This Country of Ours, H.E. Marshall

Part IV: Stories of the Struggle for Liberty
Chapters 51-63

Chapter 51 - The Boston Tea party

All these wars which had been fought on American soil had cost a great deal of money and many lives. Now it seemed to the British Government that the best way to be sure of peace in the future was to keep an army in America. They decided to do this. They also decided that America should pay for the army. And in order to raise the money a stamp tax was to be introduced. Newspapers, marriage licenses, wills, and all sorts of legal papers were henceforth to be printed on stamped paper, the price of stamps varying according to the importance of the paper from a few pence to as many pounds.

But when the Americans heard that this Act had been passed without their consent they were angry.

"No," they said to the British Government, "you cannot tax us without our consent. It is one of the foundations of British freedom that those who pay the tax must also consent to it. We are not represented in the British Parliament, our consent has not been asked, and we deny your right to tax us."

The whole country was filled with clamour. In every colony young men banded themselves together, calling themselves Sons of Liberty, and determined to resist the tax. "No taxation without representation" was the cry.

When the first boxes of stamps arrived they were seized and destroyed. Newspapers appeared with a skull and crossbones printed where the stamp should have been. There were riots and mass meetings everywhere.

The Americans did not merely resist, they resisted in a body. Nothing but the idea that their liberty was in danger made them act together. Over everything else they had been divided. Over that they were united. "There ought to be no New England men, no New Yorkers, known on the continent," said one man; "but all of us Americans."

Even in Britain there were people who thought this Stamp Act was a mistake. The great Pitt had been ill when it was passed into law, but when he returned to Parliament he spoke strongly against it.

"I was ill in bed," he said, "but if I could have been carried here in my bed I would have asked some kind friend to lay my on this floor, so that I might have spoken against it. It is a subject of greater importance than ever engaged the attention of this House; that subject always excepted, when nearly a century ago it was the question whether you yourselves were to be bond or free."

Pitt was thinking of the time when Englishmen strove with Charles I. He gloried in British liberty, and he could not bear to think of Britons oppressing Britons. "Who that has an English heart," he once said, "can ever be weary of asserting liberty?"

"I rejoice that America has resisted," he said later.

There were many against Pitt, but he won the day, and the Stamp

Act was repealed.

There was great rejoicing in America, and the matter seemed at an end. But the very next year a new bill for taxing the Americans was brought into Parliament. This time the tax was to be paid on tea, glass, lead and a few other things brought into the country.

Once again the colonies were ablaze, and they refused to pay this duty just as they had refused to pay the Stamp Tax. Everywhere there were indignation meetings. But Boston seemed to be the heart of the storm, and to Boston British troops were sent to keep order.

The soldiers had nothing to do, but the very sight of their red coats made the colonists angry. They taunted the soldiers, and worried them every way they knew, and the soldiers were not slow to reply. So at last after eighteen months of bickering one March evening it came to blows. Two or three exasperated soldiers fired upon the crowd of citizens, five of whom were killed and several others wounded.

This was afterwards known as the Boston Massacre. It made the people terribly angry, and next day a great meeting was held in Old South Church. At this meeting the people demanded that the troops should be at once removed from the town. And seeing the temper of the people the Lieutenant Governor withdrew them that same day to a little island in the harbour.

And now finding how useless it was to try to force taxes on unwilling subjects, the Government removed all the taxes except one. King George wanted to show his power. He

wanted to prove to the Americans that he had the right to tax them if he liked. So he insisted that there should still be a tax on tea.

"The King will have it so, he means to try the question with America," said Lord North, the easy-going, stupid minister who was now in power.

But to prove that neither the King nor any one else had the right to tax them, without their consent, was exactly for what the Americans were fighting. To them, one tax was as bad as a dozen. It was not a question of money, but a question of right or wrong, of freedom or slavery. So they refused to pay the tax on tea. They refused to buy tea from Britain at all, and smuggled it from Holland. Ships laden with tea came to port, and it was landed. But no one would buy it, and it rotted and mouldered in the cellars. In Boston, however, the people determined that it should not even land. And when three ships laden with tea came into Boston harbour, the people refused to allow them to unload.

"Take your tea back again to England," they said to the captain.

But the captain could not do that, for the customs officers would not allow him to leave until he had landed his cargo. The people were greatly excited. Large meetings were held, and every possible manner of getting rid of the tea was discussed. But at length some of the younger men grew tired of talk. Time was passing. If something were not done, the tea would be landed by force.

That, these bold young men determined, should not be. So about fifty of them dressed themselves as Red Indians, staining their faces brown and painting them hideously. Then, tomahawk in hand, they stole silently down to the ships, and uttering wild war cries sprang on board. They seized the tea chests and with their hatchets burst them open, and poured the tea into the harbour.

There were nearly three hundred and fifty chests, and soon the harbour was black with tea. It was terrible waste, but no one stopped it. From the shore people looked on quietly. And when the work was done the "Red Indians" vanished away as silently as they had come. This was afterwards called the Boston Tea Party. Certainly no greater brewing of tea has ever been known.

When George III heard of the Boston Tea Party he was very angry, and he resolved to punish the people of Boston. "They will be lions," he said, "as long as we are lambs, but if we show them that we mean to be firm they will soon prove very meek."

So he closed the port and forbade any ships to go there, thus

cutting off Boston from the trade of the world. He also said that

Boston should no longer be the capital of Massachusetts, and made

Salem the capital instead.

Boston, of course, was well-nigh ruined by these acts. But instead of looking coldly on her misfortunes, the other colonies rallied to her aid. And grain, cattle and all sorts of merchandise poured into Boston from them.

Boston could not be starved, neither could it be frightened into submitting.

Chapter 52 - Paul Revere's Ride - The Unsheathing of the Sword

All the colonies now felt that they must unite in truth, and that they must have some centre to which all could appeal. So a Congress of all the colonies was called at Philadelphia. This is called the first Continental Congress, and to it all the colonies except Georgia sent delegates.

This Congress drew up a Declaration of Rights. They also sent an address to the King in which they declared that they had no wish to separate from Britain.

But the King called the Congress an unlawful and seditious gathering, and would not listen to anything it had to say. Still, far-seeing statesmen with Pitt at their head struggled to bring about a reconciliation.

"I contend, not for indulgence, but for justice to America," he said. "The Americans are a brave, generous and united people, with arms in their hands, and courage in their hearts. It is not repealing this act of Parliament, it is not repealing a piece of parchment, that can restore America to our bosom. You must repeal her fears and her resentments. And you may then hope for her love and gratitude."

But few people listened to Pitt, the bill which he brought into Parliament was rejected with scorn, and the great struggle which was to last for eight years began.

Already in America, men's minds had begun to turn to war, and on every village green the farmers might be seen drilling every evening. Bands of minute men, that is, men who would be ready at a minute's notice, were organised. All sorts of war stores were gathered.

Two of the leaders of the people in all these matters were Samuel Adams and John Hancock. These men Governor Gage, who was also commander of the troops, was ordered to arrest and send to England to be tried as traitors. Gage having heard that both men were staying at the village of Lexington decided to arrest them together.

For this he carefully laid his plans. Eight hundred men were to leave Boston in secret at dead of night. First they were to go to Lexington, and having arrested the "traitors" they were next to march on to Concord to seize the large war stores which were known to be gathered there.

All the preparations were made as silently and as secretly as possible. But the colonists were on the alert. They knew that something was afoot, and guessed what it was.

On the 18th of April Gage gave strict orders that no one was to be allowed to leave Boston that night. But no orders could stop determined men.

And as the moon was rising a little boat was rowed across the Charles river almost under the shadow of the British man-of-war. The boat reached the farther shore and a man booted and spurred, and if ready for a long ride, leaped out upon the bank. This man was Paul Revere.

At ten o'clock the troops also were silently rowed across the Charles River, and in the darkness set out for Lexington. But not far off on the bank of the same river, a man stood waiting beside a saddled horse. Quietly he waited, looking always towards the tower of the Old North Church. It was Paul Revere, and he waited for a signal to tell him which way the red coats were going.

Suddenly about eleven o'clock two twinkling lights appeared upon the tower, and without a moment's loss Paul Revere leaped into the saddle and dashed away. Swiftly he rode, urging his good horse onward with voice and hand.

Near the lonely spot where stood the gallows he passed. Here under a tree, two horsemen waited, and as Revere came nearer he saw that they were British soldiers. Swiftly they darted at him. One tried to seize his bridle, the other to head him off. But Revere was a fearless rider, and

knew the countryside by heart. He swerved suddenly, doubled, and was soon clear of his pursuers.

Then on through the darkness he galloped unhindered till he reached Medford. Here he stayed but to rouse the captain of the minute men, and onward he sped once more. Now at the door of every cottage or farmhouse which he passed he loudly knocked, shouting his news "the soldiers are coming," and thundered off again in the darkness.

A little after midnight he reached Lexington and stopped before the house where Adams and Hancock were sleeping. He found it guarded by minute men, and as he excitedly shouted his news, they bade him be quiet.

"Don't make such a noise," said the sergeant, "you will waken the people in the house."

"Noise," cried Revere, "you will soon have noise enough - the regulars are coming."

Hancock was awake, and hearing Revere's voice he threw up his window, shouting to the guard to let him in. So Revere went into the house and told all he knew. When they heard the news, Hancock wanted to stay and fight, if fighting there was to be. But the others would not hear of it, so as day dawned the two men quietly walked away, and were soon on the road to Philadelphia.

Meanwhile the British troops were steadily marching nearer and nearer. At first all was silent: save the clatter and jingle of their arms and the tramp of their feet, there was no sound. No light was to be seen far or near. Then suddenly a bell rang, a shout was heard, lights twinkled here and there. The night was no longer silent and dark. The country was no longer asleep.

The colonel in command of the troops grew anxious. He had expected to take the people completely by surprise, and he had done so. Somehow the secret had leaked out. The whole countryside was up and awake, and fearing lest with his small company of soldiers, he would not be able to do what he had set out to do, he sent back to Boston for more men.

And sure enough, his fears were well founded, for when in the cold grey of early dawn the advance party reached Lexington, they found a little guard of sixty or seventy armed men drawn up to receive them.

"Disperse, ye rebels, disperse," shouted the commander as he rode towards them. But the men stood motionless and silent.

"Why don't you disperse, you villains?" he cried again.

Then seeing words had no effect, he gave the order to fire. The soldiers obeyed, and eight minute men fell dead, and several more were wounded. The minute men returned the fire, but just then more British soldiers appeared in sight. And seeing that it was useless to try to resist so great a force the Americans dispersed.

Thus the terrible war, which was almost a civil war, began. The British now marched on to Concord. They had failed to arrest the men they had been sent to arrest at Lexington. So there was all the more reason to hurry on to Concord, and seize the war stores before there was time to spirit them away. But when about seven o'clock in the morning the troops arrived at Concord the stores for the most part had been already safely hidden. A gun or two they found, and a few barrels of flour. The guns were spiked, the barrels staved in, the court house set on fire.

But meanwhile the minute men had been gathering, and now a force four hundred strong appeared on the further side of a bridge known as the North Bridge. The bridge was held by two hundred British, and when they saw the minute men approach they began to destroy it.

There was a sharp exchange of fire. Then the minute men charged across the narrow bridge, sweeping all before them. The British fled back to the village, and the minute men, hardly knowing what they had done, retired again across the bridge and waited.

The British leader now decided to return to Boston. He had done nothing which he had set out to do. But he saw this his position was one of great danger. Everywhere he was surrounded with enemies. His men were hungry and worn out, so about twelve o'clock the march back to Boston began.

But the return was not easy, for all the way the troops were harassed by the Americans. Every bush, every wall concealed an armed farmer, whose aim was deadly and sure. Man after man fell, and beneath the constant and galling fire coming, it seemed from everywhere and nowhere, the nerves of the wearied, hungry men gave way. Faster and faster the long red line swept along in every growing confusion. There was no thought now of anything but safety, and the march was almost a rout when at length the reinforcements from Boston appeared. These were a thousand strong, and their leader, Lord Percy, seeing the confusion and distress of the British formed his men into a hollow square. Into this refuge the fugitives fled, throwing themselves upon the ground in utter exhaustion, with their tongues hanging out of their mouths "like those of dogs after a chase."

Lord Percy had brought cannons with him, so with these he swept the field, and for a time forced the colonists to retire. But they did not disperse; they still hovered near, and as soon as

the retreat again began, there began with it the constant galling fire from every tree or bush, before, behind, on either side. To return the fire was useless, as the enemy were hidden. It was a sort of warfare not unlike that which Braddock had had to meet, a sort of warfare in which the American farmer was skilled, but of which the British soldier knew nothing. So when, at length, as day darkened the British troops reached Boston they were utterly spent and weary. And in a huddled, disorganised crowd, they hurried into shelter.

Chapter 53 - The First Thrust-The Battle of Bunker Hill

The sword was at length unsheathed. There was no more doubt about it. There was to be a war between the Mother Country and her daughter states. And now far and wide throughout the colonies the call to arms was heard and answered. Farmers left their ploughs and seized their rifles, trappers forsook their hunting grounds, traders left their business, and hastened to join the army.

John Stark, a bold trapper learned in Indian ways and famous in Indian warfare, marched from New Hampshire at the head of several hundred men. Israel Putnam, more famous still for his deeds of daring in the Indian wars, came too. He was busy on his farm at Pomfret, Connecticut, when the news of the fight at Lexington reached him. He was already a man of fifty-seven but there and then he left his work and hastened round the neighbouring farms calling out the militia. Then, commanding them to follow him with all speed, he mounted his horse, and turned its head towards Cambridge. Hour after hour throughout the night he rode onward, and as day dawned on the 21st of April he galloped into Cambridge, having ridden a hundred miles in eighteen hours without a change of horse. Handsome young Captain Benedict Arnold, half sailor, half merchant, gathered his men on New Haven green. And when the general of militia bade him wait for regular orders and refused to supply him with ammunition for his men, he threatened to break open the magazine if the ammunition was not forthcoming at once. So, seeing that nothing would restrain him, the general yielded, and Arnold, gallant and gay, with sixty men behind him marched for Cambridge.

Thus day by day men of all classes, and of all ages, poured in from the countryside, until an army of sixteen thousand was gathered around Boston.

Meetings, too, were held throughout the country, when patriots urged the need of arming and fighting. In the Virginian Convention, Patrick Henry, the great orator, thrilled his hearers with his fiery eloquence. "We must fight," he cried, "I repeat it, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us." Brilliantly, convincingly he spoke, and ended with the unforgettable words:— "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery! Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

"His last exclamation," said one who heard him, "was like the shout of the leader who turns back the rout of battle."

But even yet the leaders of the country hoped to avoid a war. The second Continental Congress met at Philadelphia on the 10th of May and the members talked anxiously of ways and means to restore peace. But it was already too late. For the gathered army was no longer to be restrained, and the very day upon which Congress met a British fortress had been seized by the colonists.

The chain of lakes and rivers connecting the Hudson with the St. Lawrence was felt to be of great importance to the colonists. For if Britain had control of it it would cut the colonies in two, and stop intercourse between New England and the south. It would also give the British an easy route by which to bring troops and supplies from Canada.

Among those who felt the importance of this route was Benedict Arnold, and the day after he arrived at Cambridge he laid his ideas before the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, and asked to be allowed to attack the forts guarding this waterway. His request was granted. He was given the rank of colonel, and authority to raise a company of four hundred men for the purpose.

Arnold set out at once, but he soon found that he was not first in the field. For the people of Connecticut, too, had felt the value of this waterway and Ethan Allen with a hundred and fifty volunteers who went by the name of Green Mountain Boys had set out for the same purpose. These Green Mountain Boys took their name from the district of Vermont which means Green Mountain. That district, under the name of New Hampshire Grants, had been claimed by New York colony. But the Green Mountain Boys had resisted the claim, and by force of arms proved their right to be considered a separate colony. Thus having settled their own little revolution they were now ready to take part in the great one.

At Castleton, Vermont, Arnold met Ethan Allen and his men, and claimed the leadership of the expedition. But the Green Mountain Boys scouted the idea. They would fight under their own leader or not fight at all, they said, and as Arnold had gathered very few of his four hundred men he had to give way. So instead of leading the expedition he joined it as a volunteer.

This matter settled the little company marched on to Lake Champlain, and in the middle of the night they arrived at the southern end, opposite Fort Ticonderoga. Here the lake is hardly more than a quarter of a mile wide and the men began at once to row across. But they had only two or three boats and when day began to dawn only about eighty men had got over. With these Allen decided to attack, for he feared if he waited till daylight that the garrison would be awake and would no doubt resist stubbornly. So placing himself at the head of his men with Arnold beside him, he marched quickly and silently up the hill to the gateway of the fort. When the astonished sentinel saw this body of men creeping out of the morning dusk he fired at their leader. But his gun missed fire and he fled into the fort.

After him dashed the colonists uttering a loud, blood-curdling, Indian yell as they reached the parade ground within the fort. The garrison which consisted of about forty men was completely taken by surprise, and yielded with little resistance. They Allen marched to the door of the commandment's quarters, and striking three blows upon it with his sword hilt, commanded him to come forth and surrender.

As Allen struck, the door was flung open, and half dressed and half awake the commandment appeared.

"In whose name," he demanded, "do you order me to surrender!"

"In the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress," thundered Allen.

Really the Continental Congress had nothing to do with the matter. The commandment could not know that. But he had only to look about him to see that the fort was already in the hands of the enemy. So seeing no help for it he yielded; and all his great stores of cannon and ammunition were sent to supply the needs of the New England army.

Two days after this Crown Point, further down the lake, was also seized, for it was only guarded by twelve men. Here a small ship was found and Arnold's chance to lead came. For he was a sailor, and going on board with his own men he made a dash for St. John's at the northern end of the lake. When he was about thirty miles from the fort the wind dropped, and his ship lay rocking idly on the water. Arnold, however, was not the man to be easily beaten. He had

boats enough to carry thirty men, and with these he set off to row to the fort. All night the men bent to the oars, and at six o'clock in the morning they reached St. John's.

Once more the fort was easily taken. For here too, there were no more than twelve men. Arnold, however, was only just in time, for he learned from his prisoners that troops were expected from Canada. He felt therefore that St. John's was no safe place for him and his little band of thirty. So he seized a small ship which lay in the harbour, sank everything else in the shape of a boat, and made off. And when the Canadian troops arrived next day they found the fort deserted alike by friend and foe, and the boats which should have carried them on their way to Ticonderoga at the bottom of the lake.

By these quick bold attacks the control of the great waterway was for a time at least in the hands of the colonists. It was, moreover, rendered useless to the British, for their boats being destroyed they had no means of transporting soldiers southwards until new boats could be built. This caused a long delay, a delay very useful to the colonists.

In the meantime Allen was appointed commandment of Ticonderoga, and Arnold, with a little soreness at his heart returned to Cambridge. He had been appointed leader of the expedition, but had been forced to join it as a volunteer under another leader. His knowledge and dash had crowned the expedition with success, but another received the rewards and praise.

When however the Continental Congress heard what had been done it was rather taken aback. It was not at all sure at first whether it was a case for rewards or reprimands, for it was still vainly hoping for peace. So it ordered that an exact list of all cannon and supplies which had been captured should be made, in order that they might be given back to the Mother Country, "when the restoration of the former harmony between Great Britain and these colonies shall render it prudent and consistent."

Meanwhile the new army grew daily larger. It was still almost entirely made up of New Englanders, but it was now called the Continental Army, and the Continental Congress appointed George Washington to be commander-in-chief.

Washington was now a tall, handsome man, little over forty. He was as modest as he was brave, and he accepted the great honour and heavy duties laid upon him with something of dread.

"Since the Congress desire it," he said, "I will enter upon this momentous duty, and exert every power I possess in their service. But I beg it may be remembered by every gentleman in

this room that I this day declare, with the utmost sincerity, I do not think myself equal to the command I am honoured with,"

Meantime things had not been standing still; while Congress had been choosing a commander-in-chief the army had been fighting. By this time, too, new troops had come out from England, and the British force was now ten thousand strong. Feeling sure that the Americans would not stand against such a force, Governor Gage issued a proclamation offering pardon to all who would lay down their arms, except Samuel Adams and John Hancock. These two, he said, were too bad to be forgiven. Instead they prepared to take possession of the hills commanding Boston.

It was at Bunker Hill that the first real battle of the war was fought. For Lexington had after all been a mere skirmish, only of importance because it was the first in this long and deadly war. The forts on Lake Champlain had been taken without the shedding of blood.

The battle is called Bunker Hill although it was really fought on

Breed's Hill which is quite close. The mistake of the name was made

because the Americans had been sent to take possession of Bunker

Hill, but instead took possession of Breed's Hill.

It was during the night that the Americans took up their position on the hill. And when day dawned and the British saw them there, they determined to dislodge them, and the battle began.

Up the hill the British charged with splendid courage, only to be met and driven back by a withering fire from the American rifles. Their front riles were mowed down, and the hillside was strewn with dead and dying. But again and yet again they came on. At the third charge they reached the top, for the Americans had used up all their ammunition, and could fire no longer. Still they would not yield, and there was a fierce hand to hand fight before the Americans were driven from their trenches and the hill was in possession of the British.

For the British, it was a hard won victory, for they lost nearly three times as many men as the Americans, among them some gallant officers. As to the Americans in spite of their defeat they rejoiced; for they knew now what they could do. They knew they could stand up to the famous British regulars.

And now as Washington rode towards Charleston to take command of the army, news of this battle was brought to him.

"Did our men fight?" asked Washington. And when he was told how well, his grave face lighted up.

"Then the liberties of the country are safe," he cried.

So with hope in his heart Washington rode on, and at length after a journey of eleven days reached Cambridge, the headquarters of the army.

The next day, the 3rd of July, the whole army was drawn up upon the plain. And mounted on a splendid white horse Washington rode to the head of it. Under a great elm tree he wheeled his horse, and drawing his sword solemnly took command of the army of the United Colonies. And as the blade glittered in the sunshine, a great shout went up from the soldiers. They were New Englanders, for the most part, but they welcomed their Virginian commander whole heartedly. For were they not all Americans? Were they not all ready to stand shoulder to shoulder for the one great cause?

But the army of which Washington had taken command was, perhaps, the rawest, worst equipped army which ever marched into the field.

The men had neither uniforms, tents, stores nor ammunition, many of them had no arms. There was no organisation, and little discipline. Even the exact numbers composing this army were not known. They were, in fact, as one of Washington's own officers said, "only a gathering of brave, enthusiastic, undisciplined country lads."

But out of this crowd of brave enthusiastic men, Washington set himself to make an army fit to do great deeds. So he worked, and rode, and wrote, unceasingly and unwearyingly. For he had not only to deal with the army but with Congress also. He had to awaken them to the fact that the country had to do great deeds, and that to do them well money, and a great deal of money, was needed.

Meanwhile George III also was making free at preparations. More soldiers he saw were needed to subdue these rebel farmers. And as it was difficult to persuade Britons to go to fight their brothers he hired a lot of Germans, and sent them out to fight the Americans. Nothing hurt the Americans more than this; more than anything else this act made them long to be independent. After this there was no more talk of making friends.

Chapter 54 - The War In Canada

After Bunker Hill there was a pause in the fighting round Boston which gave Washington time to get his raw recruits in hand a little. Then during the summer news came that Sir Guy Carleton, the Governor of Canada, was making plans to retake Ticonderoga, and the colonists determined to invade Canada. General Philip Schuyler was given command of the expedition, and with two thousand men he set out for St. John's, which Arnold had taken, but had been unable to hold, earlier in the year.

This time the colonists found St. John's better guarded, and only at the end of a two months' siege did it yield. By this time Schuyler had become ill, and the command was given to General Richard Montgomery who crossed the St. Lawrence, and entered Montreal in triumph.

Almost at the same time Benedict Arnold set out with twelve hundred men to attack Quebec. He marched through the forest of Maine, then an almost unknown country and uninhabited save by Indians. It was a tremendous march, and one that needed all the grit and endurance of brave, determined men. They climbed hills, struggled through swamps, paddled across lakes and down unknown streams. Sometimes they waded up to their knees in icy waters pushing their canoes before them against the rapid current, or again they carried them over long portages, shouldering their way through forest so dense that they could scarcely advance a mile an hour. At night soaked with rain and sleet they slept upon the snowy ground. Their food gave out, and the pangs of hunger were added to their other miseries. Many died by the way; others, losing heart, turned back. But sick and giddy, starving and exhausted the rest stumbled onward, and at length little more than five hundred ragged half armed, more than half famished men, reached the shores of the St. Lawrence.

They were a sorry little company with which to invade a vast province. But their courage was superb, their hope sublime, and without delay they set out to take the great fortress which had withstood so many sieges, and had only fallen at last before the genius and daring of Wolfe.

Across the St. Lawrence this little company of intrepid colonists paddled, up the path where Wolfe had led his men they climbed, and stood at length where they had stood upon the heights

of Abraham. They had no cannon, and half their muskets were useless. Yet Arnold at the head of his spectral little company boldly summoned the town to surrender.

The town did not surrender, the Governor refused to come out and fight. So seeing the uselessness of his summons Arnold marched away about twenty miles, and encamped to wait for Montgomery's arrival from Montreal. He soon arrived. But even with hid men the colonists only numbered about eight hundred, far too small a company with which to besiege a fortress such as Quebec. Still they resolved to take the place by storm.

It was early on the morning of the 1st of January, 1776, that they made the attempt in the teeth of a blinding snow storm. Arnold led the assault on one side of the town, Montgomery on the other. With tremendous dash and bravery the colonists carried the first barricades, and forced their way into the town. But almost at the outset Montgomery was killed. A little later Arnold was sorely wounded, and had to be carried back to the camp. Both leaders gone, the heart went out of the men, and they retreated, leaving many prisoners at the hands of the British.

The great assault had failed, but sick and wounded though he was, Arnold did not lose heart. He still kept up a show of besieging Quebec. "I have no thought of leaving this proud town, " he said, "until I first enter it in triumph. I am in the way of my duty and know no fear." But the only chance of taking Quebec was to take it in the winter, while the St. Lawrence was closed with ice, so that the British ships could not reach it with reinforcements and supplies. Arnold therefore sent to Washington begging for five thousand troops. Such a number it was impossible for Washington to spare from his little army, and only a few reinforcements were sent, most of whom reached Arnold utterly exhausted with their long tramp through the pathless wilderness. Smallpox, too, became rife in the camp, so although there at length two thousand men before Quebec not more that a thousand were fit for duty. Yet what mere men could do they did.

But winter passed and Quebec remained untaken. Then on April morning Captain Charles Douglas arrived off the mouth of the St. Lawrence with a fleet of British ships. He found the river still packed with ice. But Quebec he knew must be in sore straits. It was no time for caution, so by way of experiment he ran his flag ship full speed against a mass of ice. The ice was shivered to pieces, and the good ship sailed unharmed. For nine days the gallant vessel ploughed on through fields of ice, but suffering no serious damage, her stout-hearted captain having no thought but to reach and relieve the beleaguered city.

His boldness was rewarded. Other vessels followed in his track, and at their coming the colonists gave up their attempt to conquer Canada, and marched away.

The attack on Canada had been an utter failure, but Arnold still clung to the hope of commanding the great waterway from the St. Lawrence to the Hudson. At Crown Point he began to build ships, and by the end of September had a little fleet of nine. The British also busied themselves building ships, and on the 11th of October a fight between the two fleets took place on Lake Champlain, between the island of Valcour and the mainland.

The British ships were far larger and more numerous than the American, indeed in comparison with the British the American boats were mere cockle shells, but the colonists put up a gallant fight which lasted five hours, and the sun went down leaving them sadly shattered but still unbeaten.

The British commander, however, felt sure of finishing them off in the morning. So he anchored his ships in a line across the southern end of the channel, between the island and the mainland, thus cutting off all retreat. But Arnold knew his danger, and determined to make a dash for freedom. The night was dark and foggy. The British were so sure of their prey that they kept no watch. So while they slept one by one the American ships crept silently through their lines and sped away.

When day dawned the British with wrath and disgust saw an empty lake where they had expected to see a stricken foe. They immediately gave chase and the following day they again came up with the little American fleet, for many of the ships were so crippled that they could move but slowly. Again a five hours' battle was fought. One ship, the Washington, struck her flag. But Arnold in his little Congress fought doggedly on. Then seeing he could resist no more he drove the Congress and four other small boats ashore in a creek too narrow for any but the smallest one of the British ships to follow. Here he set them on fire, and bade his men leap for the shore, he himself being the last to leave the burning decks. On land he waited until he was certain that the ships were safe from capture, and that they would go down with their flags flying. Then he marched off with his men, and brought them all safely to Ticonderoga.

The attack on Canada had been an utter failure, the little American fleet had been shattered, save for Ticonderoga the coveted waterway was in the hands of the British. Had the British commander known it too he might have attacked Ticonderoga then and there, and taken it with ease. But Arnold was there, and Arnold had made such a name for himself by his dash and courage that Carleton did not dare attack the fort. And contenting himself for the moment with having gained control of Lake Champlain he turned to attack Canada. Arnold had failed to take Quebec, and he has lost his little fleet. But against his failure to take Quebec his countrymen put his wonderful march through pathless forest; against the loss of the fleet the fact that but for

Arnold it would never have been built at all. So the people cheered him as a hero, and Washington looked upon him as one of his best officers.

But Arnold's temper was hot if his head was cool, he was ambitious and somewhat arrogant. And while he had been fighting so bravely he had quarreled with his brother officers, and made enemies of many. They declared that he fought not for his country's honour but for the glory of Benedict Arnold. So it came about that he did not receive the reward of promotion which he felt himself entitled to. When Congress appointed several new Major Generals he was passed over, and once again, as after the taking of Ticonderoga, bitterness filled his heart.

Chapter 55 - The Birth of A Great Nation

While these things were happening in the north the British had been forced to march away from Boston.

At first Washington could do little but keep his army before the town, for he had no siege guns with which to bombard it. Nor had he any desire to destroy the town." Burn it," said some, "if that is the only way of driving out the British." Even John Hancock to whom a great part of Boston belonged advised this. "Burn Boston," he said," and make John Hancock a beggar, if the public good requires it." But Washington did not attempt to burn it.

After the taking of Ticonderoga and Crown Point however he got guns. For many of the cannon taken at these forts were put on sledges and dragged over the snow to Boston. It was Colonel Henry Knox who carried out this feat. He was a stout young man with a lovely smile and jolly fat laugh, who greatly enjoyed a joke. He had been a bookseller before the war turned him into a soldier. And now as he felled trees, and made sledges, and encouraged his men over the long rough way he hugely enjoyed the joke of bringing British guns to bombard the British out of Boston.

When Washington got these guns he quietly one night took possession of Dorchester Heights, which commanded both Boston town and harbour. So quick had been his action that it seemed to General Howe, the British commander, as if the fortifications on Dorchester Heights

had been the work of magic. But magic or no magic they were, he saw, a real and formidable danger. With siege guns frowning above both town and harbour it was no longer possible to hold Boston. So hastily embarking his troops General Howe sailed away to Halifax in Nova Scotia, and Boston was left in peace for the rest of the war.

By this time there had been fighting in the south as well as in New England. For King George had taken it into his stubborn head that it would be a good plan to attack the southern colonies in spite of the fact that the war in the north was already more that he could manage. Sir Peter Parker, therefore, was sent out from England with a fleet of about fifty ships, and Lord Cornwallis with two thousand men, to attack Charleston in South Carolina. Howe was also ordered to send some soldiers southward, and although he could ill spare them from Boston he sent General Sir Henry Clinton with a small detachment.

According to arrangement the troops from Boston and England were to attack together with the loyalists of the south and the friendly Indians. But everything was bungled. The fleet, the land force, the loyalists and the Indians all seemed to be pulling different ways, and attacked at different times. The assault on Charleston was a miserable failure, and to the delight of the colonists the whole British force sailed away to join Howe in the north, and for more than two years there was no fighting in the southern colonies.

The commander of the colonists in Charleston was General Charles Lee. He was not really an American at all, but an Englishman, a soldier of fortune and adventure. He had wandered about the world, fighting in many lands, and had been in Braddock's army when it was defeated. He never became an American at heart like some other Englishmen who fought on their side. He cared little for them, he cared as little for the cause in which they were fighting, merely seeing in it a chance of making himself famous, and he had a very poor opinion of their fighting qualities. He was a tall, spare man with a hollow-cheeked, ugly face, and a disagreeable manner. He had a great opinion of himself, and boasted to such purpose that the Americans believed him to be a military genius. And in this first tussle with the British in the south he did so well that their belief in him seemed justified. He seemed to the people a hero and a genius rolled in one. In all the war after he did nothing to uphold the fame he gained at Charleston.

South as well as north had now had a taste of war. South as well as north had seen the British sail away, foiled. Every royal governor had by this time been driven from his post, and for six months and more the colonies had practically ruled themselves. What then, said many, was the use of talking any more about allegiance to the mother country? It was time, they said, to announce to all the world that the colonies of America were a free and independent nation.

There was much grave discussion in Congress and throughout the country. Some patriots, even those who longed most ardently to see America a free country, thought that it was too soon to make the claim. Among those was Patrick Henry who had already ranged himself so passionately on the side of freedom." The struggle is only beginning," he said," and we are not yet united. Wait till we are united. Wait until we have won our freedom, then let us proclaim it."

But by degrees all those who hesitated were won over, and on the 4th of July, 1776, the colonies declared themselves to be free.

Many meetings were held in what has since been called Independence Hall at Philadelphia. Much discussion there was, but at length the solemn declaration was drawn up. "We, the Representatives of the United States of America," so it ran," in General Congress assembled, appealing to the supreme judge of the world for the rectitude of our intention, do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, Free and Independent States." These are but a few words of the long, gravely worded declaration which was drawn up by Thomas Jefferson, and which is familiar to every American to this day.

John Hancock was President of Congress at this time, and he was the first to sign the declaration. Large, and clear, and all across the page the signature runs, showing, as it were, the calm mind and firm judgment which guided the hand that wrote. It was not until a few days later that it was signed by the other members.

It was on the 4th of July that Congress agreed to the declaration, and so that day has ever since been kept as a national holiday. It was the birthday of the United States as a Nation. But it was not until a few days later that the Declaration was read to the people of Philadelphia from Independence Hall. It was greeted with cheers and shouts of delight. The old bell upon the tower pealed joyfully, and swift riders mounted and rode to bear the news in all directions. The next day it was read at the head of each brigade of the army, and was greeted with loud cheers.

This Declaration of Independence was a bold deed, it might almost seem a rash one. For the British army was still in the land, and the Americans by no means always victorious. But the very fact of the boldness of the deed made them feel that they must be brave and steadfast, and that having claimed freedom they must win it. The Declaration drew the colonies together as nothing else had done, and even those who had thought the deed too rash came to see that it had been wise.

Chapter 56 - The Darkest Hour - Trenton and Princeton

In many places the news of the Declaration of Independence and the news of the victory at Charleston came at the same time, and gave a double cause for rejoicing. It was the last good news which was to come for many a long day. Indeed for months misfortune followed misfortune, until it almost seemed as if the Declaration of Independence had been the rash and useless action some had held it to be.

By the end of June General Howe sailed southward from Halifax, and landed on Staten Island southwest of New York, to await the arrival from England of his brother, Admiral Howe. On July 12th, just eight days after the declaration of independence, Admiral Howe arrived with strong reinforcements of ships and men. But before he began to fight he tried to come to terms with the rebel colonies, and for a second time free pardon was offered to all who would submit and own British rule once more. But the Americans were in no mood to submit, and had no wish for "pardon."

"No doubt," said one, "we all need pardon from heaven, but the American who needs pardon from his Britannic Majesty is yet to be found."

So instead of submitting they made ready to fight. The British also prepared to fight, and the force of the next blow fell upon New York. There were now more than thirty thousand British troops gathered here. It was the largest army which had ever been sent out of England, and King George had never a doubt that this great force, backed by his unconquerable navy, would soon bring the ten or twenty thousand ragged, half starved rebels to their knees.

He little knew the men or the man which who he had to deal. The army was indeed ragged and undisciplined. But as the great Napoleon said later, "In war the man is everything." And Washington was soon to show the world what could be done by brave undisciplined men whose hearts were behind their muskets.

As soon as Washington had gained possession of Boston he left an old general with a small force to guard it, and transported the main body of his army to New York, feeling sure that the next attack would be made there.

Brooklyn Heights on Long Island commanded New York, very much in the same way as Bunker Hill and Dorchester Heights commanded Boston, and Washington knew he must keep possession of those heights, if New York was not to be given up without a blow being struck. He

did not want to give it up without striking a blow, for he feared the effect on the spirits of the country. So he send General Putnam with about eight thousand men to occupy the Heights.

In doing this Washington placed his army in a very dangerous position, for the East River was large enough to allow British war ships to sail up it and thus cut his army in two. But he could do nothing else, for if the enemy got possession of the Heights the town was at his mercy.

Howe was not slow to see this, and, having carefully and secretly made his plans, he attacked the forces on Brooklyn Heights in the early morning of August 27th in front, and flank, and rear, all at once.

One division of the Americans was nearly wiped out, many being killed and the rest being taken prisoner. A little band of Marylanders put up a fine but hopeless fight for nearly four hours, the remnant of them at length taking refuge in the fortifications. To make the defeat a disaster for the colonists Howe had but to storm these fortifications. But he refused to do so. Enough had been done for one day, he said. Bunker Hill had taught the British to beware of storming heights. A siege would be less costly, thought Howe.

Within the fortifications the colonists were in a miserable plight. They had little shelter, the rain fell in torrents, and a cold northeast wind chilled them to the bone. They had nothing to eat except dry biscuit and raw pork. They were hungry and weary, wet and cold. Yet one of their miseries was a blessing. For as long as the northeast wind blew Howe could not bring his ships up the East River and cut communications between Long Island and New York. For in those days, it must be remembered, there were no steamers, and sailing vessels had to depend on wind and tide.

Washington, however, knew his danger. He knew that he must withdraw from Long Island. So secretly he gave orders that everything which could be found in the shape of a boat was to be brought to Brooklyn Ferry. They were soon gathered, and at eight o'clock in the evening, two days after the battle of Long Island, quickly and quietly the army was ferried across the wide river to the New York side. All night the rowers laboured, but the work was by no means finished when day dawned. The weather, however, still helped the colonists, for a thick fog settled over the river and hid what was going on from the British. Wounded, prisoners, cannon, stores, horses, were all ferried over, and when later in the day the British marched into the deserted camp they found not so much as a crust of bread.

It was about six in the morning when the last boat put off, and in it was Washington, the last man to leave. For forty hours he had hardly been off his horse, and had never for a minute lain

down to rest. He was unwearyingly watchful, and left nothing to chance, and this retreat is looked upon as one of the most masterly in all military history.

Having abandoned Brooklyn Washington knew that he could not hope to hold New York against an attack. But for a fortnight neither Admiral nor General Howe made any attack. Instead they talked once more of peace. It almost seemed as if Lord Howe were on the side of the Americans, as indeed he had always said he was, until he was ordered out to fight against them. "He is either a very slow officer, or else he is our very good friend," said one of them.

The fortnight which he now wasted gave Washington time to decide what it was best to do, and when at last the British began the attack on New York nearly all the stores and cannon had already been removed to Harlem Heights, about ten miles away at the north of Manhattan Island. All the troops, too, had gone except about four thousand under General Putnam, who stayed to keep order, and look after the removal of the last of the stores. When the attack came these were very nearly caught. For the regiment who ought to have guarded the landing place, and have kept the enemy from advancing until Putnam could retire, ran away as soon as they saw the red coats.

In vain their officers tried to rally them; panic had seized them, and they fled like frightened sheep. In the confusion Washington rode up. He was a man of fiery temper, and now when he saw his men show such a lack of courage in the face of the enemy he lost all control. Dashing his had upon the ground, and, drawing his sword, he bade them cease their cowardly retreat. But even Washington could not rally the fleeing men. Then his wrath and despair knew no bounds, and spurring his horse, he rode alone towards the enemy. Death, he felt, was better than such shame. But one of his officers, dashing after him, seized his bridle and turned him back to safety.

Meanwhile Putnam was making frantic efforts to gather his men and march them off to Harlem Heights. It was a day of violent heat, and as the men struggled on, laden with their baggage, their breath came short, and the perspiration trickled down their faces. Every moment they expected to be attacked in the rear.

But the attack did not come. For as Howe and his officers were passing the pleasant country house of Mrs. Robert Murray a servant came out to ask them to lunch. It was a tempting invitation on a hot day, —too tempting to be refused. So a halt was called, and while Howe and his officers enjoyed a pleasant meal, and listened to the talk of a clever, handsome lady, Putnam marched his panting men to safety.

Washington was greatly cast down at what he called the "disgraceful and dastardly" conduct of some of his troops that day. He knew that an attack on Harlem Heights must come, and come soon. But what would be the result? Would his men run away, or would they fight? "Experience, to my extreme affliction," he wrote sadly, "has convinced me that this is rather to be wished for than expected. However, I trust there are many who will act like men, and show themselves worthy of the blessings of freedom."

Washington had no real cause for fear. Next day the test came, and the Americans wiped out the memory of the day before. In wave after wave the British attacked, but again and again the colonists met them, and at last drove them to their trenches; and there was joy in the patriot camp.

Howe still pursued the war very slowly. After the battle of Harlem Heights he left Washington along for nearly a month, during which time the colonist fortified their camp strongly. But the commander-in-chief soon became convinced that the place was little better than a trap, in which Howe might surround him, and force him to surrender with all his army. So he retreated northward to White Plains, and the British settled down in New York, which they held till the end of the war.

And now misfortunes fell thick and fast upon the patriots. They still held Fort Washington on Manhattan Island, and Fort Lee on the opposite side of the Hudson, the garrisons of which were under the command of General Greene. Washington now advised him to abandon the forts, but did not give him absolute orders to do so. It is probably that he would have taken his commander's advice had not Congress interfered and sent orders that Fort Washington was not to be given up, except as a last necessity. Greene, believing that it was possible to hold it, tried to obey Congress. But on the 16th of November, after a fierce fight against tremendous odds, the fort was surrounded, and all the defenders to the number of about three thousand were taken prisoner.

The loss was a bitter blow to Washington, for the men taken prisoners were some of his best soldiers. Four days later Fort Lee was also taken, and although the garrison escaped they left behind them large stores of food, ammunition, baggage of all sorts, as well as cannon, which they could ill spare.

Washington now resolved on a retreat towards Philadelphia, and gloom settled on the ragged little army of patriots. They were weary of retreats and defeats, and felt that their cause was already lost. Winter was fast coming on and many shouldered their arms and marched

homeward. And so the once buoyant enthusiastic army melted away to a hungry and dispirited troop of little more than four thousand.

General Lee had at this time but lately returned from his triumphs in South Carolina, and he was more boastful and arrogant than ever. After Washington he was second in command, but he had no doubt in his own mind that he ought to be first. Now he was not slow to let others know what he thought. And while Washington, noble and upright gentleman as he was, trusted Lee as a friend, and believed in him as a soldier, Lee schemed to supplant him.

Washington had left Lee at North Castle with seven thousand men. Now he sent him orders to join him at once, so that if he should have to fight a battle he could have at least some sort of army to fight with. But Lee pretended to misunderstand. He made excuses for delay, he argued, and lied, and stayed where he was. Perhaps he thought that it would be no bad thing if Washington should be defeated and captured. Then he would be commander-in-chief.

But it was Lee who was captured, not Washington. He had in a leisurely fashion at last begun to move, and on the march he spent a night at a wayside inn. The British, hearing of his whereabouts, surrounded the inn and took him prisoner. For more than a year he remained in their hands, a very comfortable captive, and his army, under General John Sullivan, marched to join Washington, who was still retreating southward through New Jersey before the overwhelming force of the British.

It was weary work retreating. But with masterly generalship, and untiring watchfulness, Washington avoided a battle, and slipped through the toils. As the pursued and pursuers neared Philadelphia something like panic laid hold of the city. All day long the rumble of wagons might be heard carrying women and children to places of safety. Congress was hurriedly removed to Baltimore; but hundreds of men seized their rifles and marched to join the army to fight for their country in its darkest hour.

But already the worst was over. Washington's army was now well reinforced. He had the recruits from Philadelphia, he had Lee's army, and he also had two thousand men sent him by Schuyler from the north. So he resolved to make a bold bid for fortune. He resolved to do or die. He gave as the password, "Victory or death," and in the dark of Christmas night, 1771, he and his men crossed the Delaware River above the town of Trenton, where the British lay, together with a large company of the Hessian troops who had been hired to fight the Americans. The river was full of floating ice, which made the crossing dangerous and slow. But through the darkness the men toiled on, fending off the ice blocks as best they could as they steered their

boats through the drifting mass. At length, after ten hours' labour, they reached the other side without the loss of one man.

It was four o'clock when the troops started off on their seven-mile march to Trenton over the snowy ground, the icy wind driving the sleet and snow in their faces. But by eight o'clock they had reached Trenton. The British were utterly taken by surprise, and almost at once the Hessians surrendered.

Having sent his prisoners, to the number of nearly a thousand, to the other side of the river, Washington took possession of the town. But he was not long allowed to remain there. For the British commander, Lord Cornwallis, marched to dislodge him with an army of eight thousand men.

Washington let him come, and on the 2nd of January, Cornwallis encamped before Trenton, determined next morning to give battle. He was sure of victory, and in great spirits. "At last we have run down the old fox, and we will bag him in the morning," he said.

But Washington was not to be so easily caught. The two armies were so near that the watchfires of the one could be plainly seen by the other. All night the American watchfires blazed, all night men could be heard working at the fortifications. But that was only a blind. In the darkness Washington and his army quietly slipped away to Princeton. There he fell upon the British reinforcements, who were marching to join Cornwallis at Trenton, and put them to flight.

When day came Cornwallis was astonished to find the American camp empty. And when he heard the firing in the distance he knew what had happened, and hastily retreated to New York, while Washington drew off his victorious but weary men to Morristown in New Jersey. Here for the next few months they remained, resting after their labours, unmolested by the foe.

Chapter 57 - Burgoyne's Campaign - Bennington and Oriskany

As many of the Americans had foreseen, the British had from the first formed the design of cutting the colonies in two by taking possession of the great waterway from the Hudson to the St. Lawrence. Their plans had been long delayed, but in the spring of 1777, they determined to carry them out.

General Burgoyne was now in command of the Canadian troops. He was a genial man of fashion, a writer of plays, and a great gambler. But he was a brave soldier, too, and his men adored him. For in days when it was common to treat the rank and file as a little better than dogs, Burgoyne treated them like reasoning beings.

It was arranged that Burgoyne should move southward with his main force, by way of Lake Champlain to Ticonderoga, and that a smaller force should go by Lake Ontario and seize Fort Stanwix. Howe, at the same time, was in Albany, having, it was to be supposed, swept the whole country free of "rebels."

It was a very fine plan, but it was not carried out as intended - because, although Burgoyne received his orders, Howe did not receive his. For the British minister, who ought to have sent them, went off on a holiday and forgot all about the matter for several weeks. When at length he remembered, and sent the order, Howe was far away from the Hudson, at his old game of trying to run Washington to earth.

Burgoyne, however, knew nothing of this and cheerfully set out from Canada with a well drilled, well equipped, and well fed army of about eight thousand men, and on the 1st of July reached Ticonderoga.

Since this fort had been taken by Ethan Allen it had been greatly strengthened, and the Americans believed that now it could withstand any assault, however vigorous. But while strengthening the fort itself they failed to fortify a little hill near. They had already much experience of the danger of heights commanding a town or fort. But they thought that this hill was too steep and rugged to be a danger. No cannon, it was said, could ever be dragged up to the top of it. When the British came, however, they thought otherwise. They at once saw the value of the hill, and determined that guns should be dragged up it. For forty-eight hours they worked furiously, and when day dawned on the 5th of August both men and guns were on the summit.

The American commander, St. Clair, saw them with despair in his heart. Every corner of the fort was commanded by the guns, and the garrison utterly at the mercy of the enemy. To remain, he knew, would mean the loss of his whole force. So he resolved to abandon the fort, and as soon as the sun set the work was begun. Guns and stores were laden on boats, cannon too heavy to be removed were spiked, and nearly all the garrison had left when a fire broke out in the officers' quarters.

The light of the flames showed the British sentinels what was going on. The alarm was given. The British made a dash for the fort, and as day dawned on July 6, 1777, the Union Jack was once more planted upon its ramparts.

Then a hot pursuit began. At the village of Hubbardton the Americans made a valiant stand, but they were worsted and fled, and five days later St. Clair brought the remnant of his force into Fort Edward, where the main army under Schuyler was stationed.

Burgoyne had begun well, and when King George heard the news he clapped his hands with joy. "I have beat them," he cried, dashing into the queen's rooms, "I have beat all the Americans." But over America the loss cast a gloom. St. Clair and Schuyler were severely blamed and court-martialled. But both were honourably acquitted. Nothing could have saved the garrison from being utterly wiped out; and when men came to judge the matter calmly they admitted that it was better to lose the fort than to lose the fort and garrison also. Meanwhile Burgoyne was chasing hot-foot after the fugitives. As he approached, Schuyler abandoned Fort Edward, for it was a mere shell and impossible of defence for a single day. But as he fell back, he broke up the roads behind him. Trees were felled and laid across them every two or three yards, bridges were burned, fords destroyed. So thoroughly was the work done that Burgoyne, in pursuit, could only march about a mile a day, and had to build no fewer than forty bridges in a distance of little more than twenty-four miles.

Besides destroying the roads Schuyler also made the country a desert. He carried away and destroyed the crops, drove off the sheep and cattle, sweeping the country so bare that the hostile army could find no food, and were forced to depend altogether on their own supplies. Before long these gave out, and the British began to suffer from hunger.

Burgoyne now learned that at the village of Bennington the patriots had a depot containing large stores of food and ammunition. These he determined to have for his own army, and he sent a force of six hundred men, mostly Germans and Indians, to make the capture.

This old trapper, Captain John Stark, was in command of the American force at Bennington. He had fought in many battles from Bunker Hill to Princeton. But, finding himself passed over, when others were promoted, he had gone off homeward in dudgeon. But now in his country's hour of need he forgot his grievances and once more girded on his sword. He led his men with splendid dash and the enemy was utterly defeated, and Stark was made a brigadier general as a reward. It was a disaster for Burgoyne, and on the heels of this defeat came the news that the second force marching by way of Lake Ontario had also met with disaster at Oriskany near Fort Stanwix.

This force had surrounded Fort Stanwix, and General Nicholas Herkimer had marched to its relief.

General Herkimer was an old German of over sixty, and although he had lived all his life in America, and loved the country with his whole heart, he spoke English very badly, and wrote it worse. It must have sadly puzzled his officers sometimes to make out his dispatches and orders. One is said to have run as follows: "Ser, yu will orter yur bodellyen to merchs Immetdielich do ford edward weid for das broflesen and amenieschen fied for en betell. Dis yu will desben at yur berrel." This being translated means:" Sir, you will order your battalion to march immediately to Fort Edward with four days' provisions, and ammunition for one battle. This you will disobey at your peril."

As this doughty old German marched to the relief of Fort Stanwix he fell into an ambush prepared for him by the famous Indian chief, Joseph Brant, who, with his braves, was fighting on the side of the British. A terrible hand to hand struggle followed. The air was filled with wild yells and still wilder curses as the two foes grappled. It was war in all its savagery. Tomahawks and knives were used as freely as rifles. Stabbing, shooting, wrestling, the men fought each other more like wildcats than human beings. A fearful thunderstorm burst forth, too. Rain fell in torrents, a raging wind tore through the tree tops, thunder and lightning added their terrors to the scene.

For five hours the savage warfare lasted. Almost at the beginning a ball shattered Herkimer's leg and killed his horse. But the stout old warrior refused to leave the field. He bade his men take the saddle from his horse and place it at the root of a great beech tree. Sitting there he directed the battle, shouting his orders in his quaint guttural English, and calmly smoking a pipe the while. They were the last orders he was to give. For, ten days after the battle he died from his wound, serenely smoking his pipe, and reading his old German Bible almost to the last.

Soon the noise of the battle was heard at Fort Stanwix, and the garrison, led by Colonel Marinus Willett, sallied forth to the aid of their comrades, put a detachment of the enemy to flight, and captured their stores of food and ammunition, together with five flags. And now for the first time the Stars and Stripes were unfurled.

When Washington had taken command of the army there had still been no real thought of separating from Britain. So for his flag he had used the British ensign with the Union Jack in the corner. But instead of a red ground he had used a ground of thirteen red and white stripes, on stripe for each colony. But when all hope of reconciliation was gone Congress decided that the Union Jack must be cut out of the flag altogether, and in its place a blue square was to be used

with thirteen white stars in a circle, one star for each state, just as there was one stripe for each state.

People, however, were too busy doing other things and had no time to see to the making of flags. So the first one was hoisted by Colonel Willett, after the battle of Orskany. He had captured five standards. These, as victor, he hoisted on the fort. To make his triumph complete, however, he wanted an American flag to hoist over them. But he had none. So a soldier's wife gave her red petticoat, some one else supplied a white shirt, and out of that and an old blue jacket was made the first American flag to float upon the breeze.

This, of course, was only a rough and ready flag, and Betsy Ross, a seamstress, who lived in Arch Street, Philadelphia, had the honour of making the first real one. While in Philadelphia Washington and some members of council called upon Betsy to ask her to make the flag. Washington had brought a sketch with him, but Betsy suggested some alterations. So Washington drew another sketch, and there and then Betsy set to work, and very soon her flag also was floating in the breeze.

Chapter 58 - Burgoyne's Campaign - Bemis Heights and Saratoga

After all the fierce fighting at Oriskany neither side could claim a victory. The British had received a check, but were by no means beaten. Fort Stanwix was still besieged, and unless relief came must soon fall into the hands of the enemy.

Colonel Gansewoort, the commandant of the fort, therefore now sent to Schuyler asking for help, and Benedict Arnold, who had but lately arrived, volunteering for the service, was soon on his way with twelve hundred men. Arnold was ready enough to fight, as he was. But he knew that his force was much smaller than that of the British, and, after some thought, he fell upon a plan by which theirs could be made less.

A spy had been caught within the American lines, and was condemned to death. He was an almost half-witted creature, with queer cunning ways, and the Indians looked upon him as a sort of Medicine Man, and feared him accordingly. Knowing this, Arnold thought that he might be

useful to him, and promised to spare his life if he would go to the British camp and spread a report among their Indian allies that the Americans were coming down upon them in tremendous force.

The man was glad enough to get a chance to escape being hanged, and his brother being held as hostage, he set out. He acted his part well. Panting and breathless, with his coat torn in many places by bullets, and a face twisted with fear, he dashed into the enemy camp. There he told his eager listeners that he had barely escaped with his life from the Americans (which was true enough) and that they were marching towards them in vast numbers, and showed his bullet-riddled coat as proof of his story.

"How many are they?" he was asked.

In reply the man spread his hands abroad, pointing to the leaves of the trees and shaking his head as if in awe.

The Indians were greatly disturbed, and began to hold a council. While they were still consulting, an Indian, friendly to the Americans, who was in the plot, arrived. He told the same story as the spy, pointing like him to the numberless trees of the forest when asked how many of the enemy were coming.

Then another and still another Indian arrived. They all told the same tale. A mysterious bird had come to warn them, they said, that the whole valley was filled with warriors.

At length the Indians could bear no more. Already many of their best warriors had been slain. They would no longer stay to be utterly wiped out, and they prepared to flee.

In vain the British commander implored them to stay. Bribes, threats, and promises were all alike useless. At last he offered them "fire water." For if only he could make them drunk, he thought, they might forget their fear. But even the much coveted "fire water" had no power to still their terrors. They refused to drink, and with clamour and noise they fled.

The panic spread to the rest of the army. Two battalions of white men followed in the wake of their redskin brothers, and the commander, deserted by the bulk of his army, was forced to join in the general retreat.

It was a humiliating and disorderly flight. The Indians, when they recovered from their terror, had lost every vestige of respect for their white brothers. Soon they became insolent, and amused themselves by playing on their fears. "They are coming! They are coming!" they would

cry whenever the weary fugitives lay down to rest. Then they would laugh to see the white men leap up again, fling away their knapsacks and their rifles, so as to make the greater haste, and stumble onward.

At length the shameful retreat came to an end, and, hungry and ragged, a feeble remnant of the expedition reached the shores of Lake Ontario, and passed over into Canada.

Such was the news brought to Burgoyne soon after the defeat at Bennington. It make his dark outlook darker still. No help could ever come to him now from the north, and all his hopes were fixed on Howe's advancing host from the south. But no news of Howe's approach reached him. Day by day the American force round him was increasing. Day by day his own was growing weaker. At last in desperation he decided to risk a battle. For he saw that he must either soon cut his way through the hostile forces or perish miserable.

General Horatio Gates was now in command of the Americans instead of Schuyler. Gates was nothing of a soldier. Indeed it was said of him that all throughout the beginning of the war he never so much as heard the sound of a gun, and that when there was a battle to the fore he always had business elsewhere. Like Lee he was an Englishman by birth. And even as Lee had been jealous of Washington so Gates was jealous of Schuyler, and at last he succeeded in ousting him. He did so at a good time for himself, for all the hard work of this campaign was done, and Gates stepped in time to reap the glory.

Burgoyne thought little of Gates, and called him an old woman. So he was the more ready to give battle. But the Americans were now so thoroughly aroused that they would have fought well without a leader. Besides, Arnold was with them, and Arnold they would have followed anywhere.

The Americans were strongly entrenched on Bemis Heights, and on the day of battle Gates would have done nothing but sit still and let the enemy wear himself out in attacks. But this did not suit Arnold's fiery temper, and he begged hard to be allowed to charge the enemy. Bates grudgingly gave him leave, and with a small force he bore down upon the British. The fight was fierce, and finding his force too small Arnold sent to Gates asking for reinforcements. But Gates, although he had ten thousand troops standing idle, refused to send a man. So, with his always diminishing handful of troops, Arnold fought on till night fell.

Again neither side could claim a victory. But Burgoyne had lost nearly six hundred men, and his position was not one whit the better. Gates took all the credit to himself, and when he sent his account of the battle to Congress he did not so much as mention Arnold's name. Out of this,

and his refusal to send reinforcements, a furious quarrel arouse between the two men, and Gates told Arnold that he had no further use for his services and that he could go. Arnold, shaken with wrath, would have gone had not his brother officers with one voice begged him to stay. So he stayed, but he had no longer any command.

Like a caged and wounded lion Burgoyne now sought a way out of the trap in which he was. But turn which way he would there was no escape. He was hemmed in on all sides. So eighteen days after the battle of Bemis Heights he took the field again on the same ground. It was a desperate adventure, for what could six thousand worn and weary men do against twenty thousand already conscious of success?

The British fought with dogged courage. Chafing with impatience Arnold watched the battle from the heights. He saw how an attack might be made with advantage, how victory might be won. At length he could bear inaction no longer, and, leaping on to his horse, he dashed into the fray.

"Go after that fellow and bring him back," shouted Gates; "he will be doing something rash."

The messenger sped after him. But Arnold was too quick, and the battle was well nigh won before Gates' order reached him. As Arnold came his men gave a ringing cheer, and for the rest of the day he and Daniel Morgan were the leaders of the battle, Gates never leaving his headquarters.

Where the bullets flew thickest, there Arnold was to be found. The madness of battle was upon him, and, like one possessed, he rode through flame and smoke, his clear voice raised above the hideous clamour, cheering and directing his men.

The fight was fierce and long, but as the day wore on there could be no more doubt about the end. The British were defeated. Yet so long as daylight lasted they fought on.

Just as the sun was setting Arnold and his men had routed a party of Germans, and a wounded German, lying on the ground, shot at Arnold, killing his horse and shattering his leg - the same leg which had been wounded at Quebec.

As Arnold fell, one of his men, with a cry of rage dashed at the German and would have killed him where he lay. But Arnold stopped him. "For God's sake, don't hurt him." he cried, "he's a fine fellow." So the man's life was spared.

Arnold's leg was so badly shattered that the doctors talked of cutting it off. Arnold, however, would not hear of it.

"If that is all you can do for me," he said, "put me on another horse and let me see the battle out."

But the battle was over, for night had put an end to the dreadful strife.

With this defeat Burgoyne's last hope vanished. To fight again would be merely to sacrifice his brave soldiers. He had only food in the camp for a week, and there was still no sign of help coming from the south. There was nothing left to him but to surrender.

So on October 17th he surrendered to General Gates, with all his cannon, ammunition, and great stores, and nearly six thousand men.

As his soldiers laid down their arms many of them wept bitterly. But there was no one there to see or deride their grief. For the Americans, having no wish to add to the sorrow of their brave foe, stayed within their lines. Then, as the disarmed soldiers marched away, Burgoyne stepped out of the ranks, and, drawing his sword, gave it to General Gates.

"The fortune of war has made me your prisoner," he said.

"It was through no fault of yours," replied Gates, with a grave courtesy, as he handed back the sword.

Chapter 59 - Brandywine - Germantown - Valley Forge

Washington spent the winter of 1776-7 at Morristown. In May he once more led his army out, and while the forces in the north, under Schuyler and then Gates, were defeating Burgoyne, he was holding his own against Howe's far more formidable army further south.

Howe had spent the winter at New York, which from the time of its capture to the end of the war, remained the British headquarters. In the spring he determined to capture Philadelphia, the

"revel capital," and began to march through New Jersey. But in every move he made he found himself checked by Washington. It was like a game of chess. Washington's army was only about half the size of Howe's, so he refused to be drawn into an open battle, but harried and harassed his foe at every turn, and at length drove Howe back to Staten Island.

Having failed to get to Philadelphia by land, Howe now decided to go by sea, and , sailing up Chesapeake Bay, he landed in Maryland in the end of August. But there again he found Washington waiting for him. And now, although his army was still much smaller than Howe's, Washington determined to risk a battle rather than give up Philadelphia without a blow.

With his usual care and genius Washington chose his position well, on the banks of the Brandywine, a little river which falls into the Delaware at Wilmington about twenty-six miles from Philadelphia. On both sides the battle was well fought. But the British army was larger, better equipped, and better drilled, and they gained the victory.

This defeat made the fate of Philadelphia certain, and Congress fled once more, this time to Lancaster. Yet for a fortnight longer Washington held back the enemy, and only on the 26th of September did the British march into the city. But before they had time to settle into their comfortable quarters Washington gave battle again, at Germantown, on the outskirts of Philadelphia.

It was a well contested battle, and at one time it seemed as if it might end in victory for the Americans. But Washington's plan of battle was rather a hard one for inexperienced troops to carry out. They were as brave as any men who ever carried rifles, but they were so ignorant of drill that they could not even form into column or wheel to right or left in soldierly fashion. A thick fog, too, which hung over the field from early morning, made it difficult to distinguish friend from foe, and at one time two divisions of the Americans, each mistaking the other for the enemy, fired upon each other.

But although the battle of Germantown was a defeat for the Americans it by no means spelled disaster. Another two months of frays and skirmishes followed. Then the British settled down to comfortable winter quarters in Philadelphia, and Washington marched his war-worn patriots to Valley Forge, about twenty miles away.

Wile the Americans had been busy losing and winning battles, Pitt in England was still struggling for peace and kindly understanding between Britain and her colonies. "You can never conquer the Americans," he cried. "If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country I would never lay down my arms, —never, never, never!"

But Pitt talked in vain. For the King was deaf to all the great minister's pleadings. In his eyes the Americans were rebels who must be crushed, and Pitt was but the "trumpet of sedition."

But meanwhile all Europe had been watching the struggle of these same rebels, watching it, too, with keep interest and admiration. And now soldiers from many countries came to offer help to the Americans. Among them the best known perhaps are Kosciuszko, who later fought so bravely for his own land, Poland; and Lafayette, who took a large share in the French Revolution.

Lafayette was at this time only nineteen. He had an immense admiration for Washington, and after they met, in spite of the difference in the their ages, they became lifelong friends, and Lafayette named his eldest son after Washington.

But the Americans owed more perhaps to Baron von Steuben than to any other foreigner. Von Steuben was a German, and had fought under Frederick the Great.

Washington had taken up winter quarters at Valley Forge, which is a beautiful little valley. But that winter it was a scene of misery and desolation. The cold was terrible, and the army was ragged and hungry. The men had neither coats, shirts, nor shoes, and often their feet and hands froze so that they had to be amputated. For days at a time they had but one poor meal a day. Even Washington saw no hope of help. "I am now convinced beyond a doubt," he wrote, "that unless some great and capital change takes place this army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things: starve, dissolve, or disperse."

Much of this misery was due to the neglect and folly of Congress. It had sadly changed from the brave days of the Declaration of Independence. It was filled now with politicians who cared about their own advancement rather than with patriots who sought their country's good. They refused to see that money, and still more money, was needed to keep a properly equipped army in the field. They harassed Washington with petty interference with his plans. They gave promotion to useless officers against his wishes and better judgment. There was plenty of food in the country, stores of clothing were ready for the army's use, but they lay by the wayside, rotting, because there was no money to pay men to bring it to the army. Washington wore himself out in fruitless efforts to awaken Congress to a sense of its duty. And at length, utterly despairing of any support, weary of seeing his men suffer and dwindle day by day under the miseries of Valley Forge, he wrote out his resignation as Commander-in-Chief of the army. And it needed all the persuasions of his officers to make him tear it up.

It was to this camp of misery at Valley Forge that Baron von Steuben came. And the ragged, hungry, perishing army he drilled. To these men, brave enough, but all unused to discipline, he taught what discipline meant.

At first it was by no means easy. For the Baron knew little English and the men he tried to teach knew not a word of French or German. So misunderstandings were many, and when one day a young American officer named Walker, who knew French, came to von Steuben and offered to act as interpreter he was overjoyed. "Had I seen an angel from heaven," he cried, "I could not have been more glad."

But even then, between his own mistakes and the men's mistakes, the Baron was often driven distracted, and lost his temper. Once, it is said, utterly worn out, he turned the troops over to Walker. "Come, my friend," he cried, "take them; I can curse them no longer."

But in spite of all hindrances and failings, both men and officers learned so much from von Steuben that when the terrible winter was over the army went forth again to fight far more fit to face the foe than before.

Chapter 60 - War on the Sea

Besides being themselves more fit to fight, the Americans now received other help, for France joined with America in her struggle against Britain. And after this the war was not confined to America only. There was war on the sea, now, as well as on land, and whenever the British and the French navies met there was fighting.

The Americans themselves also carried the war on to the sea. At first they had no fleet, but very soon they began to build ships and before long they had a little fleet of six. Of this fleet Esek Hopkins was made commander-in-chief. He was an old salt, for he had been captain of a trading vessel for thirty years. But as a naval commander he was not a success. He had no knowledge of warfare, he was touchy, obstinate, and could not get on with Congress, which he said was a pack of ignorant clerks who knew nothing at all. The fleet under him only made one

cruise. Then he was dismissed, and was succeeded by James Nicholson, the son of a Scotsman from Berwick-on-Tweed.

As the war went on other vessels were added to the first six. But the largest was not bigger than a small British cruiser, and in the end they were nearly all taken, or sunk to prevent them being taken. Still before their end they fought many gallant fights, and did some good work for their country.

The first shot of the Revolution on the water was fired by Captain Abraham Whipple when he chased a tender belonging to the British cruiser Rose, and captured her. This was, however, not the first shot the hardy Captain had fired against the British. For in 1772, before the "Boston Tea Party," even, had taken place, he had seized and burned the British revenue schooner, Gaspé, in Narragansett Bay.

The commander of the Gaspé had been trying to put down smuggling on the coast of Rhode Island. He stopped all vessels, and examined even market boats, to see if they had any smuggled goods. This made the Rhode Island people very angry. They had smuggled as they liked for a hundred years; the British laws against it seemed to them mere tyranny; and they looked upon the commander of the Gaspé as little better than a pirate, who was interfering with their lawful trade. So when one day the people learned that the Gaspé had gone aground a few miles from Providence, and could not be got off before three o'clock in the morning, they determined to attack her.

Abraham Whipple was chosen as captain for the expedition. He and his men boarded the Gaspé, wounded the captain, overpowered the crew, and burned the schooner to the water's edge.

When the British commander-in-chief heard of it he was furious, and he wrote to Whipple.

"Sir," he said, "you, Abraham Whipple, on the 10th of June, 1772, burned his Majesty's ship the Gaspé, and I will hang you at the yardarm."

To this Whipple, nothing daunted, replied: "Sir, always catch a man before you hang him."

Whipple was never caught until 1778, when with his ship the Providence he tried to relieve Charleston, in South Carolina, which was at that time besieged by the British. Then he was not hanged, but kept prisoner until the end of the war.

Lambert Wickes, captain of the Reprisal, was another gallant naval officer. When Benjamin Franklin was sent as United States ambassador to France in 1776 he sailed in the Reprisal, which was the first American warship to visit the shores of Europe.

It might be here interesting to note that besides being minister to France, Franklin had to look after naval affairs in a general way. He used his powers with wisdom, and often with great humanity. Among other things he gave all American naval commanders orders that they were not to attack the great discoverer, Captain Cook, no matter in what part of the ocean they might meet him. They were not merely forbidden to attack him, they were even commanded to offer him any aid they could. For it would not beseem Americans, said Franklin, to fight against one who had earned the admiration of the whole world.

The Reprisal did not return home before it had made its presence felt. For, having landed Franklin, Wickes cruised about the Bay of Biscay and the English Channel, capturing many British merchantmen, and taking them to France, where he sold them.

At this time France was still at peace with Britain, and the British Government complained bitterly to the French at this breach of neutrality. They were, therefore, forced to order the American ships to leave France, and Wickes sailed for home.

On the way the Reprisal was chased by a British warship, and Wickes only saved himself from capture by throwing his guns overboard. He thus escaped one danger, however, only to fall into another, and in a storm off the coast of Newfoundland the Reprisal went down, and all on board were lost.

But of all the naval commanders on the American side, the Scotsman, John Paul Jones, was the most famous. He was the son of a gardener, and was born at Arbigland in Kirkcudbrightshire. From a child he had been fond of the sea, and when still only a boy of twelve he began his seafaring life on board a ship trading with Virginia. For some years he led a roving and adventurous life. Then after a time he came to live in America, which, he said himself, "has been my favourite country since the age of thirteen, when I first saw it."

His real name was John Paul. But he took the name of Jones out of gratitude to Mr. Jones, a gentleman of Virginia, who had befriended him when he was poor and in trouble.

When the War of the Revolution broke out Jones was a young man of twenty-seven, and he threw himself heart and soul into the struggle on the side of the Americans. He was the first man to receive a naval commission after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. He was, too, the first man to break the American naval flag from the mast. This was not, however, the

Stars and Stripes, but a yellow flag with a pine tree and a rattlesnake, and the words, "Tread on me how dares."

Jones became famous at once for his deeds of skill and daring, for it was his sole ambition, he said, "to fight a battle under the new flag, which will teach the world that the American flag means something afloat, and must be respected at sea." But he never liked the yellow flag. It was more fit for a pirate ship, he thought, than to be the ensign of a great nation, and he it was who first sailed under the Stars and Stripes, which he hoisted on his little ship, the Ranger. This was only a vessel of three hundred tons. In it in November, 1777, he crossed the Atlantic, harried the coasts of England and Scotland, and then made his way to France.

From France Jones set out again with a little fleet of four ships.

His flagship he called Bonhomme Richard, as a compliment both to

France and Franklin. Franklin being the author of "Poor Richard's

Almanac," for which Bonhomme Richard was the French translation.

The Bonhomme Richard was the largest vessel of the American navy, but it was only a worn-out old East India merchantman, turned into a man-of-war by having portholes for guns cut in the sides. And, although, Jones did not know it at the time, the guns themselves had all been condemned as unsafe before they were sent on board. The other ships of the squadron were also traders fitted up with guns in the same way, but were all much smaller than the Bonhomme.

With this raffish little fleet Paul Jones set out to do great deeds. His bold plan was to attack Liverpool, the great centre of shipping, but that had to be given up, for he found it impossible to keep his little squadron together. Sometimes he would only have one other ship with him, sometimes he would be quite alone. So he cruised about the North Sea, doing a great deal of damage to British shipping, catching merchantmen, and sending them to France as prizes.

At length one afternoon in September, when he had only the Pallas with him, he sighted a whole fleet of merchantmen off the coast of England and at once gave chase. The merchantmen were being convoyed by two British men-of-war, the Serapis and the Countess of Scarborough, and they at once got between Jones and his prey. Then the merchantmen made off as fast as they could, and the men-of-war came on. Presently the captain of the Serapis hailed the Bonhomme Richard.

"What ship are you?" he shouted.

"I can't hear what you say," replied Jones, who wanted to get nearer.

That made the British captain suspicious. Nearer and nearer the two vessels drew on to each other.

"Hah," he said, "it is probably Paul Jones. If so there is hot work ahead."

Again the Serapis sent a hail.

"What ship is that? Answer immediately, or I shall be obliged to fire into you."

Paul Jones answered this time - with a broadside - and a terrible battle began. The carnage was awful. The decks were soon cumbered with dead and dying. The two ships were so near that the muzzles of the guns almost touched each other. Both were soon riddled with shot, and leaking so that the pumps could hardly keep pace with rising water. Still the men fought on.

Jones was everywhere, firing guns himself, encouraging his men, cheering them with his voice and his example. "The commodore had but to look at a man to make him brave," said a Frenchman, who was there. "Such was the power of one heart that knew no fear."

The sun went down over the green fields of England, and the great red harvest moon came up. Still through the calm moonlit night the guns thundered, and a heavy cloud of smoke hung over the sea. Two of the rotten old guns on the Bonhomme Richard had burst at the first charge, killing and wounding the gunners; others were soon utterly useless. For a minute not one could be fired, and the Captain of the Serapis thought that the Americans were beaten.

"Have you struck?" he shouted, through the smoke of the battle.

"No," cried Jones, "I haven't begun to fight yet."

The next instant the roar and rattle of the musketry crashed forth again. Both ships were now on fire, and a great hole smashed in the side of the Bonhomme.

"For God's sake, strike, Captain," said one of his officers.

Jones looked at him silently for a minute. The he answered: "No," he cried, "I will sink. I will never strike."

The ships were now side by side, and Jones gave orders to lash the Bonhomme Richard to the Serapis. He seized a rope himself and helped to do it. The carpenter beside him, finding the lines tangled rapped out a sailor's oath.

But Jones was calm as if nothing was happening.

"Don't swear, Mr. Stacy," he said. "We may soon all be in eternity.

Let us do our duty."

Lashed together now the two ships swung on the waves in a death grapple. The guns on the Bonhomme Richard were nearly all silenced. But a sailor climbed out on to the yards, and began to throw hand grenades into the Serapis. He threw one right into the hold, where it fell upon a heap of cartridges and exploded, killing about twenty men. That ended the battle. With his ship sinking and aflame, and the dead lying thick about him, the British captain struck his flag, and the Americans boarded the Serapis and took possession.

In silence and bitterness of heart Captain Pearson bowed and handed his sword to Jones. But Jones had only admiration for his gallant foe. He longed to say something to comfort him, but he looked so sad and dignified that he knew not what to say. At length he spoke.

"Captain Pearson," he said "you have fought like a hero. You have worn this sword to your credit, and to the honour of your service. I hope your King will reward you suitably."

But Captain Pearson could not answer, his heart was still too sore.

Without a word he bowed again and turned away.

While this terrible fight had been going on the Pallas had engaged the Countess of Scarborough, and captured her, and now appeared, not much worse for the fight. But the Bonhomme Richard was an utter wreck, and was sinking fast. So as quickly as possible, the sailors, utterly weary as they were with fighting, began to move the wounded to the Serapis. The crew of the British ship, too, worked with a will, doing their best to save the enemies of the night before. At length all were safely carried aboard the Serapis, and only the dead were left on the gallant old Bonhomme Richard.

"To them," says Jones, in his journal, "I gave the good old ship for their coffin, and in it they found a sublime sepulchre. And the last mortal eyes ever saw of the Bonhomme Richard was the defiant waving of her unconquered and unstricken flag as she went down."

So this strange sea-duel was over. The victorious ship went down, and the victorious captain sailed away in his prize. But the Serapis, too, was little more than a wreck. Her main mast was shot away. Her other masts and spars were badly damaged, and could carry but little sail, and it

seemed doubtful if she would ever reach port. But, after a perilous journey, the coasts of Holland were sighted, and the Serapis was duly anchored in the Texel.

With deeds like these the little American navy realised Jones' desire. But beyond that they did little to bring the war to an end. Far more was done by the privateers, which were fitted out by the hundred. They scoured the seas like greyhounds, attacking British merchantmen on every trade route, capturing and sinking as many as three hundred in one year. This kind of warfare paid so well, indeed that farming was almost given up in many states, the farmers having all gone off to make their fortunes by capturing British merchantmen.

As for Paul Jones he never had a chance again of showing his great prowess. When the war was over he entered the service of Russia, and became an admiral. He died in Paris in 1792, but for a long time it was not known where he was buried. His grave was discovered in 1905, and his body was brought to America by a squadron of the navy which was sent to France for the purpose, and reburied at Annapolis with the honour due to a hero.

Chapter 61 - The Battle of Monmouth - The Story of Captain Molly

While the Americans were learning endurance in the hard school of Valley Forge the British were having a gay time in Philadelphia. The grave old Quaker town rang with song and laughter as never before. Balls and parties, theatricals and races, followed each other in a constant round of gaiety. And amid this light-hearted jollity Howe seemed to forget all about the war.

Had he chosen he could easily have attacked Valley Forge, and crushed Washington's perishing army out of existence. Or if he grudged to lose men in an attack, he might have surrounded the Americans, and starved them into submission. But he did neither. He was too comfortable in his winter quarters, and had no wish to go out in the snow to fight battles.

Those in power in England had long been dissatisfied with Howe's way of conducting the war. Time and again he had seemed to lose his chance of crushing the rebellion and now this idle and gay winter in Philadelphia seemed the last straw. Such bitter things indeed were said of him

that he resigned his commission, and went home, and the supreme command was given to General Clinton.

Now that France had joined with America, Britain was in a very different position than before. She could no longer afford to send out large armies such as Howe had been given to subdue the colonies. For she had to keep troops at home to protect Great Britain from invasion.

She had to send ships and men all over the word, to repel the

attacks of the French on her scattered colonies and possessions.

Clinton therefore was left with only an army of about ten thousand.

And with this force he was expected to conquer the country which

Howe had been unable to conquer with thirty thousand.

Clinton knew that his task was a hard one. He saw that the taking of Philadelphia had been a mistake, and that from a military point of view it was worthless. So he decided at once to abandon Philadelphia, and take his army back to New York. And on the morning of the 18th of June the British marched out. A few days later Congress returned, and the city settled back to its quiet old life once more.

It was no easy task for Clinton to cross New Jersey in grilling summer weather, with a small force, an enormous baggage train, and Washington hanging threateningly about is path, harassing him at every step. That he did accomplish it brought him no little renown as a soldier.

For some time, following the advice of his officers, Washington did not make a general attack on the British. But near the town of Monmouth he saw his chance, and determined to give battle.

General Lee had by this time been exchanged, and was now again with Washington's army as second in command, and for this battle Washington gave him command of an advance party of six thousand men. With him were Anthony Wayne and Lafayette.

On the morning of the battle Lee's division was in a very good position. It seemed as if the British might be surrounded with ease, but when Wayne and Lafayette were about to attack Lee stopped them.

"You do not know British soldiers," he said to Lafayette. "We are certain to be driven back. We must be cautious."

"That may be so, General," replied Lafayette, "but British soldiers have been beaten, and may be so again. At any rate, I should like to try."

But for answer, Lee ordered his men to retreat.

At this Lafayette was both angry and astonished, and he hurriedly sent a message to Washington, telling him that his presence was urgently needed.

The soldiers did not in the least know from what they were retreating, and they soon fell into disorder. Then suddenly Washington appeared among them. He was white to the lips with wrath.

"I desire to know, " he said, in a terrible voice, turning to Lee, "I desire to know, sir, what is the reason—whence arises this disorder and confusion?"

Lee trembled before the awful anger of his chief. He tried to make excuses. Then Washington's fury knew no bounds. He poured forth a torrent of wrath upon Lee till, as one of his officers who heard him said, "the very leaves shook on the trees." Then halting the retreating troops, he formed them for battle once more. Later in the day meeting Lee he sent him to the rear.

Soon the battle was raging fiercely. Some of the hottest fighting took place round the American artillery, which was commanded by General Knox. The guns were doing deadly work, yet moving about coolly amidst the din and smoke of battle, there might be seen a saucy young Irish girl, with a mop of red hair, a freckled face, and flashing eyes. She was the wife of one of the gunners, and so devoted was she to her husband that she followed him even to battle, helping him constantly with his gun. His comrades looked upon her almost as one of the regiment, and called her Captain Molly, and she wore an artilleryman's coat over her short red skirt, so that she might look like a soldier.

Captain Molly was returning from a spring nearby with a bucket full of water, when her husband, who was just about to fire, was killed by a shot from the enemy. The officer in command, having no one to take his place, ordered the gun to be removed.

Molly saw her husband fall, heard the command given, and she dropped her bucket and sprang to the gun.

"Bedad no," she cried. "I'll fire the gun myself, and avenge my man's death."

It was not the first time that Molly had fired a gun. She was with her husband at Fort Clinton, when it was taken by the British. As the enemy scaled the walls the Americans retreated. Her husband dropped his lighted match and fled with the rest. But Captain Molly was in no such haste. She picked up the match, fired the gun, and then ran after the others. Hers was the last gun fired on the American side that day.

Now all the long day of Monmouth she kept her gun in action, firing so skillfully and bravely, that all around were filled with admiration, and news of her deeds was carried through the army. Even Washington heard of them.

Next day he ordered her to be brought to him, and there and then he made her a sergeant, and recommended her for an officer's pension for life. But now that her husband was dead Molly's heart was no longer with the army. Soon after the battle of Monmouth she left it, and a few years later she died.

All through the long summer day of pitiless heat the battle raged. Again and again the British charged. Again and again they were thrown back, and at length were driven across a ravine. Here Washington would have followed, but the sun went down, and darkness put an end to the fight.

Washington, however, was determined to renew the battle next day, and that night the army slept on the field. He himself slept under a tree, sharing a cloak with Lafayette. But the battle was never renewed, for during the night Clinton marched quietly away. When day dawned he was already too far off to pursue, and at length he got safely into New York.

This was the last great battle to be fought in the northern states, and a few weeks later Washington took up his quarters on White Plains. There for nearly three years he stayed, guarding the great waterway of the Hudson, and preventing the British from making any further advance in the north.

Chapter 62 - The Story of a Great Crime

For his strange conduct at the battle of Monmouth General Lee was court-martialled, and deprived of his command for one year. Before the year was out, however, he quarreled with Congress, and was expelled from the army altogether. So his soldiering days were done, and he retired to his farm in Virginia. He was still looked upon as a patriot, even if an incompetent soldier. But many years after his death some letters that he had written to Howe were found. These proved him to have been a traitor to the American cause. For in them he gave the British commander advice as to how the Americans cold best be conquered.

Thus his strange conduct at the battle of Monmouth was explained. He had always given his voice against attacking the British on their way to New York. And doubtless he thought that if Washington had been defeated, he could have proved that it was because his advice had not been followed. If in consequence Washington's command had been taken from him, he would have been made commander-in-chief and cold have easily arranged terms of peace with the British.

But his plans miscarried. He lived to see American victorious, but died before peace was signed.

Lee was a traitor. But he had never been a real American. He had taken the American side merely for his own glory, and had never done anything for it worthy of record. But now a true American, one who had fought brilliantly and gallantly for this country, turned traitor, and blackened his fair name, blotting out his brave deeds for all time.

When the Americans took possession of Philadelphia again Benedict Arnold was still too crippled by his wound to be able for active service. So the command of Philadelphia was given to him.

There he soon got into trouble. He began to live extravagantly, and grew short of money. He quarreled with the state government, and with Congress, was accused of inviting loyalists to his house, of getting money by dishonest acts, and of being in many ways untrue to his duty. He also married a beautiful young loyalist lady, and that was another offence.

Arnold was arrogant and sensitive. He grew restive under all these accusations, and demanded an enquiry. His demand was granted, and a court-martial, although acquitting him of everything except imprudence, sentenced him to be reprimanded by the Commander-in-chief.

Washington loved his high-spirited, gallant officer, and his reprimand was so gentle and kind that it seemed more like praise than blame. But even Washington's gracious words chafed Arnold's proud spirit. He was hurt and angry. He had deserved well of his country, and he was reprimanded. He had fought gallantly, and had been passed over for others. He had been twice wounded in his country's service, and he was rewarded by jealousy, caviling, and a court-martial.

Soon these feelings of bitterness turned to thoughts of treachery, when exactly is not known. But turn they did, and Arnold began in secret to write letters to General Clinton, the British commander-in-chief.

In the summer of 1780, his wound still making him unfit for active service, Arnold was given command of the fortress of West Point, which guarded the approaches to the Hudson Valley. This fortress he agreed to betray into the hands of the enemy, and thus give them command of that valley for which Burgoyne had made such a gallant and hopeless fight. For a long time Arnold carried on a secret correspondence with Major André, a British officer, and at length a meeting between them was arranged. One September night Arnold waited until all was still and dark in the fort. Then stealthily he crept forth and reached in safety a clump of trees on the bank of the Hudson just beyond the American lines. Here he lay waiting.

Soon through the darkness the British warship, the Vulture, crept up the river. Presently Arnold heard the soft splash of oars, and in a few minutes Major André stepped ashore.

For hours the two conspirators talked until at length all details of the plot were settled. But day had dawned before Arnold returned to West Point, and André set out to regain the Vulture, with plans of the fort, and all other particulars hidden in his boots. By this time, however, the batteries on shore had begun to fire upon the ship, and André, finding it impossible to get on board, decided to go back to New York by land.

It was a dangerous journey, but for a little while he crept on unseen. Then suddenly his way was barred by three Americans, and he found himself a prisoner.

"Have you any letters?" asked his captors.

"No," he answered.

They were not satisfied with his answer, and began to search him. But finding nothing they were just about to let him go when one of them said, "I'm not satisfied, boys. His boots must come off."

André made every kind of excuse to prevent them taking off his boots. They were hard to pull off, he said, and it would take a long time. He was already late, so he begged them not to hinder him more. But the more unwilling he was to take off his boots, the more determined were his captors that they should come off.

So they forced him to sit down, his boots were pulled off, and the papers discovered.

Only one of the three Americans could read. He seized the papers and glanced hastily over them.

"By heaven," he cried, "he is a spy!"

It was in vain that André now begged to be set free. First he tried persuasion, and when that failed he tried bribery. But his captors would not listen, and marched him off to headquarters.

Arnold was just about to sit down to breakfast, with some other officers as his guests, Washington being expected every minute to join them, when a letter was handed to him, telling him that a spy had been captured. It was an awful moment for Arnold. If André was captured then all too surely his own treachery was known. He could not stay to face the disgrace. But he made no sign. He calmly folded the letter, and put it in his pocket. Then saying that he had been suddenly called to the fort, he begged his guests to excuse him, and went out, and mounting the horse of the messenger who had brought the letter, he sped away, never staying his flight until he was safe aboard the Vulture.

Very soon after Arnold had escaped Washington arrived. And when the traitorous papers which had been found in André's possession were placed in his hands he was overcome with grief.

"Arnold is a traitor, and has fled to the British," he said. "Whom can we trust now?"

As he spoke the tears ran down his cheeks, bitter tears rung from his noble soul at the thought of this "one more devil's-triumph and sorrow for angels."

The chief sinner had escaped. But he had left his fellow conspirator to pay his debt. For a spy could expect no mercy. André was young, brave, and gay. He had such winning ways with him that even his captors came to love him, and they grieved that such a gay young life must be brought to a sudden and dreadful end. His many friends did their best to save him. But their efforts were all in vain. Nothing could alter the fact that he was a spy caught in the act, and the punishment was death.

So one morning André was led out to die. He begged to shot as a soldier, and not hanged like a felon. But even that was denied him. Calm and brave to the end he met his death.

When Arnold's treachery was known a cry of rage rang through the country. Yet in spite of his foul deed people could not quite forget how nobly he had fought. "Hang him," they cried, "but cut off the leg that was wounded at Saratoga first!"

Arnold, however, was beyond their vengeance, safe in the British lines. There he at once received a commission, and turned his sword against his own country.

Thus a brave man cast his valour in the dust, and made his name a scorn and a by-word. But who shall say that the men who belittled his deeds, and followed him with jealousy and carping, were wholly blameless?

Chapter 63 - A Turning Point in the World's History

After nearly four years' fighting the British had utterly failed to subdue the rebel colonies. They had lost one whole army, had poured out treasures of blood and money, and all they had in return was New York and the coast town of Newport. Besides this they were at war with half Europe. For in 1779 Spain declared war against Britain, more indeed from anger against the British than from any love of the Americans. The following year Holland also declared war against Britain, who thus found herself surrounded by foes.

Still, in spite of all, the British stuck doggedly to their task of conquering the Americans. But as Pitt had told them again and again, it was an impossible task. At length, having failed to make any impression in the north they decided to change the seat of war and attack the weaker colonies in the south.

Here for a time they were more successful. Georgia was overrun, then South Carolina, and Charleston, which had made such a brave defence at the beginning of the war, surrendered to the British, with all its stores of food and ammunition.

Things were going badly for the patriots in the south, and Gates, who was still looked upon as a hero, because Burgoyne had surrendered to him, was sent to take command. Now he had a chance to prove of what stuff he was made. He proved it by being utterly defeated at the battle of Camden.

This defeat was a bitter blow. Never since before the battle of Trenton had the patriot cause seemed so much in danger. But the dark days passed, and once more the Americans began to win instead of lose battles. South Carolina was re-conquered, and Cornwallis, who was commander-in-chief of the British army in the south, retired into Virginia, and occupied Yorktown.

Just at this time Washington learned that a French fleet was sailing for Chesapeake Bay, and he determined to make a grand French-American attack on the British in the south. He made his plans very secretly, and leaving General Heath with four thousand men to guard the Hudson, he marched southwards, moving with such quickness that he had reached the Delaware before Clinton in New York knew what he was about. His army now consisted of two thousand Americans, and four thousand French, and this was the only time throughout the war that French and Americans marched together.

On the 6th of October the siege of Yorktown began. It was soon seen that its defenses were of no use against the seventy heavy siege guns of the allied army, and the surrender of Cornwallis was only a matter of time - for he was caught in a trap, just as Burgoyne had been. He could not escape to the south, for Lafayette barred the way to the Carolinas. He could not escape by sea, for the French and British fleets had fought a battle at the entrance of Chesapeake Bay, in which the British ships had been so badly damaged that they were obliged to sail to New York to refit. He could not escape to the north or the east, for Washington's army shut him in.

Still for a few days the British made a gallant stand. But their ammunition was running short, their defenses were crumbling to bits, and on the 19th of October, almost four years to a day after Burgoyne's surrender to Gates, Cornwallis surrendered to Washington.

Two days later the British soldiers marched out with flags furled, while the bands played a tune called "The World Turned Upside Down." To them indeed the world must have seemed turned upside down, for the all-conquering British had been conquered at last, and that by a nation of farmers unskilled in war. Yet they may have found some comfort in the thought that after all they had been beaten by their equals, by men of their own race.

On either side there was the same grit and endurance, the same love of fair play. But added to that the Americans had fought for a great cause. Their hearts were in it, as the hearts of the British had never been. This was their great advantage. This nerved their arm.

For two years after this Clinton still held New York, but there was no more fighting between the regular armies, and the surrender of Cornwallis may be said to have ended the war. When Lord North heard the news he was distracted with grief. He dashed wildly up and down the room, waving his arms and crying over and over again, "O God, it is all over, it is all over."

As for King George, he would not admit that it was all over, and he swore he would rather give up his crown than acknowledge the States to be free. But at length he, too, had to give way, and the treaty of peace was signed in Paris in November, 1782. This Peace, however, was only a first step, for Europe was still at war, and it was difficult to settle matters. But in September of the following year the real peace was signed, and the United States were acknowledged to be free. By this treaty Florida was given back to Spain, the Mississippi was made the western boundary, and the Great Lakes the northern boundary of the United States.

Thus a new great power came into being, and as an English historian has said, "the world had reached one of the turning points of its history."