CHAPTER VIII – JENNY McCREA AND BENNINGTON

WHILE Burgoyne and his little navy commanded by Captain Lutwidge, broke the boom across the narrows and sailed to Skenesborough, which the Americans evacuated, Fraser and Riedesel pursued St. Clair and his troops and overtook them at Hubbardton, where there was a brisk rear-guard action which may be regarded as drawn, as St. Clair got safely away to Fort Edward. It would have been a success for the British but for the slowness of the Germans; they arrived two hours late, singing psalms, with the exception of Riedesel, who was cursing and swearing at their dilatoriness. Anburey remarks, "In this action I found all manual exercise[1] is but an ornament." Lamb in his *Memoirs of His Own Life* says very much the same thing. "In fighting in the woods the battalion manoeuvring and excellency of exercise were found of little value: to prime, load, fire and charge with the bayonet expeditiously were the chief points worthy of attention." Fraser undoubtedly realized this: the stolid Brunswickers certainly did not. Burgoyne himself was all for the "Bayonotte": in his own words "the onset of Bayonets in the hands of the Valiant is irresistible."

Lord Balcarres, in command of the light infantry, had thirty balls shot through his jacket and trousers, but only had his hip grazed by one of them.The American Colonel Francis was killed. At the same time Lieutenant-Colonel Hill and the 9th Regiment had a spirited action near Fort Anne which resulted in the Americans retreating to Fort Edward, burning Fort Anne before they did so. On July tenth Burgoyne issued a General Order thanking the troops in general and Fraser in particular, and announcing that on the following Sunday "a Feu de joy will be fired with cannon and small arms at Ticonderoga, Crown Point and the camp at Skenesborough."[2]

Harder work lay before the English troops. From Fort George to Fort Edward was only twenty miles, but the way lay through thick forest and over swamps and streams. Schuyler had a thousand men employed cutting down trees so that they lay "every which way" over what rough tracks there were, and all the bridges were destroyed. It finally took Burgoyne's soldiers—pioneers now rather than fighting men—twenty days to cover these twenty miles. Forty bridges had to be constructed, mostly over marsh land; one of these bridges was two miles long. Neilson writing in 1844 said, "Many of the logs of these bridges remain entire even to this day." Fort Edward could only by courtesy be called a fort. Schuyler, Arnold and Lincoln agreed that it should be evacuated, and that the American troops should cross the Hudson and take up a position near Stillwater, thirty, miles north of Albany. By July thirty-first this was done.

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[1] *i.e.*, drill according to the drill-books.

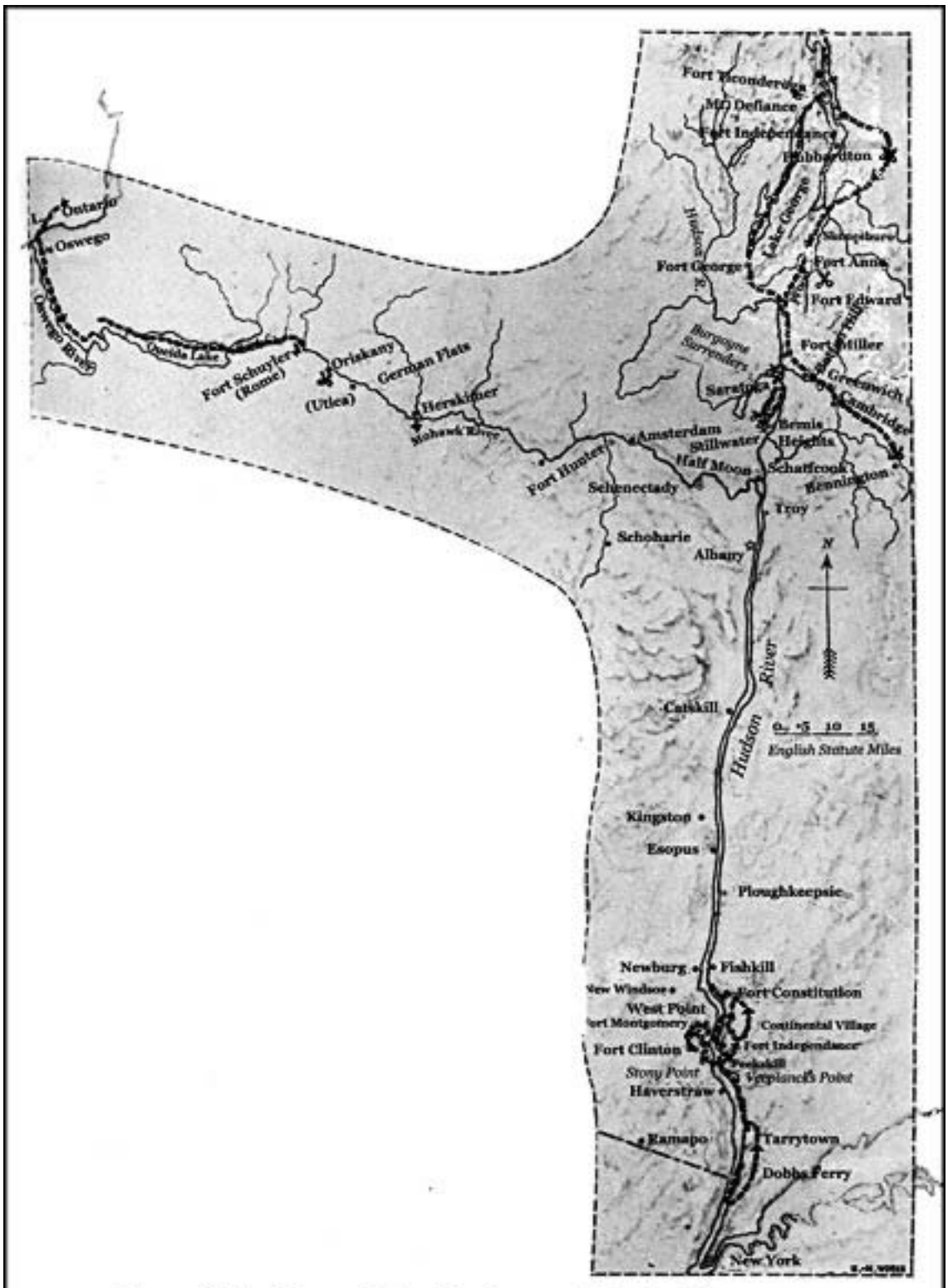
[2] Now Whitehall.

Washington ordered up strong reinforcements.

The question now arises, why did Burgoyne choose this arduous route? He could from Skenesborough have gone back to Ticonderoga, along Lake George to Fort George whence there was a direct road to Fort Edward. Instead of this he laboriously made his way to Fort Anne and Fort Edward through the difficult country already mentioned. His own excuse was that “a retrograde movement” back to Ticonderoga would have depressed his men. The real reason was that Skene (of whom more anon)—Colonel Skene by courtesy—wanted a good road made through his property at the public expense. Skene, next to Germain, was Burgoyne's evil genius.

In his despatch of July eleventh to Germain, Burgoyne says that his “manifesto” has had a great effect (chiefly, it is to be feared, in provoking mirth), but he hints that he is beginning to get uneasy about the Indians: “Your Lordship will have observed I have made no mention of the Indians in the pursuit from Ticonderoga. It is not possible to draw them in many respects from the plunder of that place, and I confidentially acknowledge this is not the only instance in which I have found (them) little more than a name. If, under the management of their conductors, they are indulged, for interested reasons, in all the caprices and humours of spoiled children, like them they grow more unreasonable and importunate upon every new favour; were they left to themselves, enormities too horrid to think of would ensue; guilty and innocent, women and infants, would be a common prey.” He also points out that he was tied down by his instructions: "Your Lordship will pardon me if I a little lament that my orders do not give me the latitude I ventured to propose in my original project for the campaign, to make a real effort instead of a feint upon New England. As things have turned out, were I at liberty to march in force immediately by my left, instead of to my right, I should have little doubt of subduing before winter the province where the rebellion originated.”

On July eleventh Burgoyne also wrote to Carleton asking him to garrison Ticonderoga, a point which does not appear to have been taken into consideration before the campaign began, though Burgoyne had assumed that Canada would supply the troops. In a letter, July second, to Howe, he wrote: “Ticonderoga reduced, I shall leave behind me proper engineers to put it in an impregnable state, and it will be garrisoned from Canada, where all the destined supplies are safely arrived. My force therefore will be left complete for future operations.” But Sir Guy found himself not in a position to do this, so Burgoyne had to leave nine hundred and ten rank and file there which, as he says, left his situation “a little difficult.”



Map of the Line of the Hudson, July-October, 1977

From Avery's "History of the United States"

He was justified in his uneasiness about the Indians. It was at this time that the dreadful tragedy of Miss Jane McCrea was enacted. Briefly, Miss McCrea was engaged to a provincial officer in Burgoyne's army called Jones, and while on her way to the British camp to see her fiancé was killed, if not by, certainly while in the charge of, two Indians. The official version drawn up by Gates in a letter to Burgoyne is as follows:

"That the savages of America should in their warfare mangle and scalp the unhappy prisoners who fall into their hands is neither new nor extraordinary; but that the famous Lieutenant-General Burgoyne, in whom the fine gentleman is united with the soldier and the scholar, should hire the savages of America to scalp Europeans and the descendants of Europeans, nay more, that he should pay a price[1] for each scalp so barbarously taken, is more than will be believed in England until authenticated facts shall in every gazette convince mankind of the truth of this horrid tale. Miss McCrea, a young lady lovely to the sight, of virtuous character and amiable disposition, engaged to be married to an officer in your army, was with other women and children taken out of a house near Fort Edward, carried into the woods, and their scalped and mangled in the most shocking manner. . . . The miserable fate of Miss McCrea was partly aggravated by her being dressed to receive her promised husband; but met her murderers employed by you."[2]

Burgoyne answered this with an indignation which makes his style even more inflated than usual. "I condescend to inform you that I would not be conscious of the acts you presume to impute to me for the whole continent of America, though the wealth of worlds were in its bowels and a paradise on its surface." He then proceeds to give his version of the tragedy.
"Respecting Miss McCrea, her fall wanted not the tragic display you have laboured to give it, to make it as sincerely abhorred and lamented by me, as it can possibly be by the tenderest of her friends. The fact was no premeditated barbarity, on the contrary two chiefs who had brought her off for the purpose of

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[1] Gates, who perhaps had heard that Burgoyne had alluded to him as "that old midwife," called Burgoyne, in conversation, "the polite Macaroni because he paid for scalps." As a friend of mine (Mr. D. C. Mearns) has wittily put it, "Gates resented scalps in his Macaroni" In the eighteenth centum by the way, the Macaroni was what we call a dandy. Sheridan's Sir Benjamin Backbite has a pleasant allusion to them in the *School for Scandal* in his epigram on Lady Betty Curricle's ponies:

Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies.
Other horses are clowns, but these Macaronies.
To give them this title I'm sure can't be wrong,
Their legs are *so* short, and their tails are *so* long.

For the "Macaroni's knapsack" described by Burgoyne see page 208.

[2] Gates was very proud of this letter: he showed it to General Lincoln and to Wilkinson and when they suggested it was rather personal exclaimed, "By God! I don't believe either of you can mend it."

security, not of violence to her person, disputed who should be her guard, and in a fit of savage passion in the one from whose hands she was snatched, the unhappy woman became the victim. Upon the first intelligence of the events, I obliged the Indians to deliver the murderer into my hands, and though to have punished him by our laws and principles of justice would have been perhaps unprecedented, he certainly would have suffered an ignominious death, had I not been convinced by circumstances and observation beyond the possibility of a doubt, that a pardon under the terms I prescribed and they accepted, would be more efficacious than an execution to prevent similar mischiefs."

Burgoyne was attacked not only in America, but at home over this sad affair. In 1779 in the Committee of the House of Commons he was fully vindicated by the Earl of Harrington, who was a member of the expedition as Captain in the 29th Foot. He stated that when the news of the murder of Miss McCrea was received General Burgoyne repaired immediately to the Indian camp, threatened the culprit with death, insisted that he should be given up, "and there were many gentlemen of the army, and I own I was one of the number, who feared that he would put that threat in execution. Motives of policy, I believe, alone prevented him from it; and if he had not pardoned the man, which he did, I believe the total defection of the Indians would have ensued, and the consequences, on their return through Canada, might have been dreadful; not to speak of the weight they would have thrown into the opposite scale, had they gone over to the enemy, which I rather imagine would have been the case." Mr. J. P. Baxter in his invaluable work, *The British Invasion from the North,* proves, it would seem conclusively, that Miss McCrea was not scalped, but met her death when the Indians in whose charge she was, were fired on by a party of Americans who were pursuing them. So her death may be said to have been a pure accident. Poor Jenny McCrea gave rise to other disputes. One poet described her as having "clustering curls of soft blonde hair": another said it was "darker than a raven's wing." One, perhaps both, must have been using poetic license.

This Miss McCrea business was bad enough in all conscience, but worse was to cone, and that was the Battle of Bennington. The real culprit here was the German Colonel Baume, and after him Skene. Burgoyne wanted supplies, Riedesel wanted horses for his dragoons, and Bennington was reported by Skene to be a depôt for horses and supplies in general. Colonel Baume was given by Burgoyne detailed written, supplemented by verbal, instructions. He was sent "to try the affections of the country, to disconcert the councils of the enemy, to mount the Riedesel's dragoons and to obtain large supplies of cattle, horses and carriages." He was told exactly how he was to do this: he was also told "Colonel Skeene [sic] will be with you as much as possible in order to assist you with his advice, to help you to distinguish the good subjects from the

bad, to procure you the best intelligence of the enemy, and to choose those people who are to bring me the accounts of your progress and success." Skene appears to have been a kind of eighteenth century country squire only, if possible, rather more stupid. In the Stopford-Sackville Manuscripts there is a letter from Canada quoted in which it is said of him: "*M. Skeene assura le Général Burgoyne que s'il vouloit lui donner 500 hommes il répondrait de battre les rebelles et de rapporter beaucoup de vivres et surtout des chevaux pour les dragons allemands."* He was a rustic optimist; he was always sending the most hopeful letters to Dartmouth: "The Americans want confidence in their officers and their officers want confidence in them." "The country is coming in fast in reply to Burgoyne's manifesto." To Burgoyne this cheerful marplot remarked: "All you have to do is to scatter plunder on your march and then the rebels will be so busily engaged in collecting[1] it that you need have no fear of any attack." I can only trace one sensible remark of his, to wit, "This wooded country is of such a nature that it is impossible for the General to fix the Rebels in a body": that is to say, these rascally rebels would not come out into the open, line up as in the drill-books and be heavily defeated as in the text-books. Skene adds the ominous words, "Therefore the duty must be done by detachment." It is hardly necessary to add that when you have an army strictly limited in numbers opposed to an army growing in numbers daily, the more you send out detachments, the more you are asking for disaster.

Baume set out from Fort Anne with about five hundred men, mostly Germans. His rate of progress was slow, and no wonder. Burgoyne's British soldiers each carried a knapsack, a blanket, a haversack, a canteen for water, a hatchet and part of his kit: with his musket and sixty rounds of ammunition all this weighed about sixty pounds. The Germans were in even worse case. Each Brunswick dragoon wore huge jack-boots, stiff leather breeches, huge gauntlets and a hat heavy with feathers. From the back of his head protruded a long peruke. By his side trailed a broadsword weighing about twelve pounds, over his shoulder was slung a heavy carbine, and he carried his quotum of flour with which to make bread. The Americans were in their shirt-sleeves. Stedman goes so far as to say of Riedesel's dragoons, "Their very hats and swords weighed very nearly as much as the whole equipment of one of our [British] soldiers," an exaggeration of course, for it is impossible to conceive a hat weighing forty-eight pounds—even Dame Fashion has not yet dared to go to such lengths, or rather weights. *Il faut souffrir pour être belle,* but not to this extent.

The credit of the American victory at Bennington, then famous for its Catamount Tavern where the Green Mountain Boys would hold convivial meetings, belongs to Stark, whom we have already met on Breed's Hill. On his

[1] In the early days of the European War the same thing was said of the German Uhlans in Belgium

way to Bennington he received orders from Schuyler to take his men to the left bank of the Hudson. Sore (like Arnold) at having been passed over for promotion, he politely declined to do so, and was censured. A few weeks later he was thanked by Congress and made a brigadier-general in the American Army. He had with him in all about eighteen hundred men. On August fourteenth[1] Baume and his troops, plunging heavily through the woods, accompanied by two field guns, came into touch with Stark's men. The poor simple German thought at first, thanks to the idiot Skene, that they were friends come to join him. When they opened fire, even Skene perceived that they were not friends. Baume entrenched himself upon a hill and sent back word to Burgoyne. Breymann, another German officer with more Germans, was sent to reinforce Baume. He also took two field guns with him; his rate of marching was half-a-mile an hour and, in addition, his guide lost his way. On the fifteenth it rained hard[2] and neither side made a move, except Breymann, if half-a-mile an hour can be called movement. On the sixteenth, a bright clear day, Stark attacked Baume in front and rear. As he gave the word to advance, he added the historic words "My men, there are your enemies the red-coats and the tories : we must conquer them or to-night Molly Stark will be a widow." It is painful to have to add that some iconoclast has coldly pointed out that Mrs. Stark was really called Bessie : perhaps Molly was a pet name, or perhaps he was thinking of somebody else; in any case, in the heat of action such mistakes are comprehensible. (Another iconoclast, by the way, has tried to argue that the dying Nelson never said "Kiss me, Hardy," but "Kismet, Hardy.") There were certainly two famous Mollies (delightful name!) in North American history of this day. One was Molly Brant, the Mohawk maiden whom Sir William Johnson married when he settled among the tribe; the other was Molly Pitcher, better known as Captain Molly. She was at Fort Clinton when it was captured by the British in October, 1777, and fired the last gun on the American side. She was also at Monmouth, and Washington, for her bravery, made her a sergeant. Later she took up her abode near West Point. It is rather painful to read that in April, 1787, an official letter was sent to Major-General Henry Knox, Secretary of War:

> "Sir,
>
> "I am informed by the woman that takes care of Captain Molly that she is much in want of Shifts. If you think proper to order three or four, I shall be glad."

There have been similar warriors in the British Army, notably Old

[1] Burgoyne seems to have been confident of success for on this very day he wrote to Baume a letter (which fell into Schuyler's hands) requesting him to send along all captured cattle, wheat and flour that could be spared.

[2] At this date there was always difficulty with the powder and cartouch. boxes in heavy rain.

Mother Ross, that mistress of "maroding" (as she called marauding), Hannah Shell, and the quarrelsome Doctor James Barry who fought a duel at the Cape, rose to be Inspector-General of Army Hospitals, and who after his, or rather her, death in 1865 proved to be a woman.

To return to Bennington, the Indians and Canadians vamoosed, the Germans put up a brave fight until their ammunition ran out, Colonel Baume was killed, and Colonel Breymann was too late. "Our People," Stark reported, "behaved with the greatest spirit and bravery imaginable: had they been Alexanders or Charleses of Sweden they could not have behaved better; the action lasted two hours at the expiration of which time we forced their breastwork at the muzzle of their guns, took two pieces of brass cannon, with a number of prisoners." Stark said "it was the hottest action I ever saw in my life" and he had been on the Plains of Abraham with Wolfe and, as we have seen, at Bunker Hill.

New Hampshire was delighted, and justly so. The General Assembly formally thanked Stark and "resolved unanimously, that the Board of War of this State be, and hereby are, directed in the name of this Court, to present to the Honourable Brigadier General Stark, a compleat suit of Clothes becoming his Rank, together with a piece of linen; As a Testimony of the high sense this Court have of the great and important Services rendered by that brave Officer to the United States of America." Hadden, who is the authority for this curious statement, adds that among the British "it was remarked upon the above reward That either the General was Stark naked or Congress stark mad." Armies are always full of rumors ("shaves" as they used to call them) and stories, and it was said at the time that the real reason of Breymann's slowness was that he and Baume were not on the best of terms, and that he was heard to say when he heard the firing, "We will let them get warm before we reach them," and that he halted to let his men "cook their kettles." Such stories are always interesting—gossip invariably is—but as a rule they must just be taken as stories.

Most battles inspire poets. Bennington inspired several, including William Cullen Bryant. But it is doubtful if bard was ever worse inspired than the gentleman who wrote

Each soldier there had left at home
A sweetheart, wife, or mother,
A blooming sister, or perchance,
A fair-haired, blue-eyed brother.

But perhaps I am prejudiced and bilious and hypercritical owing to the fact that Bennington was a very serious setback for John Burgoyne. Horace

Walpole flippantly said of it, “General Burgoyne has had bad sport in the woods.” In the Knox Manuscripts there is a story told of Thurlow, then attorney-general, who asked what was Burgoyne's reason for sending Germans to Bennington instead of English, “for that seemed the first cause of his capture.” Knox explained that “the Brunswick troops happening to be on Burgoyne’s left as the Hessians [at Trenton] were upon Howe’s, they were of course the corps to be detached on that side.” The gruff old lawyer, missing the military point by miles, exclaimed, “So because one damned blockhead did a foolish thing the other blockhead must follow his example.” Skene, the intelligence (!) officer and interpreter, must take most of the blame for this defeat. “He acted like a — showing his powers to every man who pretended to be friendly, among which number were many of the rebel soldiers, who, to remove doubts, took the oaths of allegiance and were told to wear white papers in their hats, that being the distinguishing mark of friends; to crown the folly of this farce they were permitted immediately to return, in fact to join their respective corps in the rebel army.” (Hadden.)

Burgoyne, though, like the good fellow he was, he does not mention Skene by name, points pretty clearly to him in his despatch of August twentieth:

“It appears that Lieutenant-Colonel Baume, not having been able to complete his march undiscovered, was joined at a place called Sancoix Mills, about four miles short of Bennington, by many people professing themselves to be Loyalists. A provincial gentleman of confidence who had been sent with the detachment, as knowing the country and the character of the inhabitants, was so incautious as to leave at liberty such as took the oath of allegiance.

“His credulity and their profligacy caused the first misfortune. Colonel Baume was induced to proceed without sufficient knowledge of the ground. His design was betrayed; the men who had taken the oaths were the first to fire upon him; he was attacked on all sides. He shewed great personal courage, but was overpowered by numbers.”

Burgoyne also issued a General Order dealing with the Bennington disaster: the failure was not due to any want of gallantry on the part of either officers or men but to “the credulity of those who managed the department of intelligence and who suffered great numbers of the rebel soldiers to pass and repass and perhaps count the numbers of the detachment, and upon an ill-founded confidence induced Lieut-Col. Baume to advance too far to have a secure retreat.” A secondary cause was Breymann's slowness: he and his men, thanks to bad weather, bad roads, tired horses and other impediments “could not reach twenty-four miles from eight in the morning of the 15th, to four in the afternoon of the 16th.”

In his confidential letter of the same date as his despatch (August twentieth) to Lord George Germain, Burgoyne is more explicit. It is obvious that he is getting uneasy. Fort Stanwix still holds out, the Loyalists are not rising as was expected, he has four hundred with him, not half of them armed, and the rest "trimmers" waiting to see what would happen. "Wherever the King's forces point, militia to the amount of three or four thousand assemble in twenty-four hours, they bring with them their subsistence, etc., and, the alarm over, they return to their farms. The Hampshire Grants in particular, a country unpeopled and almost unknown in the last war, now abounds in the most active and most rebellious race of the continent, and hangs like a gathering storm upon my left." A fine phrase, this last, and John Burgoyne the poet must have smacked the thigh of John Burgoyne the general as he penned it. The rest of this letter is very significant. He has only received one letter from Howe, with the astonishing news that "his intention is for Pennsylvania,"* and that Sir Henry Clinton remained in command at New York and would act as occurrences might direct. Poor Burgoyne goes on:

"No operation, my Lord, has yet been undertaken in my favour: the highlands have not even been threatened. The consequence is that Putnam has detached two brigades to Mr. Gates, who is now strongly posted near the mouth of the Mohawk River, with an army superior to mine in troops of the Congress, and as many militia as he pleases. Had I a latitude in my orders, I should think it my duty to wait in this position, or perhaps as far back as Fort Edward, where my communication with Lake George would be perfectly secure, till some event happened to assist my movement forward, but my orders being positive to 'force a junction with Sir William Howe' I apprehend I am not at liberty to remain inactive longer than shall be necessary to collect twenty-five days provisions and to receive the reinforcement of the additional companies, the German drafts and recruits now (and unfortunately only now) on Lake Champlain."

This puts Burgoyne's view of the situation quite clearly: he had received definite orders and he thought it his duty not to deviate in any way from them. He had not, he continues, foreseen that he was to be "left to pursue my way through such a tract of country and hosts of foes, without any co-operation from New York."

The army was as astonished as Burgoyne. Everybody knew the object of the expedition was to join Sir William Howe at Albany. Anburey writes: "You can easily conceive the astonishment it occasioned when we were informed that

*This reminds one of the old song, "I'm off to Philadelphia in the morning." Howe captured Philadelphia. But Franklin expressed it much better: he said Philadelphia captured Howe.

General Howe's army had gone to Philadelphia, and it was the more increased as we could not form to ourselves any idea how such a step would facilitate or effect a junction."

The ineffable Germain comments (Knox Manuscripts) on Burgoyne's letter: "I am sorry to find that Burgoyne's campaign is so totally ruined: the best wish I can form is that he may have returned to Ticonderoga without much loss. His private letter to me, 20th of August, contains nothing material about the affair near Bennington, but what alarms me most is that he thinks his orders to go to Albany to force a junction with Sir William Howe are so positive that he must attempt at all events the obeying them." This scoundrel was evidently already preparing his defense. He knew that if it came to a plain Yes or No he could not say—or rather he could not prove, for he would have told any lie—that Howe had been instructed to go north to meet Burgoyne : so, in place of this, he is evidently going to plead, if necessary, that Burgoyne had totally misunderstood his instructions, and was given a free hand, or a "latitude" as the General says himself, to retreat toward Canada. Meanwhile where was the lethargic Howe? Why, gone, not north to join forces with Burgoyne, but south, away from him.

We know that, thanks to Germain, Howe never got instructions to go north from New York to meet Burgoyne, but why did he go south? It was not characteristic of him to go anywhere, except calling on ladies. His lethargy is well summed up by a contemporary rhymester who addressed him:

Awake, awake, Sir Billy,
There's forage in the plain.
Ah ! leave your little filly,
And open the campaign.
Heed not a woman's prattle
Which tickles in the ear,
But give the word for battle
And grasp the warlike spear.

He was fond of fillies. In Boston he "found a Cleopatra." Judge Jones, the Loyalist historian, wrote of him: "Nothing seemed to engross his attentions but the faro table, the playhouse, the dancing assembly and, last but not least, Mrs. Loring." Howe met her first in 1775. She went a-soldiering with him and was known in the British Army as "the Sultana." Like Howe (and Burgoyne) she was a confirmed gambler, and thought nothing of losing three hundred guineas at a sitting. This "illustrious courtesan," as the judge calls her, had a husband Joshua, who was made a Commissary of Prisoners, as a slight token of Sir William's esteem for him—and his wife. Joshua was in fact a *mari complaisant.* (According to a document in the American Manuscripts in the

Royal Institution it was Loring who in February, 1782, signed the proposal for the exchange of Burgoyne for an equivalent of one thousand and forty seven rank and file. At the same time Brigadier-General O'Hara was valued at two hundred rank and file. Which is another injustice to Ireland, another blow at O'Hara.) In New York also Howe missed a chance. He had a lingering lunch with a beauty, Mrs. Lindley Murray, who, with "crafty hospitality" entertained him with pleasant and, in view of her name, one can assume highly grammatical, chat, while Putnam got away, I had almost added "with it." It was said at the time that "Mrs. Murray"—and her Madeira—" saved the American Army."

Why then did this lethargic, pleasure-loving General go south? Well, this remained a mystery until 1860, when Mr. G. H. Moore brought out in New York an extraordinarily interesting book, *The Treason of Charles Lee.* This contains a reproduction of a document, endorsed by Henry Strachey, then Secretary to the Royal Commissioners, the brothers Howe, "Mr. Lee's Plan-March 29, 1777." Lee, then a prisoner in British hands, thought it consistent with his honor—it was certainly consistent with his dishonour—to advise Howe what steps he should take to defeat the Americans with whom this double-traitor had joined forces. He writes that he thinks himself "not only justifiable but bound in conscience to furnish all the lights I can to enable 'em to bring matters to a conclusion in the most compendious manner and consequently the least expensive* to both Parties." He goes on to suggest that Howe should turn his attention southward and send troops up the "Patomac" to occupy Alexandria and up "Chesepeak" Bay to seize Annapolis. He should then issue proclamations of pardon "and I will answer for it with my life that all the Inhabitants of that great tract southward of the Patapisco and lying betwixt the Patomac and Chesepeak Bay, and those on the eastern Shore of Maryland will immediately lay down their arms."

Mr. Manners Chichester, the author of the life of Charles Lee in the *Dictionary of National Biography,* seems dubious as to the authenticity of this document. But there can be no question about it. The Sixth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts published in 1877 says: "During the last illness of the late Sir Henry Strachey (the second baronet) some of the most important of the first Sir Henry Strachey's American documents were withdrawn from the library of Sutton Court, conveyed to the United States and there sold. One of the writings thus taken from a muniment room in Somersetshire was that remarkable document which soon after it had come by purchase into the possession of Mr. G. H. Moore, an American scholar, was published in facsimile at New York."

*Characteristic of him, for gold was his god

Howe in his *Narrative* says: "I therefore agreed with the Admiral to go up Chesapeak Bay, a plan which had been preconcerted"—he does not say by whom. Howe does not seem to have worried much about Burgoyne. He wrote casually, July thirtieth, to Sir Henry Clinton: "If you can make any diversion in favour of General Burgoyne's approaching Albany, with security to King's-Bridge, I need not point out the utility of such a measure." He had certainly not received, as we know, any instructions to join Burgoyne, but when, after he returned home, he was asked why he did not do so on his own initiative, his answer was very feeble:

"Would not my enemies have insinuated that, alarmed at the rapid success which the honourable General [Burgoyne] had a right to expect when Ticonderoga fell, I had enviously grasped a share of that merit which would otherwise have been all his own? And let me add, would not Ministers have told you, as they truly might, that I had acted without any orders or instructions from them; that General Burgoyne was directed to force his own way to Albany, and that they had put under his command troops sufficient to effect the march? Would they not have referred you to the original and settled plan of that expedition (which is amongst the papers on your table*) to prove that no assistance from me was suggested? And would they not readily have impressed this House with the conclusion that, if any doubt could have arisen in-their minds of the success of such a well-digested plan, they should, from the beginning, have made me a party to it, and have given me explicit instructions to act accordingly?"

All this, of course, must have been most unpleasant for Germain, and must have made him wish that he had never heard of Sussex, but it does not clear Howe of the charge of lack of intelligence. He had shown great, almost suspicious lack of it when he evacuated Boston and left an enormous quantity of military stores behind him. He was extraordinarily indolent. In the early stages of the war Washington was called Fabius Cunctator, but if ever there was an Arch Cunctator it was Howe. Some writers have thought that he was unfaithful to his trust, but this is difficult to prove. He and his brother were commissioners to bring about peace if possible: it is difficult to fight with a sword in one hand, an olive-branch in the other. He certainly does not seem to have been enthusiastic in the cause for which he was fighting. Save when on the actual battle-field, he had rather less energy than a slug. Lee sums him up admirably: "He shut his eyes, fought his battles, drunk his bottle, had his little whore, received his orders from North and Germain, one more absurd than the other, shut his eyes and fought again." As regards his move

*_i.e._, in the House of Commons

southward the truth undoubtedly was that, like other people,* he had been impressed by Charles Lee and therefore followed his suggestion. The army in general was stupefied by Howe's move. Sir Henry Clinton wrote: "I owe it to truth to say there was not I believe a man in the army except Lord Cornwallis and General Grant who did not reprobate the movement to the southward and see the necessity of a co-operation with General Burgoyne." William Knox (in the American Department) wrote ,(Knox Manuscripts) : "People here are greatly puzzled by General Howe's conduct." He quotes the casual Germain as saying: "I am sorry the Canada army will be disappointed in the junction they expect with Sir William Howe, but the more honour for Burgoyne if he does the business without any assistance from New York." Knox also quotes a certain Henry White: "The expedition to Chesapeak Bay is the real occasion of all the mischief that has happened: had it been left to the Congress they could not have planned a more destructive measure to the King's affairs; and it was foreseen and foretold by every man of sense who was well acquainted with the country. This unaccountable movement is well deserving a national enquiry."

Anburey very shrewdly remarks: "I am too much afraid that those at the head of affairs too implicitly credited every report and are continually led away by the false information of men who are interested in the deception and are profiting by the common calamities of England and America." He also says that a Major Browne, who had been on Washington's staff, told him, when a prisoner, that when Washington was informed that Howe had gone to the Chesapeak, "he did not believe it: he dreaded nothing so much as General Howe's army going up the North River." Charles Lee, in fact, traitor though he was to America, did her unintentionally a good turn. Anburey's last comment (November, 1777) on this affair is: "That some great error has been committed, either unintentional or designed, must be evident to everyone—where to fix it, is impossible to say. But time, that great discloser of secrets will no doubt reveal this." He was right. Time—and Mr. G. H. Moore—did reveal it, in 1860, at New York, the very place where "Mr. Lee's Plan" was drawn up. Lee's mainspring seems to have been jealousy of Washington. When he was taken prisoner by Colonel Harcourt he had just begun a letter: "My dear Gates: *Entre nous* a certain great man is most damnably deficient." The best that can be said for him is that he saw that the Americans would make good soldiers, and that the British would have to forget a lot when they came to fight in the forests of North America. "It is very possible for men to be clothed in red, to be expert in all the tricks of the parade, to call themselves regular troops and yet, by attaching themselves principally or solely to the tinsel and show of war, to be totally unfit for real

*For example, Washington, who offered to exchange six field officers for Lee.

service. If they can acquit themselves tolerably in the puerile reviews exhibited for the amusement of royal masters and misses in Hyde Park or Wimbledon Common it is sufficient."

Mercy Warren, *née* Otis, wife of James Warren, summed Lee up well: "Without religion or country, principle or attachment, gold was his deity and liberty the idol of his fancy; he hoarded the former without taste for its enjoyment, and worshipped the latter as the patroness of licentiousness rather than the protectress of virtue." The best that can be said for him is that he had an amusing and vitriolic pen.* After his court-martial he had a war of words with a Member of Congress, Mr. William Henry Drayton. One can not but smile when one reads in one of his letters to this gentleman: "You tell me the Americans are the most merciful people on the face of the earth: I think so too, and the strongest instance of it is that they did not long ago hang you up." But savage humor does not excuse treachery, so let us leave Charles Lee. Briefly, he double-crossed his native land and also the land of his adoption.

It should be added that at the time Howe's movements were put down by some to jealousy. In the Dartmouth Manuscripts an anonymous correspondent is quoted as saying: "Howe's conduct since he has had command of the army has been a heap of blunders and ridiculous delays: he has always been jealous of the superior military capacity of Burgoyne and Clinton, and has made a sacrifice of the former by disabling the latter from making any diversion in his favour, having left him barely enough troops to defend New York and Staten Island."

This can not be substantiated. Howe's mind was far too torpid to be moved by jealousy. He lacked ideas. Lee gave him one, and he jumped at it. His lethargy continued when he proceeded to put Lee's plan into execution. He embarked his troops at New York on July, fifth; kept them in transports till the twenty-third; reached the entrance of Delaware Bay on the thirtieth; and beat down the coast and up Chesapeake Bay until August twenty-third. Britannia has rarely ruled the waves in so leisurely a manner; she should have been represented carrying, not a trident, but a fan on this particular expedition.

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*The only possible argument in favor of the idiotic theory that he was Junius.