to ask those around him to stand back. Soon the chief came to, declaring at once that, by the splendor of God, the air (eyre) had revived him. When able to stand, he asked who had thought of unlocking his visor. The soldier being pointed out, the mighty William summoned him forth, bade him kneel, and then and there, with the accolade, dubbed him knight, by the name of Air, or Eyre, as they spelled it then."

"Good ! Blood will tell. Now I know why you're a fighting 'Quaker.' Come Vrooman, walk

with us. I'll guarantee the houses will not fall down."

So on they sauntered, first on Chestnut and then along High Street. Among other friends met, whom Colonel Eyre saluted, or whom he stopped to give an introduction to his visitors, were Mr. Robert Aiken, the publisher of the Pennsylvania Magazine, and his editor, Mr. Thomas Paine, a brisk gentleman of English birth, who had written not a few tracts which fired the patriotism of both civilians and soldiers. The Continentals had cheered their hearts by reading these by the light of the camp-fires. Even in the gloom of Valley Forge, such stirring appeals to patriotism kindled lamps of hope.

"When will you empty your battery of quills on the enemy again, Mr. Paine?" asked Colonel Eyre.

"Oh, I am out of ammunition just now," said Mr. Paine, laughing. "Haven't a quire of paper left. As soon as I get the fifty reams we are waiting for, from St. Eustatius, the country will hear from me!"

"Good," said the colonel; "our men need them. I hope General Sullivan's soldiers will take a good supply in their knapsacks."

"Thank you, colonel; I am glad to find my work appreciated. Good day."

Christ Church, on Second Street, seemed a grand structure. After years of familiarity with narrow

river canoes only, the crowded wharves and sea-going ships loomed up vast and mysterious. Colonel Eyre pointed out the line of high ground along Front Street, in which Penn's colonists had dug caves and lived for a time while their houses were going up. He showed the house in which Catherine Montour, the Indian queen, whose town was near Seneca Lake, had stopped, when visiting Philadelphia at the age of ten years, with Seneca chiefs. Another object of interest was the house in which had been held the Indian council, at which the Iroquois confronted the Delawares in a dispute about their sale of lands, called them squaws, and so angered the young chief Taughannock that he went off vowing revenge, and kept his vow. He showed also the spot on Chestnut Street where the mangled and scalped corpses of those slain in the Indian massacres had been brought and exposed as an object lesson, showing what the British allies could and would do. While all paused to admire the State House, Colonel Eyre called attention to the last indictment against King George, in the Declaration of July 4, 1776, a copy of which was posted on Independence Hall. It read:—

“He [the king of Great Britain] has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.”

"That statement, penned nearly three years ago, fully justifies the Western Expedition against the Indians, which General Sullivan is to lead," said Colonel Hand; "for what was then surmise is now multiplied fact."

"Yes, 'seeing is believing, but feeling is the naked truth.' The orders of the Congress to desolate the Indian country are harsh, but they are necessary. I have seen Wyoming. That is enough for me."

As for the ladies, they had their own schemes and pleasures. John Harby's daughter, who went shopping with Miss Eyre down the Philadelphia Cheap-side, Second Street, thought the wonderful things seen in the shops—which had been captured by the privateers or brought over by way of the Dutch West Indies from Europe—were gay beyond the glamour of fairy tales. The first strenuous self-denial of the early years of the war, which had compelled the patriotic women to do without many familiar luxuries, was now over. The privateers which, in the teeth of British squadrons, kept the stars and stripes afloat on the ocean and gathered to refit and load with supplies at St. Eustatius, brought in fresh invoices almost weekly. One prosy but significant fact we must note, and that is this: Besides what the ladies thought necessary for their comfort, there were "grains" and "hardware," which English as well as French merchants sold

to the Dutch, to supply Washington's army, in exchange for tobacco, American produce, or Spanish silver, said "grains" being grains of gunpowder, and "hardware" being cannon.

This chapter, already far too long, would be tediously so, were I here to tell of the call into the upholstery shop on Mulberry Street near Second, and the chat with Mrs. Ross-Claypole, flag maker to the Continental Congress. Philadelphia, the nation's capital, was a wonderfully gay city, for the British had left it and gone to New York. Meanwhile, Washington held his Continentals together, and waited for the time to come when the French alliance should mean efficient coöperation.

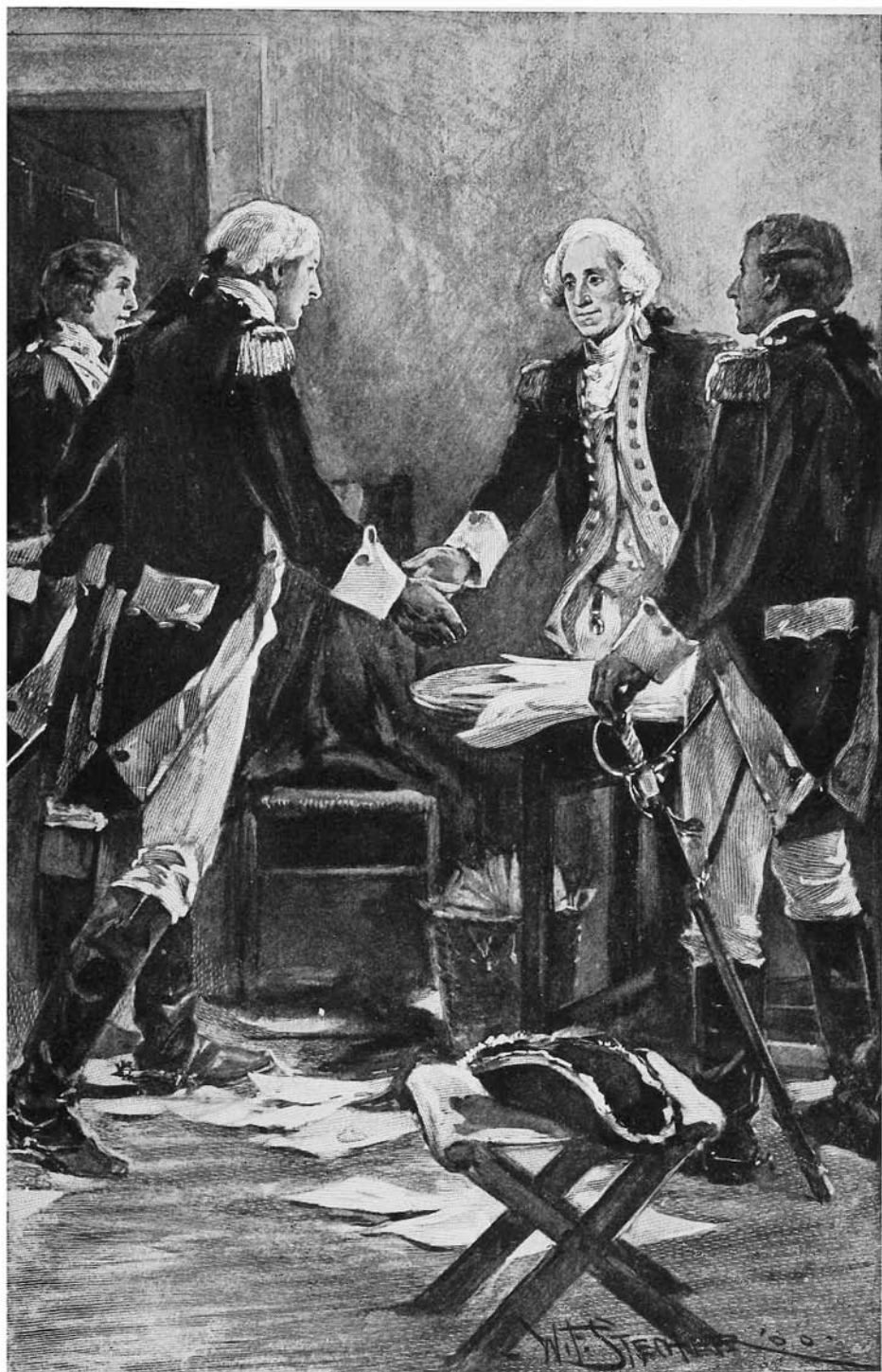
## CHAPTER IV

### RAAD VOOR DAAD

“**R**AAD voor daad” (“Council before action”), as the Dutch proverb says. Washington was accustomed to think things out before he began operations. He deliberated and then struck hard.

Colonel Hand, with Colonel Eyre and his aides, Captain Adam Vrooman, and his son Claes, had ridden from Philadelphia to the camp at Middlebrook, New Jersey, arriving early in the morning of the third day. After slight detention by the pickets and outer guard of General Anthony Wayne’s brigade, consisting of the First, Second, and Third Pennsylvania regiments, the visitors were escorted to Major Alexander Hamilton’s office. By him they were introduced into Washington’s presence, who, in his dignity, greeted them with noticeable warmth. Colonel Eyre had been very active in the Trenton and Princeton campaign of 1776-77, both in handling the boats when crossing the Delaware to capture Hessians and in serving his cannon at Princeton. His brother George had acted as his aide, and he knew the Eyres well.

“I am very happy to see both a Continental officer



"THE GENERAL EXTENDED HIS HAND COURTEOUSLY TO THE FATHER AND SON."





and one of the Pennsylvania line who have been over ground once so familiar to me in Ohio and western Pennsylvania. I am particularly glad, Colonel Hand, that you have taken some lessons in Indian warfare, for I expect to give you further opportunities in that direction. Do you mind travelling northwestwardly?" said Washington.

"I shall be only too happy, your Excellency, to go wheresoever you order," said Colonel Hand; "and I wish to tell you how well I have been assisted by my aides, Captain Adam Vrooman and his son Claes, of Schenectady. The young man knows the Seneca country by personal examination. He has been beyond Cayuga Lake as far as Kanedasaga, the big 'castle,' where the Wyoming raid was planned. I beg to commend them both to the attention of your Excellency."

The general extended his hand courteously to the father and son, and bade them be seated. After a few exchanges of inquiry, the council of war was called for ten o'clock next morning. The visitors improved their time by visiting the camp and attending the inspection of some regiments by Baron Steuben. It was with a feeling of awe that young Vrooman first looked on this former aide-de-camp to the mighty king of Prussia, Frederick the Great. In glittering uniform, on a horse richly caparisoned and with unusually large holsters, Baron Steuben seemed every inch a soldier. To a boy whose ideas of

European warfare had been gained in childhood by poring over the numerous pictures of the Dutch histories of the Vaderland and the States-General's version of the family Bible, this Prussian recalled the figures of Mars and the imposing Roman soldiers under Cæsar. Dismounting, after an hour or two of drill and tactics, the indefatigable German ordered knapsacks unslung and their contents tumbled into their blankets, to see that everything provided by law was there and in order. Five hours were spent on three regiments. Then Steuben rode back to his headquarters at the house of the Staats family. "Nothing," as the baron said himself, "is too little for a great soldier."

After dinner the visitors entered the soldiers' log huts, built without a nail, but made strong with plenty of hickory pins. These were provided with a double row of bunks on all sides, in which were plenty of straw and in each, neatly folded up, a Leyden blanket. A dozen men lived in each hut. The broad fireplaces and chimneys were made of bricks and splints of wood well covered with clay. A rude table occupied most of the centre of the room, on one half of which were soldiers' gear, Mr. Paine's tracts, smokers' material, packs of cards, novels, copies of the Philadelphia periodicals, occasionally a book, and once in a while a Bible; and on the other half, vessels for eating and drinking, of wood, pewter, and earthenware. Later in the afternoon, the visitors enjoyed

the sight of dress parade and heard the evening gun.

It was a brilliant company of handsome men, most of them still young or in the prime of life, that gathered around the table of the commander-in-chief at Middlebrook, to take council concerning the proposed expedition of chastisement against "the Senecas," that name of the largest of the Six Nations, which stood in the popular minds for the whole of the allied savages. There were present Generals Knox, Wayne, Greene, Maxwell; Colonels Hand, Eyre, Steuben, Proctor, and Alexander Hamilton, Captain Adam Vrooman and his son Claes. From Generals Clinton and Poor and Domine Kirkland, letters recently received were read. General Sullivan was already at Easton, where also were boat-building parties from the Eyre shipyards, some of whom were to go forward to Wyoming and Tioga Point.

The "Seneca country" was a common phrase for the great unknown land, rich in lakes, waterfalls, and cleared maize land, of central and western New York, — the granary of the Six Nations. There were, indeed, what professed to be maps of the region lying on the table, and the heads of Washington's generals were bent over them. But, apart from showing the lines of the rivers and in a vague way the position of the lakes and Indian "castles" or fortified towns, there was very little exact information to be gained about this rich region threaded only by Indian trails.

The great Iroquois confederacy dominated a region twelve hundred miles long and six hundred miles wide, but their houses and firesides lay between the Hudson River and Niagara Falls and between Lake Ontario and Tioga Point at the forks of the Susquehanna, almost the whole area being within the length and breadth of New York. The Long House, as they called their domain, had four doors, the northern at Oswego, and the southern, where all the trails from the four points of the compass met, at Tioga Point, where the two rivers, the Chemung and the outlet of Otsego Lake forming the Susquehanna, meet. This southern door was ever guarded by a vigilant Seneca chief. Near by were the great maize lands of Queen Esther, who had figured so cruelly in the Wyoming massacre. The eastern door was at Schenectady, and the western at Niagara.

Washington, feeling in duty bound to do so, had offered the command of this expedition, for which one-third of the whole Continental army was to be spared, to General Horatio Gates, his old comrade on Braddock's field. But this officer, pride-swollen with victory at Saratoga over Burgoyne — though Gansevoort at Oriskany, Stark at Bennington, Arnold at Stillwater, and in all the wisdom and skill of Schuyler, who had foreseen and prepared every element of success, had wrought the results which secured French recognition — declined Washington's generous offer. This was done in language which plainly irritated the

commander-in-chief, who then turned to Sullivan. Young, — for he was not yet forty, — alert, of handsome military bearing, zealously patriotic, not indeed able to avoid mistakes, but ever quick to rectify or neutralize them, Major-General John Sullivan was the man for the emergency. He was one not likely to be “Braddocked.”

Washington might have offered the command to Major-General Anthony Wayne, but this gallant officer had other work to do; and do it he did, that very summer of 1779. Wayne, as elegantly gotten up in his dress as a Chestnut Street beau, politely and formally present in body but hardly in spirit, took only a general interest in the council. During some of the discussions of details over maps, he even pulled out a book, which was no other than Smollett's novel of “Roderick Random,” and began to read in snatches. It told the story of Admiral Vernon's expedition against the Spaniards in Cuba, in which Washington's older brother, Lawrence, had taken part. This, as we all know, had resulted in the naming of the family estate on the “Mount” by the Potomac and in the bringing home of a comrade, the Dutchman Jacob van Braam, who had taught the boy of ten, now the great commander Washington, broadsword and infantry exercises and a knowledge of fortification. Wayne had come provided with “food for the mind.” He had perfect confidence in Sullivan, while, in planning a battle or a campaign, Washington was in his eyes infallible.

Washington, who always made an allowance of five minutes for difference in timepieces, — for split-second watches were not yet invented, — called the meeting to order at the moment of 10.05 A.M. He laid down his own watch on the table, and, addressing Colonel Hand, said: "What shall we do for guides and interpreters? You are going among Indians that speak various languages. Fortunately no European language, other than English, will be needed. You will not have my unpleasant experience of years ago."

"Ah," said Colonel Hand, ever alert; "may I ask your Excellency what that was?"

"Well, not knowing French, I had to trust to my former military instructor, Van Braam, whose acquaintance with English was as defective as was mine with French. In the correspondence with Commander Contrecoeur, I and my party, after we had captured Dumonville and his men, were made out to be 'assassins.' The Senecas were our allies then, and the Half King helped us. Yet I suffered less than Van Braam; for, on our return to Virginia, the storm of ridicule so angered my Dutch friend that he threw up his commission, sold his lands, and is now somewhere in the British army. You will have no experience of that kind, I hope. Have you selected a pilot?"

"My young friend Vrooman," said Colonel Hand, "can certainly guide any force that will advance

through the Mohawk Valley and into the region westward, for he has been as far as Conesus, which, I am told, is the westernmost lake in that wonderful crescent line, around the shores of which the Indians are most thickly settled. He tells me also that there is a Connecticut gentleman, a clergyman, who has actually lived among the Oneidas. He speaks not only their language well but knows other Indian dialects."

"What is his name?" asked the commander-in-chief of Claes Vrooman.

"The Reverend Domine Samuel Kirkland," replied Claes.

"Very good," said Washington. "He is an old friend. Your words confirm a letter I have received from the domine himself. We must have him appointed as chaplain, and he can take some of his friendly Oneidas, our allies, with him, of whom Mr. Vrooman has told Colonel Hand. At least this one of the Six Nations has cast in its lot with us. We are to have a visit from their warriors in a few days. A delegation is now on its way here."

It was at this council table in Middlebrook, after the opinions of Knox, Steuben, and Greene had been especially drawn out and expressed, that the plan of the campaign was definitely formed and the forces assigned. It was decided to detach at least five thousand men for the task, — a number which at once revealed the seriousness of the work in hand,

for that meant one-third of the whole Continental army.

Though hundreds of miles apart, there was to be a right and left wing to the main body. The centre under Sullivan was to move from Easton, the right wing under Clinton from Schenectady, and the left under Broadhead from Pittsburg. Thus supported on either flank, east and west, the Continental army of chastisement was to sweep all Iroquoisia.

Colonel Broadhead, with six hundred men, was to advance into northern Pennsylvania and southwestern New York, to punish the Indians there.

At Schenectady General Clinton was to assemble his New York and Massachusetts troops. These were to proceed up the valley of the Mohawk. After throwing forward detachments to chastise the Onondagas, the men were to load their boats and stores on wagons at Canajoharie, and then cross the country to Lake Otsego. There they would build a dam and raise the combined waters of this and Schuyler Lake. By floating, poling, or pushing down into the Susquehanna, they were to deliver the ammunition and stores at Tioga Point. It seemed a bold and toilsome enterprise, but Clinton was not only brave and inclined to new projects, but was a skilled engineer. From Easton, the New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey regiments under Poor, Hubley, and Maxwell, the artillery under Proctor, and the riflemen under Colonel Hand, were



to set out by way of Wyoming for Tioga Point, to force the southern door of the Indian confederacy, and lay the "Long House" in ashes. Henceforth, Washington was to be known among the Iroquois as the "Town Destroyer."

Colonel Eyre was to relieve Colonel Proctor in command of the forts on the Delaware. The two artillery officers had been young men of energy and enterprise in the shipyard of Richard Wright, Colonel Eyre's father-in-law, where the young Irishman was very popular. Having learned the handling of cannon, Proctor raised a company, and in two years rose to be colonel. At Middlebrook, Eyre and Proctor had already renewed each other's acquaintance, and were sitting together.

"I am putting a severe task upon General Sullivan and yourselves, gentlemen," said Washington, addressing especially Maxwell, Hand, and Proctor. "To take so large an army so far into the wilderness seems like invading a foreign country; but there is not only an imperative need of the expedition in order to cut off these flank attacks of savages and Tories, but as one born on the soil, I feel that, while grateful for foreign assistance, we must depend largely upon ourselves. If our country is to be made free, it must be by Americans. We cannot afford to sit idly by and wait for the French to come and do our work. The orders of the Congress are explicit. Our cruel enemies are to be so punished that their

strength will be broken. Their country is to be so devastated that it will be not possible for the savages to occupy, the land again during the war. I have taken every precaution, based on experience, and shall furnish General Sullivan with all of the riflemen we can spare, — at least two hundred, if possible, — for these men are used to the forest and to Indian ways. I have placed the light infantry under command of Colonel Hand, who also has had experience in Indian warfare. Although it will be difficult and toilsome to transport the artillery, yet I rely upon its power of inspiring terror among the savages. The labor expended in transportation will, I feel sure, be justified. In the other brigade commanders, Poor and Clinton, I repose the highest confidence. Besides the skilled guides, I shall order Erskine and Lodge, of the topographical engineers, to measure the route and make maps of the region traversed. So, good day."

Thereupon Washington, leaving the members of the council to the courtesies of his aide, Alexander Hamilton, left the room, and adjournment was soon the order of the hour.

## CHAPTER V

### GAYETY IN THE CONTINENTAL CAMP

WHAT happened at Middlebrook, while Colonel Eyre remained a fortnight with the army, is thus told in a letter which he wrote to his wife, who had charged him to tell her particularly about the ladies at the camp and in the country around. During the whole war there was probably no place at which the officers of the Continental army had a pleasanter time during winter quarters than at Middlebrook, in central New Jersey. Here was the very reverse of the gloom and misery at Valley Forge the year previous. Colonel Eyre was a keen observer and a diligent letter-writer. Hence his impressions are worth our notice. He was not averse to amusing his wife with delightful bits of gossip which he with his brother officers enjoyed.

Let us open the yellow time-stained packet of his letters, and see with his eyes what was worth looking at in the Jersey cantonments: —

“CAMP AT MIDDLEBROOK HEIGHTS,

“May 31, 1779.

“DEAR WIFE POLLY AND DAUGHTER PEGGY: I must tell you of my ride hither in the pleasant company of

Colonel Hand and Captain Vrooman and his son. When I remember Valley Forge, with its hunger and rags, its misery and sufferings, I can hardly believe that this is the same army, but it is. Baron Steuben has accomplished wonders in drill, tactics, and inspection of arms and equipments. Our men, after having met the enemy in the open field at Monmouth, feel in wonderfully high spirits. This is a rich country, and there are many fine old homes and farms here. Besides the pretty girls and stately matrons of the county, many of the officers have their wives, and in some cases their whole families. You would be surprised at the gayety in the camp. Some of the dinners given are more like those which we are apt to associate with Walnut Street, rather than with the heart of New Jersey.

“Let me first say, as I must always, a good word about the loyalty and patriotism of our soldiers. They live as they have fought, like men determined to be free. Every effort has been made by the king’s emissaries to persuade our men, and all sorts of rewards offered to them, to desert. Indeed, I have found that during this winter past some of the regimental camps have been flooded with printed circulars, urging the soldiers to come again under King George’s banner, with promise of pay and honors; but very few have yielded. Mr. Paine’s patriotic tracts have handsomely neutralized the Tory treason.

“The Jersey people, too, are nobly loyal. Washington has done all in his power to protect them from the marauders and disorderly elements in the army. Any thief caught meets with speedy punishment. Recently our commander gave a lesson which is not likely to be soon forgotten. Late in April, after a mighty crowd of people had gathered, and two regiments of soldiers had been drawn up in a hollow square, five deserters sat on their coffins under a gallows with the halters around their necks. Alongside of each was an open grave, for each one to fill. Two did swing, but three were pardoned.

“In another case nine men went through the same dramatic ordeal, but all except one were reprieved, the coffins taken away, and the graves filled up with earth. The ninth man had to swing, for he had forged discharges by which the army lost nearly one hundred men. I am happy to say that the Consistories of the Reformed Dutch churches here, through their domine, Rev. Jacob Hardenbergh, the son of the New York militia colonel, have sent a long letter to General Washington, thanking him for his vigilance in maintaining strict discipline throughout the army. This letter General Washington answered with his usual clearness and suavity.

“The domine is so hated of the Tories that he sleeps with a loaded musket by his bedside. Princeton has heaped honors on his head, and made him doctor of divinity. I suppose the British will burn

his meeting-house as soon as the army moves elsewhere.

“But now to more cheerful things. I could not now take time to tell you about all the fine officers I have met here. I shall leave that till I see you again; but of some I must speak. Our fellow Pennsylvanian, Anthony Wayne, is as much of a dandy as when we knew him before the war. He always looks as if he had just stepped out of a bandbox, but is one of the bravest of the brave. It is not only we “free Quakers,” who wear soldier clothes, but Dutch and German Reformed domines also.

“Muhlenburg — ‘the time to preach and the time to fight’ parson-general — is as fat as ever, like his wife, who is with him. They entertain frequently, not only with suppers but with dances. It is very rare, they say, that the fun is over before two or three o’clock in the morning. In spite of these muddy roads — as red as Margaret’s cheek when she blushes — there is a good deal of social life and visiting of officers’ wives, one with the other. Judging by the immaculate whiteness and elegant doing up of the ladies’ collars and ruffles, there must be a good deal of starch consumed in the cantonment.

“The country houses here are, many of them, built of Holland brick, and the Holland Dutch who live in them are a very hospitable set of people. They certainly know what good living is. I have been interested to notice how differently the men from

Connecticut or Virginia, North Carolina, or New Jersey, do things. Each set has its own way, but it is certainly a good thing for our country to bring the patriots of the different states together, to stand shoulder to shoulder in one common interest.

“Near Chimney Rock, which is a piece of high ground easily seen from New Brunswick, Major-General Putnam’s division is encamped. With them is Colonel Gibson’s Virginia regiment, with the surgeon of which, Thatcher by name, I had a long and pleasant talk. General Greene, of Rhode Island, whom I have met before, has his headquarters in a snug stone house belonging to a Mr. Van Veghten, a hale old gentleman of about eighty years of age. I have had considerable business with General Greene, who is now quartermaster-general. His wife is a lovely woman and extremely handsome. If I am not ungallant, and if you will not be jealous, I should say that her bright gray eyes had not seen more than twenty-five years of experience in this world. Her conversation is certainly very delightful.

“Of course I am most interested in the artillery, which I find is parked at Pluckamin. Here they hold a sort of school of war in the academy building, the young officers and men receiving instruction in gunnery and tactics. There are altogether about forty-nine companies, with about seventeen hundred men. They wear black coats with red facings. Their jackets and breeches are of white wool, and their hats are

of yellow. My friend, Colonel Proctor, does not like this new uniform. He prefers the old blue coats faced with white and buff, which remind him of old-country politics and traditions ; but, like a good soldier, he yields to Washington's orders. He will march his artillery men into the wilderness with a regiment of black coats instead of blue. He is to take nine guns. How I wish I were going in his place !

“ Our Pennsylvania boys under Wayne have blue coats lined with white, ruffled shirts, red flannel leggings, and caps dressed with fur. They are almost as neat as their general, whose nick or pet name ‘ Mad ’ came from a slouchy, drunken fellow. His regiments form one of the finest brigades in the Continental force. Washington's life-guards wear buff and blue, forming a splendid body of men, and the model for the army. There are some quite bright uniforms in the Maryland and Pennsylvania lines, but naturally I am most interested in those men that are to march westward against the savages. Nearly all the Jersey-men wear blue, turned up with red. The New Hampshire men, who are to join Sullivan, are now in camp at Redding, Connecticut, or on their march to the Delaware Valley. The general, as usual, is ahead of time, and already at Easton. How well I remember him at Brandywine, — a dark-featured, bright-eyed man, with rosy cheeks, and as handsome as a picture. This morning I received a letter from him. He is delighted with his appointment and work. Think of



his seeing the New York lakes and perhaps pushing on to Niagara !

“ I must tell you a curious little anecdote, which shows how narrow and bigoted some sectarians can be. You know how harshly some of the Friends have spoken of us ‘free Quakers,’ because we have taken up arms for our country’s freedom, and how uncharitable some of them are in their judgments ; but I think the Dutch churchmen here have gone further. My chief of artillery, General Knox, told me about it. Mrs. Knox has insisted on being with her husband and sharing his privations in camp, so that it is no wonder that two of her children have died in infancy. They are Congregationalists, as indeed nearly all the New Englanders are, and this, in the eyes of the Dutch Calvinists, means something dangerous, though both sorts of churchmen honor the Geneva reformer.

“ A short time ago Mrs. Knox’s second baby, born in the camp here, died. The father and mother wished the little one to be buried in the churchyard, but the elders in the Great Consistory are so frightfully orthodox that they declined allowing the infant to be buried within the cemetery. Is not this like what Christ said about ‘despising the little ones’ ? The little grave lies about ten yards west of the ‘meeting-house,’ as we would say, for we find it hard to call anything made of brick or stone a ‘church,’ which can only be made up of living souls.

“I am bound to say that the general’s host, old Jacobus van der Veer, is very angry about the Consistory’s action, especially as he gave the ground to the church, for he himself has suffered from the same narrowness and bigotry. Several years ago his own daughter, who was insane, was denied burial on account of her infirmity. When will the world learn that insanity is not necessarily a proof of God’s disfavor? So he buried his daughter just outside the line fence, and when the general was informed he could not put his baby’s corpse in the cemetery, Mr. Van de Veer took my chief by the hand and led him out by his daughter’s grave, and with a choking voice said, ‘General, this is my ground; bury your child here.’

“I have been to several tea drinkings, dinners, and evening companies, and if I were to give the list of ladies, it would be a long one. Mrs. Washington, Mrs. Knox, Mrs. Lott from near Morristown, Lady Sterling and her brilliant daughter Kitty, Mrs. Greene, a Miss Brown from Virginia, and Misses Katy and Betsey Livingston, daughters of the governor of New Jersey, are in the cantonment. His married daughter, Mrs. John Jay, has also been here. She has so wonderfully brilliant a complexion that strangers think it must come from rouge, though those who know her best say it is nature’s own blush. Then there are the five handsome and well-bred daughters of Philip van Horne, who lives at Phil’s

Hill. He is a fine man, but his weakness seems to be a desire to cultivate friendship with the friends both of King George and the Continental Congress.

“On great occasions, such as a review, ladies come up from Princeton, Elizabethtown, and Basking Ridge; but, handsome as they are, I must tell you of the superb officers here, for example, Colonel Alexander Hamilton. He is only twenty-two years old, has, besides rosy cheeks and powdered hair, such amiable manners and agreeable presence, that he makes every visitor a friend. He is single, and I wonder what lady he is yet to win. The only person whom I ever heard of having taken offence at him for being asked to wait, while General Washington was busy, was that rather impetuous Pole, Count Pulaski.

“Two other officers in Washington’s military family are Colonel Tench, Tilghman, and William Colfax, the latter being chief of Washington’s body-guard. I could not exaggerate the beauty of his clear, florid complexion and expressive blue eyes. He is such a favorite of Mrs. Washington that she has knit for him, with her own hands, a linen thread net for his queue.

“He is engaged to Hester, a daughter of Jasper Schuyler, cousin of General Philip Schuyler.

“By the way, it may interest you to know that her great-grandfather, Arendt Schuyler, was named after that famous friend of the Indians, Arendt van Culer, who a century and a half ago so impressed the

redmen with his honesty and justice that they still call the governors of New York after his name, and their bond of loyalty to the king 'the covenant of Corlaer,' of which more anon. 'Corlaer' is a name to conjure by among the Indians; and, by plying them with the name of this Dutchman, who died over a century ago, and is a sort of saint or holy father among the Iroquois, the British won them to their side."

## CHAPTER VI

### THE GENERAL OF THE CONTINENTAL ARMIES

“ I MUST tell you about Washington’s body-guard, which numbers one hundred and eighty men. They wear blue coats faced with buff, red waistcoats, buckskin breeches, white belts, and black cocked hats trimmed with white capes, being as superb a body of men as I have ever seen. Among them are several Pennsylvania Germans, who are great singers of hymns. One song I heard so often that I copied it down, and here it is : —

“ ‘ England’s Georgel, Kaiser, Koenig,  
Ist fur Gott und us zu wenig.’ ”

“ I hear that they go into battle singing this as a refrain. Roughly translated, it means that King George is not great enough to inspire loyalty, and that God means it to be so.

“ A very funny incident happened here a few weeks ago. It was rumored that Captain Simcoe was riding through the country, hoping, with his Queen’s Rangers, to dash between the lines and seize Washington’s person. It was wonderful to see how quickly, on the alarm being given, the life-guards showed

their mettle. They leaped out of their huts, half dressed, and unceremoniously taking possession of headquarters, bolted and barricaded the door. Then they threw open every window, at which five men could be seen, with guns loaded and cocked, waiting until a regiment or two from the camp should turn out and form around the house.

“The alarm proved to be a false one; but at the dinner table Mrs. Washington told, most amusingly, how she had to put her head under the bed-clothes, and entrenched herself with pillows, so as to keep warm while the winter breezes swept through her bedroom; for the men stood guard till they were ordered to enter their huts again, and the Simcoe supposed to be near should put off his raid till a more favorable day. There have been so many cases on both sides of officers being captured in their beds, that, between enterprise and vigilance, there are some lively episodes.

“General Washington seems to appoint men out of sheer merit, and not out of personal favor. Nevertheless, if I were a betting man, I should wager a dinner of the best Pennsylvania ‘dump noodles and schnitz,’ with the ham and molasses thrown in, that ‘Light-horse Harry Lee,’ a young cavalry officer here, has been sentimentally favored by Washington and given the separate command of three companies of light horse, although he is only twenty-three years old. Mrs. Greene says that Harry Lee’s mother, when a

young girl, made Washington's heart bounce up and down, and many thought, from his attentions to her at one time that they were both in love with each other and engaged to be married. But, until our general met the widow Custis, he does not seem to have been very successful as a lover.

“‘Light-horse Harry Lee is a graduate of Princeton College, and a very graceful fellow. He is an especial favorite at the Van Veghten house, which I enjoy visiting so often, though I am frequently at the Middlebrook tavern also, where I meet many officers, among whom I am delighted with Colonel Alexander Scammel, now thirty-five years old and an adjutant-general of the army. He stands six feet two in his stockings, and is a big-hearted fellow. He is self-doomed to bachelorhood, for his lady love up in Connecticut will have him only on condition of his leaving the army. Yet, though he loves her, he loves his country more, and has broken off the engagement.

“It would not do to close my gallery of silhouettes without telling you of Captain Duponceau, Captain James Fairlie, and Captain William North, who are of the baron's family. The first is a Frenchman, with a proneness to kiss pretty girls that may get him into trouble. The second tells such funny stories that even Washington laughs at them. They even say that once, in crossing the Hudson River, the general actually rolled off his seat and came near

capsizing the craft, for Fairlie was so funny. Think of that! As for North, he is Steuben's right arm in making the German discipline popular.

"It is a wonderful picture of society that I see here. I confess that I am surprised to find so much of it in the camp, yes, perhaps even more, relatively, at least, than in the city. The visiting ladies, on social occasions, wear high, round hats with long feathers, and their satin petticoats, taffetas, and brocades seem to me to be simply gorgeous, though Mrs. Washington, by dressing in plainer gowns, with only neat kerchiefs, tries to set the good example of modest propriety. So long as the Dutch keep open for us a port of free entry and departure at St. Eustatius, we are likely to enjoy Europe's luxuries; while, as I know from my own wife's magical powers in the same direction, you can trust to the skilful fingers and needles of our ladies to make old things look new and handsome.

"As for the men, they enjoy their fine clothes as much as the birds do their feathers, or the ladies their hose and head-dresses. What is there in war that immediately makes men put on finery? Is it to please the ladies, or to make the soldier's short life gay while it lasts? Washington himself, in his uniform of blue and buff, varnished boots, and three-cornered hat, is 'the glass of fashion and the mould of form' for all of us. He is a perfect horseman, delighting every eye that looks on him. Even the



horse seems to enjoy being ridden by such a capital equestrian. As to fashions of the hair, the older men, on social occasions, wear their wigs, but the younger put their hair in a queue; and you can be sure that both lard for stiffening and powder for whitening are plentifully used.

“When to a grand review, for example, the fine ladies drive up from Basking Ridge, Morristown, or Princeton, I almost think that it is Sunday morning, and that I am standing on Second Street near Market, in front of Christ’s Church, as I see these gentlemen, in gay coats, knee breeches, silk stockings, and buckled shoes, with cocked hats under their arms, handing out the gorgeously appparelled females from their carriages. When the ladies salute their gallants with impressive courtesies, the bow of the head and the wave of the leg and the scraping of the ground with the foot make such a picture of gayety that I wonder whether, after all, we are at war.

“But, as a people, we are poor enough, too. Our army is shamefully small, and hard money is lacking. Soon enough, no doubt, these officers, Greene and Knox, Muhlenberg and Steuben, Maxwell and Hand, who have fought on the red clay of Brandywine, in the fog at Germantown, and over the rolling land of Monmouth, will be amid powder, smoke, and blood again. Happily for our future, we now have Steuben’s ‘Regulations for the Infantry of the United States’ put into good English by Captain

Walker. It is certain that the artillery was never in better condition, while the cavalry, if dash and valor can avail anything, will certainly make their mark.

“One of the funniest sights the camp has yet witnessed contrasted strangely with the magnificent review of the army, in presence of the French minister Gerard and the Spanish envoy Don Juan de Miralles, of which I must tell you. The latter has been sent by the governor of Havana to look into our country and its resources; but of his real intentions, ability, or standing, we are all in the dark. Some blame Congress for unwisely welcoming him; for, although Spain may be our friend and yet recognize our independence, this man may be a spy and an intriguer. Spain evidently wants to keep Florida, and to control the Mississippi Valley, and in this matter, as a ship-builder, I am deeply interested. Some of the Southern officers, whom I have met here, say that they hope Congress will never grant to any foreign power the free navigation of the Mississippi, or give it up for a pecuniary consideration.

“But the contrast I hinted at was in the visit of a band of Indian chiefs, whose faces are painted, their heads tufted with scalp-locks, and their ears and noses hung with brass and copper ornaments. They rode wretched horses without saddles, and had old ropes and straps for bridles. Their appearance

was a sorry one, but, being from friendly tribes, especially the Oneidas and Mohawks, Washington thought it best to pay them considerable deference, and had several regiments draw up in line on dress parade for their delectation. He sat on his gray horse and was followed by his black servant Bill, in addition to his usual escort. I am sure we ought to honor these Oneidas, for siding with us against the king. Little Tree, a Seneca chief, who visited Philadelphia and the general's headquarters, is now believed to be a renegade, as 'Old Smoke' proved himself to be. Hanyari, the Oneida chief, is worth them both.

"To conclude this too long letter, it has been decided that the three brigades of Poor, Maxwell, and Hand, with several companies of riflemen and Colonel Proctor's artillery regiment, will form the main force against the Senecas. They will report at Easton and move on to Tioga Point, which is near the centre of the boundary line between New York and Pennsylvania, and there join Clinton's brigade, from Schenectady. Proctor's regimental band is also going, so the men will have some music. They will need it, to cheer them up; for hauling the guns in a forest will be hard work, though to Tioga Point they will go in boats.

"General Maxwell and his men have not had the quiet winter which our soldiers at Middlebrook have enjoyed, for, late in February, Colonel Sterling, with

two British regiments and a company of the guards, tried to surprise the Jerseymen; but the general alertly led off his men down the Rahway Road. So the prowling fox, as the disappointed hunter, who failed to fill his game-bag, called him, was neither trapped nor slain. Instead of being captured, the Jerseymen turned on their foes and gave the British a taste of cannon-ball and musketry, cutting them up badly.

“Colonels Ogden’s, Shrieve’s, and Dayton’s regiments, with some men from Colonels Spencer’s and Baldwin’s regiments, will form Maxwell’s brigade, making 111 officers and 1294 men. Lieutenant-Colonel Barber, of the Third New Jersey, is to be Sullivan’s chief of staff, and Captain Aaron Ogden, of the First Regiment, is aide to General Maxwell. The New Jersey men felt very bad at being ordered into the wilderness at this particular time. This is not because they are not brave and patriotic, but because the currency issued by Congress is so nearly worthless. They have not had their pay for many months. I am told that here a colonel’s salary, in Continental pasteboard, will not pay for his horses’ oats, and the six months’ pay of a private will hardly buy one barrel of flour. Fortunately, however, owing to Governor Livingston’s activity, both officers and men have been paid some hard money, the officers two hundred dollars and the men forty dollars each. He keeps up a steady correspondence with Holland,

and is sure that the Dutch republic will yet recognize and assist our country. How a million or so of guilders would cheer us all up!

"The first and third New Jersey regiments are already at Easton, and I had the pleasure of seeing the second, Colonel Shrieve's, marching past us the other day. They were entertained first by the citizens of Elizabethtown and then escorted from the village. As they passed through our camp at Middlebrook, the hurrahs of our soldiers, who envied them the prospect of an active campaign, were worth hearing. I am told that the cantonment here is likely to remain nearly intact until June, but I must hasten, for my orders are to report immediately to the Delaware forts. Perhaps I may reach you almost as soon as this letter, which goes out from camp to-night."

Thus ended Colonel Eyre's letter. He did *not* reach home for a fortnight after the "express" had delivered his message, for he was at his guns in the Delaware forts, guarding against a rumored British naval raid on Philadelphia.

Let us now read another letter, — this time from the north. It will tell us how his friends the frontiersmen fared. In those days, Schenectady was in the "Far West."

## CHAPTER VII

### LIFE IN A FRONTIER TOWN

SCHENECTADY, N.Y., June 5, 1779.

"DEAR COLONEL EYRE, I promised to write to you when I got home in Schenectady, and tell you how my native town, 'Dorp,' we call it—looks to me after many months' absence, and what is being done by the military here in preparation for the Western Expedition against the Tories and Indians. Father and I left Middlebrook, and, after a long horseback ride, came to Kingston, where I saw a big drove of fat cattle starting off for Otsego Lake to furnish beef for Sullivan's, or rather Clinton's, army.

"At Esopus we took boat up the Hudson River to Albany and walked overland, arriving here day before yesterday.

"You would like to know how a frontier town, so different from Philadelphia, looks? This settlement, made in 1661 on lands bought from the Mohawks by Arendt van Curler, was laid out as a parallelogram, with a gate at the south on the road to Albany, and one on the north toward Canada. In between are

two streets. One is called Church, and is quite wide, running from gate to gate; and the other is Cross, from east to west. The town is surrounded by palisades made by cutting trees, sharpening their points and driving them into the earth, setting them three deep, and bracing them at the top with stout timber. Inside there is a bank or way, on which sentinels or defenders may stand. Outside there is a ditch, and at the gates drawbridges, so that Indians cannot force the place by a sudden attack. Even white men would have difficulty in capturing this place, unless well provided with ladders or artillery at least as heavy as six-pounders.

“The Mohawk River bends sharply here, and the walls run along Front, Traders, Martyrs, and Ferry streets. Thus two sides face the water, the main river, and the Binne-kill or inside branch. Our streets tell their story even better than yours, which William Penn named after numbers and trees. On Traders Street live the men who buy and sell. Front street really fronts the river, and you reach the ferry by going down Ferry Street. The Street of the Martyrs is that on which so many fell in the bloody Indian massacre, instigated by Louis XIV. and his mistress, Madame de Maintenon, when our Dutch stadholder was also England's king, in 1690. We call the people slaughtered then, ‘martyrs,’ for they died for their religion, as well as because they were subjects of the king of England. Now

things are so changed that the savages are employed, not by the French, but by the German king of Great Britain.

“Since the war broke out, our wooden walls have been extended eastward over the Wall Street and Maiden Lane; for, beside the townspeople ordinarily living here, hundreds of refugees from the Mohawk and Schoharie valleys and in the open country northward toward Saratoga have come to dwell in this town. The increased population, together with the soldiers who have at various times camped around on the hills and flats, and the hospital nurses and doctors on Niskayuna Street, together with the boat-building operations, make Dorp a bustling place, almost like Philadelphia, though on a very much smaller scale. If Sullivan’s expedition fails, or is only in part successful, we shall have to shelter the friendly Oneidas here, also.

“Sunday evenings we generally spend in sitting out on the *stoep*, the men smoking and chatting with each other and the women, while the young folks are sauntering up and down, though I tell you we have fine singing in some of the houses, or by companies gathered often on the porches. It is surprising how popular, especially since the outbreak of the war for Independence, the ‘Wilhelmus Lied’ or ‘Dutch National Song,’ written by Sainte-Aldegonde, is. It was my wife’s especial favorite. I wonder if she sings it in her captivity. The green and well-shaded



road leading past the burying-ground is a favorite walk, and some call it 'Lover's Lane.'

"The liveliest part of the town is on the strip of ground between Front Street and the Mohawk. Here the boat yards are as busy as beehives in honey-making time. The two hundred and eight boats ordered are nearly all finished. They are made for use rather than beauty; for they are to go with heavy loads in shallow water, where they have to be poled, pushed, drawn, and coaxed, as well as sailed occasionally.

"General Clinton's plan is to load the stores on these boats and move up the river to Canajoharie. There, teams of oxen and wagons will be in readiness to transport both the boats and the stores over to Otsego Lake, one of the sources of the Susquehanna. Gay and eager as the soldiers seem to be for the expedition, I really fear there will be some hard swearing, when it comes to dragging those boats and barrels over the hills, for I have been over that region and know it to be rough. Just now the last twenty boats are under adze and hammer, and the chips are flying at a lively rate. Kindling wood will be very handy for everybody, this coming winter. The ground is fairly carpeted with shavings.

"On week-days, after supper-time, the girls and people generally come down to romp and frolic among the boats and boat yards, and to see the army stores, which have been hauled in wagons

overland from Albany, put on board. One wonder whether all the powder in these casks will ever be fired off, or these boxes of leaden balls be all used there are so many of them. Entrenching tools and camp gear, big bullet moulds, axes, and what not take up a formidable amount of room. These stores are frightfully clumsy and heavy, but I suppose are necessary. The rum barrels alone fill ten boats; for evidently the officers are going to have a good time despite their vowing, one and all, that, under Clinton they will never be 'Braddocked.' I hope they will not, like Braddock's officers, be shot with their napkins pinned on them. As for buttons, I never saw so many in my life as there are on these Massachusetts troops. They fairly dazzle me. A rifleman accustomed to a brown buckskin hunting frock, can not help noticing what splendid shooting they make for an Indian behind a tree. He has only to count down to the fifth, and he has the place to aim at. They make nearly as good a target as a British officer's gorget or brass neckpiece. This campaign will not be a picnic.

"How these boats are ever to navigate the shallow Susquehanna—and I have been along the valley there—I do not know; but Clinton is an engineer, and perhaps he can store up the water in Otsego Lake to fill up the channels lower down and get us to Tioga Point. All the boats will be finished by June 15th. Then, while the regiments march on

land, these will move up the river. I hope all these boxes and barrels contain in good quality what they profess to have inside, for I know of some pretty rascally work done by contractors in Albany and Schenectady, in days gone by, when they used to supply Oswego. Last Sunday, I thought that the Van Loup girls were rather extravagantly dressed, and flaunted rather too much jewelry, in a time when so many are suffering for clothing and shelter. Everybody knows that their father cheated both the king and Congress, in the supplies which he furnished, first for Oswego, and then for the Oriskany campaign. They proved worthless when they were most wanted.

“The boatmen are all here, and ready to move west. We New Yorkers are fortunate in having such a leader as General George Clinton, and such colonels as Gansevoort, who held Fort Stanwix—we call it Fort Schuyler now—so gallantly against St. Leger. Proud, indeed, are we of our red, white, and blue flag made there, out of white linen shirts, red flannel petticoats, and what-nots. It was this flag which, in point of time, showed the stars and stripes first of all over our army. This same flag is now kept here, and we are going to hoist it over the fort at Front and Ferry streets, when the flotilla moves up the stream. I am to be attached especially to Colonel Pierre van Cortlandt’s regiment, and, when not under General Hand’s orders, as I often may be, must hold myself respon-

sible to the colonel. Of this I am mighty glad, for he knows me, and what I want to accomplish. He is the patriot who tore up his royal commission and foiled all the seductions of Tories to win him over. He is now at Wyoming with his regiment, but I report to him at Tioga Point. His rank and file form a splendid body of men.

"I must tell you about a fine lad here, named Herman Clute, who is but twenty years old, but very intelligent, strong as an ox, and brave as a lion. He is to take the place of a soldier who was disabled by an accident on the boats. He has been recommended to my care by his mother. If we do not hear a good account of him, then count me a stupid prophet."

We shall find out, in the course of our study, whether Claes Vrooman's expectations of Herman were extravagant. Had he been writing to an older or more intimate friend he would probably have added that, between the young soldier and the maid in captivity, Mary Vrooman, there had long existed a very warm and a very tender feeling. They had been playmates from childhood. Since the Cherry Valley episode, Herman had moped much. Now he was full of the fire of hope. In him was the "love that lightens all distress." His mother grieved to spare her only son, but no Spartan ever gave her son more willingly. It was a red-letter day for Herman when he put on the Continental uniform.

## CHAPTER VIII

### FROM SCHENECTADY TO OTSEGO LAKE

**I**T was a gay day inside "Old Dorp," as the palisaded frontier town of Schenectady was called, when, on that bright June morning, in 1779, people from town and country, having come in in crowds to see the departure of the soldiers and the fleets, lined the Binne-kill and the river sides. It was very cool weather. Only a few days before, the hard frost had killed many of the blossoms and nipped the flowers and early vegetables, but there were enough of bloom on the trees and rich greenery springing up, since the warmth and showers together had come, to obliterate all traces of Jack Frost's work. Flags — home-made indeed, but with the true ancestral Dutch as well as American colors, red, white, and blue, so dear to the eye of man descended from Holland's heroes — hung out of windows in the house fronts and in the gable ends which faced the streets.

Very few houses in the place were two storied, most of them being of bricks indeed, but having but one

story, above which were high, sloping tiled roofs and roomy attics on the second floor. All were shining clean, with curtains and flowers at the windows, and walls and mantelpieces inside well decorated with prints and paintings from Holland, the old home land of liberty set behind the dikes, as well as with the less æsthetic efforts of the local artists. Many of the fireplaces were flanked and topped with tiles, telling the Scripture story rather freely, with here and there a gay picture in enamel of Prince Maurice or Father William, or some later stadholder. Delft ware in Dorp was quite as common, at least, as ballast bricks from Holland and long pipes from Gouda. Painted on the outside with gay colors, generally red and blue, each house had a *stoep*, or porch furnished with seats, kept well "filed" or scrubbed.

The two-leaved or double door of each house was not divided up and down, but crosswise, so that, when the lower part was shut, all kinds of enterprising but unwelcome creatures, including the pigs and chickens by day, and various marauders, on two, four or more legs, at night, were kept out. The upper half of the door, on which was usually a shining brass knocker, could be thrown inward, letting in air and light, and keeping the house well ventilated. Moreover, on the wooden equator, between the lintels, Mynheer or Mevrouw could rest on his or her elbows. This he could do while smoking his pipe in one corner of his

mouth and chatting with a sociable neighbor out of the other. Or, the *vrouw* could stand with broom, and hand to her chin, or arms akimbo, while digesting between breakfast and dinner the gossip of yesterday, or, in late afternoon, the morning happenings.

To-day, however, pretty much "everybody that was anybody," not at the riverside, was out on Church Street. The spaces, not only on the *stoeps* but between them, were crowded with women, children, and the older men. The girls had bunches of flowers, to hand to the soldiers to stick inside their big, smooth-bore muskets. The small boys, who had on cocked hats, with enough red and blue and white flannel pinned on their coats to make them look like Continentals, waved flags, while they hurraed for Generals Washington, Sullivan, and Clinton, and for Colonels Gansevoort and Van Cortlandt. Some shouted to the men in the ranks to be sure to bring home Brant and Butler as prisoners, to dodge the bullets, and not to leave their scalps in the woods.

So, with fife and drum and the flags flapping in the stiff western breeze, the men of the various commands assembled at Schenectady to convoy the stores afloat, marched up the valley with their faces set toward Canajoharie. Simultaneously the long flotilla of boats, decked with hundreds of flags and pennons, and some of them loaded perilously near the gunwale, moved up stream in the same direction and disappeared.

The town was once more left to its wonted quietness and peace. The small boy grieved over the absence of the soldiers, and, out of sheer habit, listened in vain for the morning and evening gun from the camp, answering that of the fort. Chickens, ducks, and turkeys, to say nothing of the cows, manifested visible signs of rejoicing, for they could now wander peacefully up and down the streets, in which were even yet some suggestions of stumps of forest trees long ago cut down, on their way to and from the pasture. Certainly the geese made their usual *gansevoort*, or goose parade, with apparently greater pride and regularity. It was noted by Granny Shaddlegroen that the leading gander, finding half a loaf of hard, stale bread, actually carried it all the way from Cross to Martyrs Street, and there, dipping it in the runnel of water, so soaked it soft that the gander's whole harem enjoyed the feast with screams of delight. Surely this was a good omen.

What happened to himself and comrades, and how a soldier's life looks to the youth of twenty, Herman Clute, who had been suddenly called to be a soldier, may be learned from a letter which he wrote to his mother from the great camp at Tioga Point, where five thousand Continental soldiers, chiefly from the six states of Massachusetts, New York, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Virginia, were gathered together under the forest trees in that won-



derful peninsula formed by the twin branches of the Susquehanna.

There, just like two lovers that nearly come together, quarrel, part, and make up again, the two streams first approach and then separate, only to unite again farther on. Where on the map they seem about to touch, but do not, Fort Sullivan, of which we shall hear more, was built.

“FORT SULLIVAN, TIOGA POINT, PA.,

“August 23, 1779.

“DEAR MOTHER: Would you like to know what the life of a soldier on a campaign is like? Well, here I am, away off hundreds of miles from home in the woods of Pennsylvania, but well and hearty, though I declare I never worked so hard in my life. After father had been drowned at Little Falls, and I as the oldest son had to do the work of the house, I used to think life was very hard. Between chopping wood, looking after the horses, and taking the cows to drink and to pasture, with all my other chores, I was driven pretty hard. But I tell you that to carry a heavy gun, big powder-horn full to the nozzle, bullet bag with a pound or two of lead, an axe at my belt and a knapsack weighing forty pounds with a blanket on top, marching through the woods and along the river, where there are no roads, except what the Indians tramped over, is a good deal harder than farming.

For ease, I should like to be back among the cows.

“The first few days I thought I could not stand it, but now I am rather used to it. I must tell you my first experiences, not of sleeping out of doors—for I have done that often—but of sleeping in the rain. The mosquitoes and wood flies were very lively the first two days, and the men that smoked seemed to have the easier time. Some of the tough and skinny fellows seemed to suffer the most.

“The first night, when I lay down, with my knapsack for a pillow, and fitted my shoulders snugly between two roots of a tree, I was quickly asleep. Something seemed to be tickling my face, and I thought sister Cartie was teasing me with a spear of wheat. By and by I dreamed that flies were moving over my face, and I brushed them away. This was of no use, for they kept coming on in swarms, I thought. When I took both hands to drive them away, I woke up and found my hands wet. Then I realized that it was raining. However, I didn’t move, but let the rain fall until it began to pour pretty lively. I could feel the water soaking into my clothes, inch by inch, as I lay on the ground.

“In the morning we were a very bedraggled set, as you might imagine; but wood is plenty here. In spite of the rain, we soon had roaring fires, dried ourselves off somewhat, and toasted slices of bacon

on our ramrods. I thought that the dry bread in my haversack never tasted better.

“At Canajoharie, we had to take off our coats and help unload the boats, and hoist them up on the big wagons that were here all ready to receive us. Such pushing and pulling as we had, I can hardly tell you! One Connecticut man fell dead at the work. It is said that he broke a blood vessel. Following the wagons, each drawn by four yoke of oxen, we marched over the hills. When we reached Lake Otsego, I thought I had never seen a more lovely sheet of water. Many of the trees and bushes, in their fresh green of spring or early summer, dip over into the water.

“We have a fine place for camp upon the side of the hill, well cleared and drained, and the tents are set in regular rows. We can get all the fish and venison we want here, and we have plenty of beef also, for fifty wagons are steadily going between Canajoharie and the lake, and all the men seem in good spirits. I have been over to see the other regiments, especially that from Massachusetts called after Colonel Alden, who was killed last year at Cherry Valley.

“I have just heard that a spy from Butler’s rangers has been seized and hanged, down at the river. He was one of a party of two Tories and nine Indians, such as are still roaming the country, to kill, burn, and destroy. When I take my place on the watch

at night, I feel that there is danger and I must keep a sharp lookout. Only the other day a sentinel was fired on by Indians in ambush. One night I caught the gleam of moonbeams on gun barrels, and was pretty sure that two men were moving around the bushes. I fired, but whether any damage was done them I do not know; but a search afterwards showed that I was not mistaken, for men had been lying down there, and the officer commended me.

“Of course you will want to know what we get to eat. While at Otsego Lake we had good bread, for an oven was built in the camp. With fresh beef just from the hoof, and occasionally green stuff, we fare well. A good deal goes on in the way of excitement. One day thirty friendly Oneida Indians came in, led by a chief named Hanyari, who will be our guides into the Seneca country. I have learned to like Hanyari very much. In the party is a wonderful old fellow, who saved Domine Kirkland from starvation by collecting ginseng plant in the woods, and, running to Albany, sold it and brought back supplies. He seems to know every plant in the forest. When Vrooman showed him a picture of the glen flower which the Philadelphia lady desires, he said at once that he had seen it growing at the head of Cayuga Lake.

“One white man here, whose house was burnt and family all slain by the savages, who has been the

whole length of the Susquehanna and to Baltimore, will be our river pilot. He tells us about the Scotch Tories of a settlement in this region, who were such hidebound loyalists that they defied old customs.

“Instead of their observing the law of the road and turning to the right, as our Dutch law directs, they always moved to the left. They thus often got into quarrels with their white neighbors, who would turn to the right. They seem to enjoy keeping up the old feuds and clan fights of Scotland. These are all scattered now, and most of them are among the Senecas, helping the savages on their maize farms.

“On another day, an Indian came in from Fort Schuyler and gave the news that fourteen hundred Indians and Tories, under Brant, are on their way to intercept or ambuscade us, when we attempt to march from Otsego to Tioga Point. Failing on this, we fear they may slip off down toward the Delaware region, and ravage the settlements there.

“On one Sunday, the brigade chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Gano, preached a good sermon from Job xxii. 21. I have heard him several times, and like him.

“But even more solemn, certainly more awe-inspiring, than worship under the trees, is the punishment given to deserters. The army discipline is very severe. On one day, three deserters were

brought into camp and immediately tied up and whipped. One of them received five hundred lashes, because he had some weeks ago been sentenced to three hundred stripes, but was forgiven by the colonel. Then, instead of being a better soldier, he deserted again; so what he got was back pay. A few days later, two more men, one of them a sergeant, were whipped, one hundred lashes each. Three more were sentenced to be shot to death,—one a Massachusetts, another a New York, and the third a Pennsylvania man. Riding the wooden horse—made by chopping a log into triangular shape, with a sharp edge—and running the gantlet are common punishments.

“Oh, it was an awful sight, I tell you, to see three wretched men sitting on their coffins, the roughest sort you can imagine, with the lids on, and their fresh-dug graves just before them; but General Clinton thought that two should be reprieved, and they were; but the other was brought out and, before the whole brigade, shot. Nine men fired, but only eight guns were loaded. These were changed round, before being handed to the firing party, so that no man could say or know or feel that his bullet did the work. It was the law, not his comrades, that killed the man.

“Except these dark things, everything else is fine, and I enjoy army life. One day a courier brought in tidings of General Wayne’s capture

of Stony Point, but most of the other messengers told us of farmers shot in the fields, or people on pleasure parties ambuscaded. The surmise about Brant was well founded. He found our forces too strong, and so he slipped away into the Delaware and Walkill valleys. We have heard of the Minisink massacre, in which fifty men were slaughtered.

“On the whole, it was a very pleasant month, that one of July, and I shall always remember it. We had plenty of fruit, apples, vegetables, and a fine herd of fat cattle, from Kingston, have kept us in good condition. There is a broad trail leading from that old town, Kingston, which grandmother still calls ‘Wiltwyck,’ to Otsego, and on westward to Niagara. On August 7th, we had a parade in which all the light infantry and the rifle corps showed at their best. Colonel William Butler is to command us, and we have word that General Sullivan, after long delays at Wyoming, which were no fault of his, has at last been able to get to Tioga Point.

“There are plenty of rattlesnakes in this region, and we have killed a great many. What a pity that old Clausha Decatur, of Frog Alley in Dort, is not here. He might get oil enough out of them to cure his rheumatism. They say their flesh is good to eat and that the taste is very pleasant. One escaped prisoner from the Senecas, who joined our camp at Unadilla,

was sixteen days in the woods, and had little else but rattlesnake meat to live on. One day last week, while rambling in the woods, I caught hold of the edge of a high rock to lift myself up with my hands, when just as my eyes were level with the top, I saw three big ones, just ready to spring at me. How I dropped and ran! I shall never forget their glittering, lidless eyes and dripping fangs. Ugh! I shudder as I think of it.

“Do you want to know how our boats got started, and are now floating in plenty of water in the Susquehanna River, where only a few days before one would hardly have wet his knees in walking across it? Let me tell you. On June 21st, Colonel William Butler ordered out a party made up of skilful axemen, and they built a dam with a sluice and gateway clear across the southern end of the lake. Making it water-tight, they closed it up. What with the natural flow of water into Schuyler and Otsego lakes, and the heavy rains (for we had a terrible storm on the 11th of July), the water in the lake rose, it seemed to me, about two feet, though others say only one.

“Indeed, when it comes to numbers, figures, size, or distance, I have learned not to believe everything I hear in camp, for none of the trails have been measured, and, especially on days when the men have not much to do, all kinds of stories start. Sometimes they try to scare me, because, being a young and



green soldier, they consider me a good 'marine.' I miss also my 'hill clock.' At home, for afternoon time, I need only look eastward to the Helderberg range, to see in what notch the sun was, and, when it seemed to be rolling down hill like a ball, I knew how late it must be; but here, I know only the points of the compass.

"Our chaplain, Gano, is a clever and jolly fellow, who has helped us to bear cheerfully the long delay here. Being on guard near the general's tent, on Friday, August 6th, I heard the following conversation:—

"'Chaplain,' said the general, 'you will have your last preaching service here day after to-morrow.'

"'Ah, indeed! Are we to march soon? Before another Sunday?'

"'Yes, but I do not want the men to know it.'

"'Nor shall I tell them; but, general, am I at liberty to preach from any text I choose?'

"'Certainly, chaplain.'

"'And you will not, in any event, tax me with violation of confidence?'

"'No! only stick to your Bible, and I'll give the official orders.'

"'All right, general.'

"The chaplain, recognizing me, warned me not to disclose anything I overheard, and I promised not to; but I noticed a twinkle in his eye. So on Sunday, August 8th, he preached to the whole brigade,

from the text, 'Being ready to depart on the morrow.'

"The faces of our men lightened, but the general's face wore a frown. He was distinctly vexed ; but the parson made application to our souls, rather than our bodies, and, as he proceeded, General Clinton looked pleased. At the conclusion of the services, the commander rose and announced the order of march on Monday morning."

## CHAPTER IX

### INTO QUEEN ESTHER'S COUNTRY

HERMAN CLUTE'S letter, in different-colored ink and another sort of paper, showing the interruptions of a private soldier, continues as follows: —

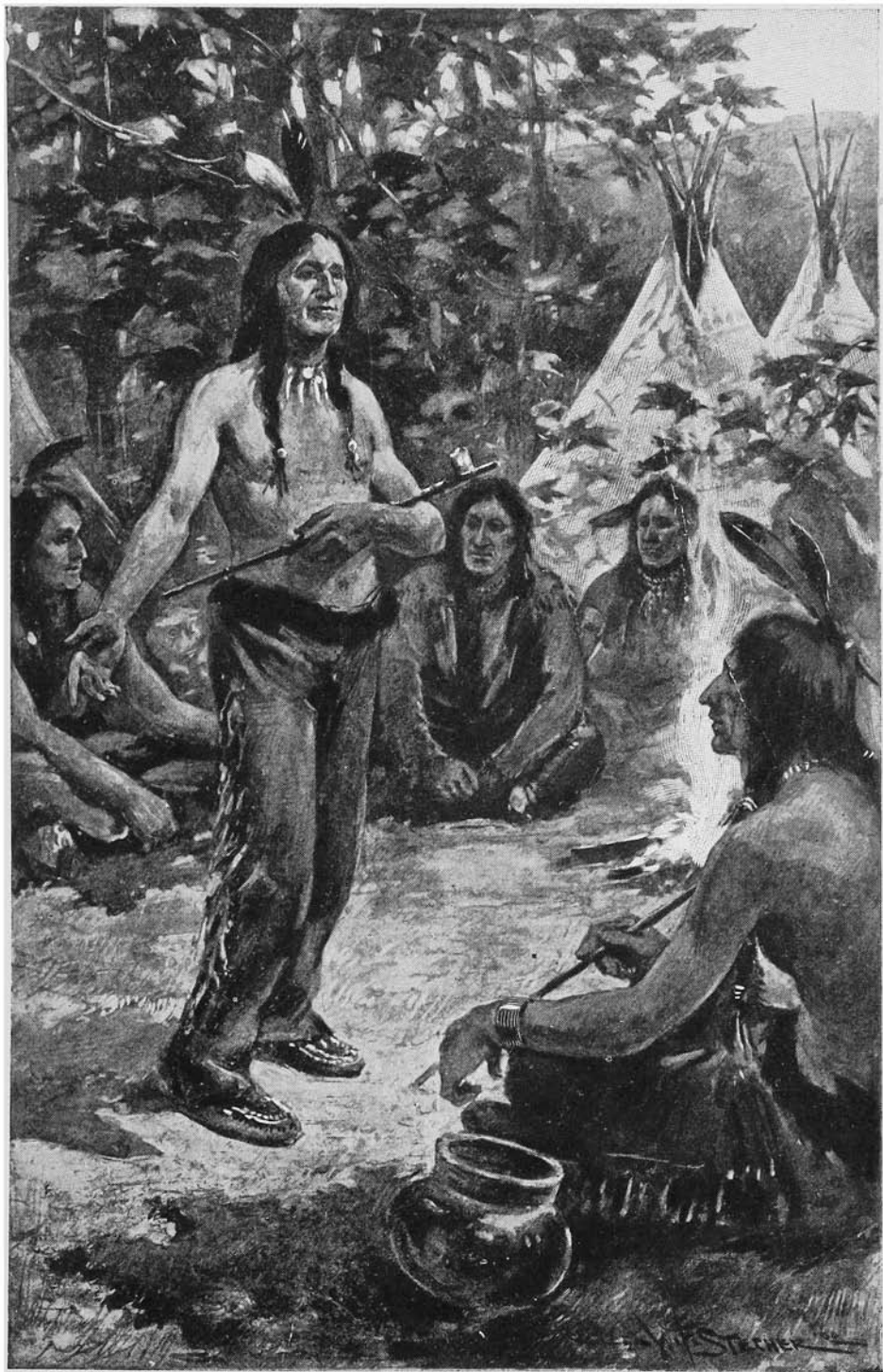
“All the boats gathered in line, loaded, and ready to proceed down the river, were moved to the banks of the outlet. On Sunday, at six o'clock P.M., the axemen chopped away the gate, and all night long the water poured out through the sluice into the river. You can imagine how steadily this supplied a channel for us, for Otsego is eight miles long and Schuyler Lake empties into it. On Monday, after breakfast, I was one of the lucky fellows who were ordered into the boats. The current was so swift that it reminded me of sliding down hill. Besides the ammunition, provisions, and stores, we have two pieces of cannon belonging to Colonel Dubois's regiment.

“We made thirty miles by water that day, and twenty-five miles the next. Of course the men who

marched by shore did not have to go the same distance we did, for the river is very winding and they could march in nearly a straight line, though the riflemen kept near the bank, to guard against surprises by Indians, whose tracks we found in many places.

“The savages were mightily scared at seeing the river rise in summer, and thought the Great Spirit was angry. In one place, they painted a rough picture of the river overflowing on the rocks, showing a cornfield flooded. At Unadilla, besides meeting the rattlesnake eater I have spoken of, we came to the place where General Herkimer had held a council with Brant and the Indians. He urged them not to take up arms against our side, but to let us settle our family quarrel with the British between ourselves. It seemed to be too much for the Indian intellect to be able to decide between white men, as to the right and wrong of British and American quarrels; and when the Tories’ presents of rum, hatchets, powder, balls, beads, — and especially rum, — came, they decided to side with King George. The Tories persuaded them to believe they were thus keeping ‘the Covenant of Corlaer,’ and that ‘the silver chain’ was well brightened; but they will have to suffer for their weakness, just as the Onondagas have already been ruined and driven from their desolated farms and burnt homes by Colonel Van Schaick.

“After four days of boat service, I took my turn



"HERE . . . HAD BEEN HELD MANY A COUNCIL."

