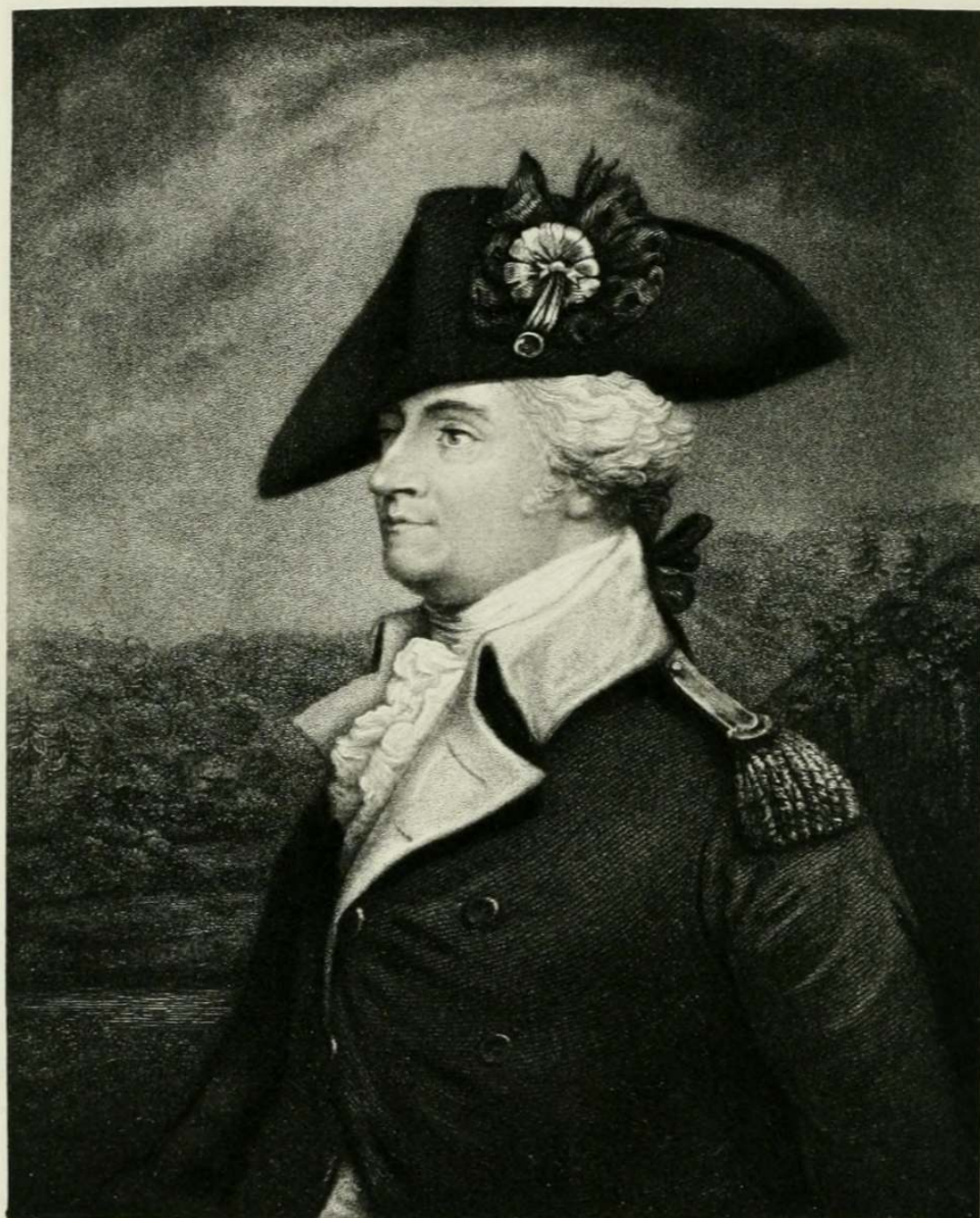




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THE STORMING OF STONY POINT



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THE
STORMING
OF
STONY POINT
ON THE HUDSON

MIDNIGHT, JULY 15, 1779

ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE LIGHT OF UNPUBLISHED
DOCUMENTS

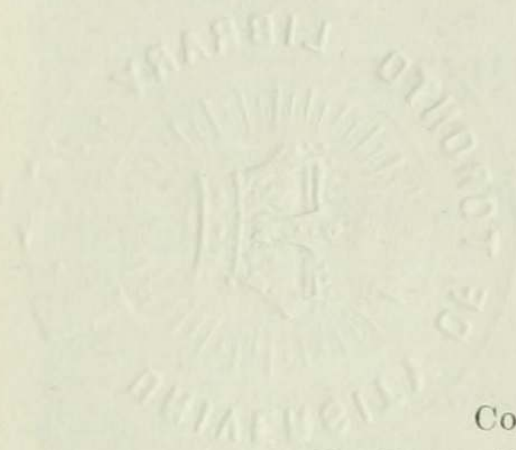
BY

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PREFACE.

THE Storming of Stony Point is more or less vaguely recalled as one of the cleverest exploits of the Revolutionary War. There is no doubt as to what men thought of it at the time. To one it was "the finest stroke that has been struck this war." Another saw in it "a second Trenton," a comparison that revived, next to Saratoga, the happiest turn in the struggle. Another pardonably regarded it as quite equal to "Caesar's Veni, Vidi, Vici." "Among the most brilliant assaults I am acquainted with in history," wrote General Charles Lee, who had missed the chance of having something of the same sort said of his own tactics at Monmouth the year before. The congratulatory messages and letters that passed between Congress, the camp, State authorities and public men, excited wide-spread rejoicing, which would have been still deeper could the effect of the defeat upon the enemy have been fully measured. No one appreciated the affair more thoroughly than Washington, who had worked out the plan in detail for Wayne to execute, and who on the following day rode down to the scene to express his thanks in person to his victorious troops.

It was more than an exploit. There was more in the event than its surprising completeness or the immediate disturbing effect which a blow of this kind would naturally have upon the operations of a campaign. It proved to be decisive for the year, which at that stage of the contest meant much for the American cause. How it affected the general morale on both sides may appear from the story itself.

The inducement to go over the ground again lies in the new material which seems to justify it. For the first time we get at the official correspondence on the other side which is exceptionally interesting and historically important. What the English King, his War Minister, their Commander in America, officers of rank and opposition fault-finders had to say about the situation and how they failed to win success and took defeat, we have never satisfactorily known. With these unearthed contributions the true perspective comes out.

The documents in question, with so many others, have been lying these hundred years or more in the Public Record Office, London, or in private hands or in society collections—the usual wells from which to draw. They are not voluminous, perhaps fortunately, but most of them will be found to the point. How England tried in vain to offset the French alliance, how Spain came into the contest, how the Ministry kept laying plans to re-establish “legal government” in the Colonies,

how Sir Henry Clinton proposed to handle "Mr. Washington," how the latter declined to be handled, what George Third thought of matters, how he felt over the Stony Point "misfortune," and where some officials, having inside knowledge of things, put the blame for England's poor showing down to date—on these and minor points there is more light. The letters and papers bearing upon them are included in the first part of the Appendix, and some in the text of the present work.

As for American authorities we have to depend, first of all, on Washington's correspondence, especially Sparks' edition; but President Sparks, in addition, possessed copies of numerous valuable manuscripts, home and foreign, which he never utilized. This collection, now deposited in the Library of Harvard University, the writer examined and freely used some years ago. At Yale University is President Stiles' unique diary of the Revolution, which should see the light in printed form some day, and from its pages we give the sketch of Stony Point bearing Baron Steuben's explanations of it. The late Mr. Henry B. Dawson's monograph, "The Assault on Stony Point," is of high value as containing so much from General Wayne's correspondence, which is preserved in the Library of the Pennsylvania Historical Society. With this should be mentioned the "Life of Wayne," by the late Professor Charles J. Stille, of Philadelphia. Governor Clinton's papers at

Albany have also been consulted. The map of the scene of action showing especially the route taken by the storming column, has been compiled mainly from the manuscript surveys of Washington's topographer, Thomas Erskine, F. R. S., in possession of the New York Historical Society. The source of other documents is given in the Appendix.

It was with a happy purpose that a number of gentlemen recently organized a "Society for the Preservation of Scenic and Historic Places and Objects in New York"; and they are to be congratulated on having persuaded the State to purchase the battle-ground of Stony Point. This tract of some thirty acres, lying between the railroad cut on the west and the Government lighthouse property at the east end, includes the site of nearly all the British works, and the field of the actual fighting. When laid out as a public park, it is to be hoped that its rugged features will remain untouched and that no concessions will be made to the demands of the modern picnic. The ground could be marked, and very accurately, with tablets and memorials. Indeed, there are few spots on the Hudson where a noble Revolutionary monument could stand more appropriately or with more imposing effect. The national monument at Yorktown, Virginia, is the grandest as yet erected to commemorate that period, but unfortunately the famous field is off the line of travel and to-day is all but forgotten. Not even a "pilgrimage" honors

it. Almost as isolated are the handsome shaft at Saratoga and the stirring sculptures at Monmouth. Bunker Hill and Trenton are more fortunate. What was thought of the Hudson Highlands it is hardly necessary to repeat—"the key to the continent," both sides regarded them—but on the whole course of the river, with its beauty and associations attracting multitudes, there is no mark to serve as a reminder. A lofty column on Stony Point dedicated to the men of the Revolution, whose qualities of strength and vigilance the position itself so strikingly typifies, would be very much to the purpose.

New York City, September 1st, 1899.

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THE STORMING OF STONY POINT

I

THE GENERAL SITUATION IN 1779—EUROPE IN THE CONTEST

THAT middle year of the American Revolution, 'Seventeen Seventy-nine—a year without a pitched battle or a stirring campaign—was in a certain sense the determining point of the struggle. The sphere of the war had so far enlarged that it was no longer merely the question of a rebellion. It was the year when the Continental powers had come to understand their own interests in the issue, and following the previous example of one of their number, either joined sides, or unwilling as most of them were to precipitate a general conflict, held entirely aloof. It was the year when England for the first time practically stood alone. That the sympathies of Europe were not with her was plainly shown in the following spring, when the "Armed Neutrality" was promulgated from St. Petersburg.

Events and the jealousies of Courts had been leading up to this situation. The treaty of 1778 between France and the United States, the char-

acteristic attitude of Spain, the insistence of Russia and Prussia and Holland, and some of their neighbors, on neutral and maritime rights, indicated a trend which had passed quite beyond the ability of the British Ministers to check or divert. They were now looking as anxiously across the Channel as before they had been looking confidently across the Atlantic. The trouble began with the French alliance. Nothing disturbed and irritated the mother country more than what she denounced as an unnatural and ungrateful partnership of an English-born people with a common and hated rival. England's disgust was a compound, in uncertain proportions, of wounded feelings, indignation and dejection, together with an ill-concealed consciousness that her American policy was proving a failure and her diplomatic management had been none of the shrewdest.

The first impulse of a spirited nation would have been to redouble energies and strike down the alliance. This had been done most effectively in the previous war. In the present case the Englishman's inclination was modified by the state of home politics and his deepened resentment towards his French neighbor. Whatever difference of opinion existed as to the treatment the rebels deserved in the new turn of affairs there was none as to the deserts due the traditional enemy; for, under the disguise of an alliance, was not France interfering in a domestic concern, secretly and then openly abetting rebellion and plotting

deeply for the eventual recovery, through the rebels themselves, of the valuable region she had but recently lost in America? Was she not maliciously bent on Great Britain's ruin? On this aspect of the matter, English Whig and Tory thought and felt alike.

What to do in the emergency was about as grave a question as that presented in 1775. In that year it was a question whether to conciliate or coerce the Americans. Great Britain resolved on coercion with the result that after three years of much fighting and heavy expenditures no headway had been made. Chatham's early warning that "You cannot conquer America," which the Tory majority laughed at as a bit of passionate declamation, seemed in 1778 to have had a touch of prophecy about it. And yet in the light of her growing military reputation, her expansion of territory, the assumed relation of colonists to their mother country, and her position in Europe, the England of 1775 could do nothing less than follow what might be called her historical sense, and resolve to suppress the revolt. She accepted her judgment as the will and warning of experience and ignored theories and experiments. The policy of retraction and conciliation, the offer of concessions and good-will as urged by Chatham and Burke, while ethically sound and winning, struck the average mind as promising less success, and certainly greater loss of national dignity, than the policy of force. All Englishmen wished to

keep the colonies safely within the empire by one means or another. Concessions at the outset meant repeated demands and concessions thereafter with the final surrender of nearly all authority on the part of the general government. At a certain point the use of force would be inevitable, and Tory instinct believed in applying it first as last.

The French alliance was met just before formal announcement of it to Great Britain. It was met, not with a change of Ministry and a set determination to face it as it stood, but with an unexpected, and as the outcome emphasized, a humiliating change of policy. What occurred was a veritable surrender by the government into the camp of the Whigs, by its acceptance of their original program of concessions for America. Its authors looked upon it as a necessary *coup d'etat* which might go far towards solving the war question, and incidentally strengthen their party's grip upon the country. Lord North, the head of the Ministry, was at this moment the most unpopular and best abused Englishman in public life. He was held responsible for the wretched campaigns in the colonies, and his continuance in office was freely criticised and denounced as well by many of his friends as by the opposition. King George retained him, and at times against North's own inclination, as the only available and most pliable agent to carry out what he conceived to be the true wish of the great majority of his people,

namely, the vigorous prosecution of the American war. While that wish was interpreted mainly by the heavy government vote in the Commons, by resolutions of cities and counties, by the landed interests and through the clergy, representing only so much loyal Toryism, there can be little doubt that the nation as such was with him and still less that the King, with all his stubbornness and limited capacities, was honestly and profoundly impressed with his duty to his subjects and his kingdom. His published correspondence and his general conduct shows that. What he privately wrote to North midway in the contest, June, 1779, reflected his uniform sentiment: "I should think it the greatest injustice," he said, "if it could be supposed that any man in my dominions more ardently desired the restoration of peace and solid happiness in every part than I do; there is no personal sacrifice I could not readily yield for so desirable an object; but at the same time no inclination to get out of the present difficulties, which certainly keep my mind very far from a state of ease, can induce me to enter into what I look upon as the destruction of the Empire."¹ The King's mistake—political crime, his critics have called it—was in doggedly keeping about him a weak, vain and generally unsuccessful Cabinet, without gratifying the country or his own party with a change, and the trial of

¹ There is something impressive about this letter. See Document No. I in the Appendix.

new and abler men. He seems to have feared prominent Tories, whom he might be unable to control, as much as he hated the leading Whigs. He was a coercionist, and no Minister who was not as much a one as himself could meet with favor or remain in power. But like his advisers he failed to understand the actual situation; he was blinded to its weightier demands, abroad and at home—blinded by his never-failing faith in success, his determination, prejudices and narrow horizon.

To thwart France was the matter in hand. On the 17th of February, 1778, Lord North, anticipating news of the alliance, sprung his new plan on the House of Commons, confounding the Tories no less than the Whigs. It was a motion, in brief, to repeal all the obnoxious tax measures which had led to the war and practically concede everything America had demanded save independence. If the colonists would but renounce the French alliance and return to the old fold with larger and assured privileges, Great Britain would immediately withdraw her armies and close the struggle. The bill further provided that commissioners should be appointed to proceed to America and negotiate a peace on these terms. "Concession and reconciliation" coming from a Ministry with an iron-clad record was the surprise of the hour; but the motion went through with little opposition—the Tories shrinkingly supporting their leaders and the Whigs disarmed by the govern-

ment's adoption of their own policy. Of course, the scheme was transparent and plausible—*pacify America and then fight France.*

Had that early and constant friend of the colonists, the noble Earl of Chatham, survived the anxieties and excitement of the time it is possible that he might have reappeared in the councils of the government and helped extricate England from her difficulties. Lord North wished to retire, and who but Chatham was the man to carry out what was originally Chatham's policy? But the King had no love for him, and would only consent to his holding a second place in the new proposed coalition Ministry, a position the Earl would not accept. Events, however, may have forced the King to put him at the head. As Chatham was opposed to granting independence to America, reconciliation could not have been effected under then existing conditions. So far as his contemporaries—among them his political ally, Lord Shelburne—could gather from his conversations, "his idea was to withdraw the English troops from all the continent of America, except a few strongly fortified and easily held positions on the coast, and then to concentrate all the naval and military resources of his country on the struggle with France. He would have repealed at one stroke all the vexatious legislation which had estranged England from her colonies, and he would have trusted to those common ties of race, religion and language, on which Shelburne had

insisted, to make it possible to come to terms. The task of Chatham would in any case have taxed the highest resources of his genius, and it is more than probable that his health and strength would have given way under the effort."¹ In other words, this statesman seems to have represented the views of certain Whigs who would have let the colonists go for the time being, and then, after crushing France and forcing her to annul the American treaty, invited them in their dilemma to return to their former allegiance, and enjoy all the rights and immunities they desired. Their plan was the reverse of North's, namely, first defeat France and then pacify America. There were difficulties in the way of both plans, for if France threw a force into America, as she subsequently did, England would have been compelled to fight both jointly at a disadvantage. Whatever losses the French would have suffered elsewhere could have been repaired at the general peace when the situation in America would have enabled the allies to name the terms. Independence for the colonies seemed assured in any case. It is interesting to note that the King also had a plan for meeting the emergency. Forecasting a French war, he wrote to North as early as January 1, 1778: "It might perhaps be wise to strengthen the forces in Canada, the Floridas and Nova Scotia; withdraw

¹ Fitzmaurice, in his "Life of William Shelburne," gives the fullest and most authoritative account published of the attempt to organize a Whig or coalition Ministry and of Chatham's attitude and views at the time. The above quotation is from Chap. I., Vol. III.

the rest from North America and without loss of time employ them in attacking New Orleans and the French and Spanish West India possessions. We must at the same time continue destroying the trade and ports of the rebellious colonies, and thus soon bring both contests to a conclusion; and this country having had its attention diverted to a fresh object, would be in a better shape to subscribe to such terms as Administration might think advisable to offer America, who on her part will at such a time be more ready to treat than at the present hour."

But Chatham died, the King had endorsed North's turn-coat scheme and induced him to continue in the Cabinet, and it only remained to despatch peace commissioners across the sea. Three well-known figures in Court and party circles, Carlisle, Johnstone and Eden, were appointed, and for the next six months, from May to November, 1778, the hopes of the "Administration," as George Third called his government, centered on their efforts. Whigs and wiser Tories predicted utter failure. So high did political and personal feeling run that this olive-branch offer was openly discredited and ridiculed from the start. The historian, Gibbon, then member of the Commons and supporter of the crown, despairingly wrote to a friend: "You see we are reduced to the humiliation of sueing for a peace. I much fear we shall have the additional humiliation of being rejected. In the meantime a French war is

every day a probable event. I have not seen so very black a prospect. . . . I voted with government, yet I still repeat that in my opinion Lord North does not deserve pardon for the past, applause for the present or confidence in the future." Walpole's entry in his diary is sarcastic and jubilant: "Yesterday, February 17, did the whole Administration, by the mouth of their spokesman, Lord North, no, no, not resign; on the contrary, try to keep their places by a full and ample confession of all their faults, and by a still more extraordinary act, by doing full justice both to America and to the opposition." The commissioners arrived at their destination at the most unfavorable moment that could have been chosen. Burgoyne's surrender was still the great event in the air, the French treaty, then just announced to the States, was accepted as settling the question of independence, and now the rumor was spreading that Philadelphia, which cost the enemy a campaign to secure, was about to be evacuated. In fact the commissioners reached that city, then the British headquarters in America, only to find that orders had preceded them to Sir Henry Clinton, Commander-in-Chief, to abandon the place and concentrate again at New York as a French fleet was aiming for the coast. They arrived in May; Clinton withdrew in June, and laid himself open to attack at Monmouth, which the Continentals claimed as another victory to set up against the peace project. Losing no time, how-

ever, from Philadelphia the Commissioners communicated their mission to Congress. It need not be said that their offers were received with a rebuff—indeed not received at all except for publication throughout the country as an evidence of the straits to which Great Britain was reduced. The newspapers commented on them to the amusement and contempt of the people. Even Tories acknowledged the inopportuneness of the arrival. It only made matters worse when the Commission attempted to treat with the States separately, and when it reached New York to be cooped up during the remaining months of its stay the situation became ludicrous. The task was hopeless. As the Commissioners could not offer independence, and as France had guaranteed it, their proffer of anything less fell flat. The futility of their errand dawned on them at an early date. Referring to the brusque reception of their messages by Congress, they wrote home July 5: “The treaty of alliance with France, the evacuation of Philadelphia, the leaving open the whole coast of America to foreign supplies, the free entrance for prizes, and these events rapidly following each other, and represented as the effect of consummate prudence and policy on the part of Congress, to be supported by further assistance from Europe, have so elated the persons in authority through the revolted colonies that we could not expect an answer more decent at present.” And again:

“The decided rejection given by the Congress to all terms of accommodation short of independence leaves no room to hope that any success will attend the commission with which we are honored except through the exertions of his Majesty’s arms, or by an appeal to the people at large, or by negotiation with separate bodies of men and individuals.”¹ By August the members requested leave to return home, and on October 3d, just before sailing they issued a parting proclamation to the Congress, Assemblies, and people of the United States repeating their offers, including a general pardon to the end of the “grace” extended for forty days after date, and reminding all concerned that, upon a rejection of their terms, Great Britain could not be expected again to assume the same liberal attitude toward them. They indulged in no warning except so far as one could be construed from the expression that “a perseverance in the present rebellion or any adherence to the treasonable connection attempted to be framed with a foreign power will be considered as crimes of the most aggravated kind.” In America this was made much of as a threat to resume the war with fire and sword, and subsequently in Parliament opposition members denounced it in the same vein, but the Commissioners and Ministry

¹ From letters in Stevens’ collection of “Facsimiles.” American historians have devoted little space to the visit of the peace commissioners, through lack of material. Stevens has now made it possible to give nearly a complete account of it, the correspondence in the case being considerable.

disclaimed any such intention. Only a more energetic prosecution of the war was meant; and as a matter of fact the war went on very much as before. Returning to England the Commission gladly surrendered its authority. At least one of its members, William Eden, had closely studied affairs in America, and subsequently he expressed himself freely to Attorney-General Wedderburn on the true causes of their ill-success. The letter, Document II, in the Appendix, will be found worth reading. His conclusions, as the deliberate view of an observing civilian and official, coincide remarkably with the impartial conclusions of later investigation. "In plain English," he closes, "the times require an unparalleled exertion of activity, spirit, invention, enterprise, judgment and concert; of which when I look at the present Ministry I see neither the existence nor the possibility." At home the Commissioners came in for the usual criticism, but it fell to Edmund Burke to embalm their memory in the high oratory of the period when he introduced this scathing passage in his address to the electors of Bristol in 1780:

"Do you remember our Commission? We sent out a solemn embassy across the Atlantic Ocean to lay down the Crown, the peerage, the Commons of Great Britain, at the feet of the American Congress. That our disgrace might want no sort of brightening and burnishing, observe who they were that composed this famous embassy. My Lord Carlisle is among the first ranks of our nobility. He is the

identical man who, but two years before, had been put forward at the opening of a session in the House of Lords, as the mover of a haughty and rigorous address against America. He was put in the front of the embassy of submission. Mr. Eden was taken from the office of Lord Suffolk, to whom he was then under Secretary of State; from the office of that Lord Suffolk who, but a few weeks before, in his place in Parliament, did not deign to inquire where a Congress of 'vagrants' was to be found. This Lord Suffolk sent Mr. Eden to find these vagrants, without knowing where his King's generals were to be found, who were joined in the same Commission for supplicating those whom they were sent to subdue. They enter the Capital of America only to abandon it; and these assertors and representatives of the dignity of England, at the tail of a flying army, let fly their Parthian shafts of memorials and remonstrances at random behind them. Their promises and their offers, their flatteries and their menaces, were all despised; and we were saved the disgrace of their formal reception, only because the Congress scorned to receive them, while the State House of independent Philadelphia opened her doors to the public entry of the ambassador of France. From war and blood we went to submission; and from submission plunged back again to war and blood, to desolate and be desolated, without measure, hope or end. I am a Royalist; I blushed for this degradation of the Crown. I am a Whig; I blushed for the dishonor of Parliament. I am a true Englishman; I felt to the quick for the disgrace of England. I am a man; I felt for the melancholy reverse of human affairs, in the fall of the first power in the world."

And thus the year 1778 was, in great measure, lost to England. America had not been pacified

and France had entered the field. In the South the British were active and met with some successes, such as the capture of Savannah. But in the more important North, Sir Henry Clinton's hands had been tied, not only by the presence of the peace Commission, of which, by virtue of his position, he was also a member, but by the partial depletion of his force to strengthen the British West Indies. Some of his best troops were detached—"the nerves of my army," as he complained. Stirred up, however, by the failures chargeable to and the denunciations heaped upon it, Administration proceeded to lay the lines for a better record in the important year to come. With what success, the following chapters are intended to show.

II

THE ENEMY'S PROPOSED OPERATIONS FOR THE YEAR— GERMAINE AND CLINTON AS TO WASHINGTON

A plan of campaign in America was accordingly devised for 1779. As in preceding years, it had a very definite objective and promised large results on paper. In 1776, when the war opened on an extensive scale, the British determined to make New York their central base, sever Washington's lines of communication and dissipate his army. In that year they met with greater successes than in any other, but at its close Trenton and Princeton offset the moral effect of their progress. In 1777 their capture of Philadelphia was an insignificant advantage compared with the failure of Burgoyne's movement and the surrender of his army. In 1778 came the French alliance and the quandary of the enemy, resulting in the contraction of their operations. In 1779 they attempted their last campaign in the North, bending their energies thereafter mainly to the Southern States.

Judging from the actual movements of the British this year, 1779, they appeared to have waited on circumstances. There was nothing threatening or serious in what they did, except for brief intervals. They made no sustained

effort. Washington naturally interpreted every step they took as involving some secret design against his own position, but he was never in danger. Historians of the war, both English and American, properly speak of the operations as expeditionary, desultory and without a campaign character. The enemy, however, opened up with profound *intentions*, as they could ill afford to fritter away the year after the peace fiasco of '78.

These intentions, now just come to light, invest this period of the war with a fresh interest. At an early day Lord George Germaine, the Minister at the head of the war office, a man unequal to the position, but who assumed a certain expertness in the art of military planning, wrote out instructions for Sir Henry Clinton in America, the material portions of which under date, Whitehall, London, January 23, 1779, ran as follows:¹

GERMAINE TO CLINTON.

"I will state to you the outlines of the Plan for the future conduct of the War in North America, submitted to the King and which His Majesty has thought fit to approve; but at the same time I am Commanded to say to you that His Majesty has such entire reliance upon your wisdom, zeal for his service, and great military abilities that he leaves it to your judgment to make such alterations either in the Plan itself or in the mode pointed out for its execution as, from your knowledge of many circum-

¹ Original letter in "Carleton Papers," London Institution. The above from President Sparks' copy of it in Harvard University MSS. Collections.

stances which cannot be known here you shall conceive to conduce more immediately and effectually to the attainment of the great end of all His Majesty's measures—namely, the re-establishment of Legal Government in the revolted Provinces.

“It is most earnestly wished that you may be able to bring Mr. Washington to a *general* and *decisive* action at the opening of the Campaign; but if that cannot be effected it is imagined that with an army of about 12,000 Men in the field under your immediate Command, you may force him to seek for safety in the Highlands of New York or the Jerseys, and leave the Inhabitants of the open Country at liberty to follow what the Commissioners represent to be their inclinations and renounce the authority of the Congress, and return to their allegiance to His Majesty. This would obviate the chief objection to the re-establishment of civil government in New York since a majority of the Counties in the Province could then send members to the Assembly, and the antient constitution could be restored in due form—an event the more to be desired as it would afford His Majesty the opportunity of realizing his benign intentions towards his Revolted subjects and removing their ill-founded apprehensions of being ruled by Military Laws in all time to Come, should they submit to His Majesty's Government.

“But besides these immediate good effects, which your success in that quarter might be expected to be attended with, the operations proposed to be carried on in other parts would be greatly facilitated by your obliging General Washington to keep the whole of his Regular Troops together to oppose your army, and on the other hand those operations could not fail to prevent his receiving succours from the Countries attacked. It is, therefore, intended

that two corps of about 4,000 each, assisted by a naval force, should be employed upon the seacoasts of the revolted Provinces, the one to act on the side of New England and New Hampshire, and the other in the Chesapeake Bay, and by entering the rivers and inlets, wherever it was found practicable, seize or destroy their shipping and stores, and deprive them of every means of fitting out privateers, or carrying on Foreign Commerce.

“A considerable diversion will also be directed to be made on the side of Canada, by a succession of parties of Indians supported by Detachments of the troops there, alarming and harrassing the Frontiers and making IncurSIONS into the Settlements.

“The reinforcement intended to be sent out to you early in the Spring to enable you to effect these important services will consist of Col. Macdonald’s Highlanders and the Edinburgh Regiment of 1,000 each, the remainder of Col. Maclean’s Regiment, which is 400, also 3,000 British and 1,200 German Recruits—making in the whole an addition of about 6,600 to your present force, which appears from your last returns to be upwards of 22,000 effectives at New York and Rhode Island; and as the augmentation of the British Regiments will extend to those in America some further addition will be expected in the course of the Summer.”

We may imagine that the perusal of this letter put Clinton in no very agreeable mood. The contemptuous estimate of Germaine’s abilities which he privately entertained could hardly have been modified by the implication in the “Plan” that the outlines of a campaign in America had to be drawn up by a Minister at home. A pretty piece of Cabinet work, My Lord, to devise on the banks

of the peaceful Thames, but how will it stand a provincial cloud-burst, say around Anthony's Nose on the Hudson? The plan, in brief, proposed three things.

First—Beat Washington or drive him well away from settled parts of the country.

Second—Harry the frontiers and the coasts, North and South.

Third—Restore the province of New York, set up the former government, welcome the population, let them elect a good, loyal Assembly, and go on in the old way "benignly." The other colonies would doubtless fall into line.

Now Clinton knew perfectly well that "Mr. Washington," who was already in the Jersey hills, would never put himself in the way of being beaten, and that to compel him to retreat further, and especially to keep him at a distance, would necessitate the permanent occupation of interior points many miles from New York, which would subject his communications to constant interruption and invite such uprisings as overwhelmed Burgoyne. It would have required double his force to occupy and control the Province and satisfy the other demands of the plan. The most important point was the handling of Washington, and what Clinton thought of that task is clearly stated in his reply to the War Minister under date of May 14:¹

¹ From the same source as previous letter.

CLINTON TO GERMAINE.

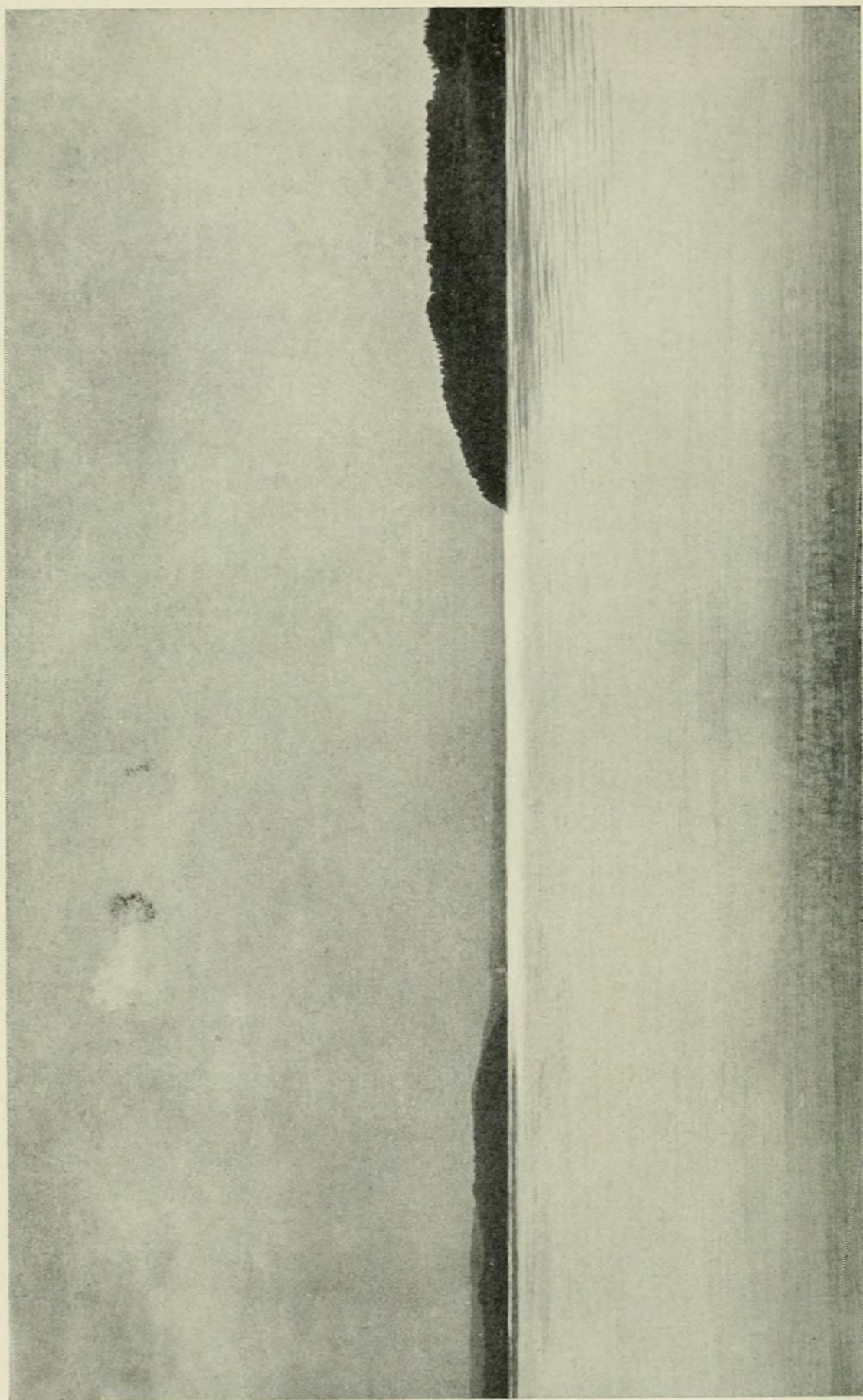
“My Lord,

. To force Washington to an action upon terms tolerably equal has been the object of every campaign during this war. The difficulty of attaining that object in so strong a Country even with the force Sir William Howe had, by this time needs no illustration. Washington has at this instant 8,000 Continental troops in Jersey, besides Militia—a number far exceeding what he had when Sir William Howe marched against him in June, 1777. I believe the force with which your Lordship seems to apprehend that I might drive Washington from his present position and oblige him to retire to the Mountains is in my idea by no means equal to the task, and my opinion is supported by the conduct of Sir William Howe, who with an army superior to what mine can possibly be, thought the attempt to force that position entirely unadvisable. It shall be my endeavor to draw Washington forward before he is Reinforced, by indirect Manouvres, and if he gives in to my views no efforts shall be wanting to strike at him whilst he is in motion; but if he persists in keeping his present post I must not flatter myself that it will be easy to gain any advantage over him or to carry into effect, as I certainly should wish to do, the measures which your Lordship appears to recommend.”

No doubt Clinton, in confessing that he found Washington a hard nut to crack, enjoyed some consolation in reminding Germaine that his predecessor, Howe, had found him a still harder one. Both Howe and Burgoyne were now back in England, sitting in Parliament, and calling for an investigation into their conduct in America. Clinton's failure, up to that time, to do more than they

found it possible, afforded them an additional illustration of the difficulties of campaigning in that country, and so far may have helped out their case. But Clinton's predicament was the less sufferable, as the ill-success of those two generals made little impression upon the government as to the support he ought to receive. The new Commander was expected to accomplish greater things with fewer men. During his entire service he was constantly mortified and hampered by the inadequate means placed at his disposal to "rush" the war in the colonies. This, in fact, with Eden's further explanations, accounts for the inability of the mother country to crush the rebellion. Since 1776 her armies here had been too weak to effect permanent results. As long as she entrusted the chief command to men of only fair capacities, to safe, methodical heads like Howe and Clinton, who received their instructions from the home office, it devolved on that office to supply them with all the troops they called for. What a military genius might have done with the force at hand was another matter; but the genius was not forthcoming.

Clinton, however, was thoroughly loyal to his King, and accepting his orders, forthwith thought out a bit of strategy by which he might possibly entrap Washington. Secretly he could not have expected it to work, for it depended, as he naively observed to Germaine, on whether the American Chief unwittingly gave into his "views."



NORTH VIEW OF STONY POINT AND VERPLANCKS

And as to his army, he reminded the Minister in the letter already quoted that he had overrated its strength. Even with the reinforcements promised he could not put twelve thousand men in the field and that was not enough for an effective campaign.

In this connection it is interesting to note the means by which Washington was able to arrive at a close estimate of the enemy's numbers from time to time, as may be seen from General McDougall's report of his examination of deserters, given in Document 18 of the Appendix.

What now was the situation at this date on the other side of the line?

III

WASHINGTON'S POSITION AND PLANS—STATE OF THE COUNTRY AND THE ARMY

One must look long and far into the writings of Washington to find those frequent public expressions of confidence and enthusiasm in the cause he was fighting for, those urgent and uplifting appeals to his countrymen to keep strong in heart and bend every sinew, or even those tocsin calls to his soldiers in camp and field with which at times in history the recognized and conscious leader of a glorious movement has buoyed it over to success. And yet his leadership saved the nation. He has been compared to William of Orange, but that Prince controlled proportionately greater resources. He has been compared to Cromwell, but Cromwell could appeal from patriotism to Puritanism and hold his following by a double tie as Washington could not. With varying intellectual endowments, the power of all three lay in the depth of their faith and the strength and contagion of their resolution. Probably the least demonstrative was Washington, who was reserved, conservative and pre-eminently practical. Men came to understand him through his action and the quality of his nature. They found that as a chieftain he was to be measured,

not by words, assurances and proclamations, whose effect was ephemeral, but by the degree of his patience, vigilance, judgment and energies. Here lay his strength and quiet greatness. He satisfied the test after the severest experiences and inspired profound confidence; and that confidence had first become universal and established throughout the country at about this period of the war, the opening of the year 1779.

As in the case of many an accepted and faithful head of a popular undertaking, Washington failed to receive adequate support, or more properly, a support which, as Commander-in-Chief, he could uniformly depend upon and utilize. If there was one interval in the struggle when prospects looked the brightest, we should place it here at this time, after Saratoga, Monmouth, the treaty with France, the weakened condition of the enemy, and the probable further complications in Europe working to the advantage of America. Washington recognized all this, but what concerned him most was the lethargic attitude into which the country appeared to drop at these very prospects. To his observation it was shirking the fighting business and giving itself over to the levities and self-interests of peace. What he wrote at the close of 1778 might have come from a disheartened Whig in England at the same date: "Our affairs are in a more distressed, ruinous and deplorable condition than they have been since the commencement of the contest." It is true, he was writing from Phil-

adelphia, then the capital and socially the miniature London of America, where much wealth and gaiety had centered, where the French Minister, Gerard, was holding Court, and assuring all of ultimate success, where fortunes were made or lost through the luck or ill-luck of privateers that found safe ports on the Delaware and Chesapeake, where Congressmen assembled from all parts of the country, some with their families, and were engaging in long debates and wrangles over the lesser difficulties of the situation, and where the atmosphere in general seemed little charged with the heaviness of a lingering war. Much of this was on the surface, for Philadelphia remained always patriotic, but to the Commander-in-Chief, coming from a distressed camp, it took on an exaggerated form. To Benjamin Harrison, of Virginia, and again to James Warren, of Massachusetts, he poured out his soul in the most anxious terms. To the former he wrote: "If I were to be called upon to draw a picture of the times and of men, from what I have seen, heard, and in part know, I should in one word say, that idleness, dissipation, and extravagance seem to have laid fast hold of most of them; that speculation, peculation, and an insatiable thirst for riches seem to have got the better of every other consideration, and almost of every order of men; that party disputes and personal quarrels are the great business of the day; whilst the momentous concerns of an empire, a great and accumulating debt, ruined

finances, depreciated money, and want of credit, which in its consequences is the want of everything, are but secondary considerations, and postponed from day to day, from week to week, as if our affairs wore the most promising aspect. After drawing this picture, which from my soul I believe to be a true one, I need not repeat to you, that I am alarmed and wish to see my countrymen roused. . . . Our money is now sinking fifty per cent. a day in this city; and I shall not be surprised if in the course of a few months, a total stop is put to the currency of it; and yet an assembly, a concert, a dinner, or supper, that will cost three or four hundred pounds, will not only take men off from acting in this business, but even from thinking of it, while a great part of the officers of our army, from absolute necessity, are quitting the service and the more virtuous few, rather than do this, are sinking by sure degrees into beggary and want."

In Washington's view, as to every American, the Revolution, so far from being an inspiration, was the rational outcome of colonial tendencies, and now, in war, required but the same aroused attention, the same common guardianship and able handling that it received from its civil leaders in the early days of protests and petitions, and that it was to receive again when threatened with disaster on the question of the Constitution. With the ship upon the right course, with eyes and hopes turned to a new destination, it was only

necessary to avoid evils and ordinary dangers and all would be well; and this is the key-note of Washington's extensive correspondence during the fighting years. His role is largely that of pilot and protector; where he writes strongly, impressively and sometimes in an impassioned way, it is to criticise, advise and warn.

Behind this occasional despondency was the condition of the army—a mere skeleton at this date. Life in Philadelphia would have troubled the Chief little if Congress had only provided him with a respectable force. That was now to be a standing anxiety to the close of the war—few soldiers. Some critics see in this a mortifying reflection on the patriotism of the “fathers”; but why there were always few and not enough was due to several natural causes apart from lukewarmness or sheer disinclination. The principal one was the effect of Burgoyne's surrender, and it operated in New England which was a large recruiting ground. That signal event turned the common militiaman into something of a general. He observed that thereafter the enemy hugged the coast under cover of their ships, and that their few inland raids did not penetrate far or continue long. To keep them in wholesome dread of another “Burgoynade,” to protect their own towns and villages, and to raise the necessary crops for people and army, it devolved on the militiaman to remain at home with his local company; and with these objects in view the Northern States main-

tained a generally excellent militia organization. Then there was the traditional aversion and opposition to long terms of service. "Three years or the War" was a stumbling block to heads of families and veterans of the French and Indian war who had been called out only for the campaign months, from May to November, to return and spend the winters at their firesides instead of in a dreary and perhaps fatal camp. Again, as already hinted, the French alliance lulled the great majority into a sense of security; and just now, and for the remainder of the war, credited rumors were afloat that the enemy were about to abandon the contest, and that recruits would not be needed. Washington's uniform and repeated representations that the Continental army was the chief defence against the British regulars, that the former was dwindling, that the latter were more numerous, and that militiamen invariably proved a poor reliance in the open field, failed to have the proper effect against the above considerations. Had Washington ever been in imminent danger the country would have rallied around him; but as the enemy, especially after Monmouth, seemed disinclined to hunt him down, the independent and over-wise American saw no present call to rush to camp. This was the great embarrassment. Washington was repeatedly prevented from taking a promising offensive for the reason that the average native, judging for himself, regarded the existing defensive as sufficiently effec-

tual. Sooner or later, in his opinion, the enemy would tire and give up the struggle at all points, as in 1780 and '81 they had apparently given it up in the Northern and Middle States.

There were, however, at this time in the American camps above the line of the Delaware, some twelve thousand seasoned troops whose service would not expire for one or two years—the Continental army proper dating its organization from January 1st, 1777—and these might be utilized with some effect. Several plans were proposed. For one, the “emancipation of Canada” was always a favorite object with certain generals and members of Congress. The attempt was seriously considered and some preparations were made, but France declined co-operation and nothing was done. Nor was France just then ready to threaten New York with a fleet, in which case Washington would have collected every available Continental, and with militia assistance, made a strenuous effort to force the enemy from that base. So that by the time any movement could take place there seemed to be but one that was feasible, and that was an expedition against the hostile tribes of the Six Nations in Western New York, who with the Tories in that quarter, threatened a repetition of the Wyoming and Cherry Valley massacres. It was time they were chastised, and during the summer a Continental force under General Sullivan completely defeated them. As for the Commander-in-Chief, he intended with his

depleted army to remain in the vicinity of the enemy.

In the spring of 1779, the Continental troops were posted as follows:

Washington with regiments from the middle and Southern States was still in winter quarters at Middlebrook, New Jersey, a few miles north of Boundbrook, where the men had fared much better than at Valley Forge the year before. The Eastern troops were quartered, the Connecticut and New Hampshire division at Redding, near the New York boundary; the Massachusetts men on the east side of the Hudson and other points. West Point was garrisoned with a brigade under General John Paterson. General McDougall took post at Peekskill; General Gates at Providence.

These several winter encampments, it will be observed, were centered within supporting distance of West Point. By forced marches nearly all the troops could reach its vicinity in two or three days. West Point was "the key to the continent."¹ The side that held it controlled the military situation. It was to gain possession of it, including the line of the river from Albany to New York, that Burgoyne came down from Canada and that Clinton marched up in the vain effort to assist him, in 1777. Recognizing its importance as

¹ What a prominent loyalist in New York, Judge William Smith, thought of its importance, appears in Document 17, Appendix; and generally, how far American Tories commented on campaign plans, to the embarrassment of British Commanders, appears in Spark's "Washington," Vol VI, p. 270-71, note

guarding the strongest though not the shortest line of communication between essential New England and the States below, the Americans fortified the position and made it practically impregnable. Only once more did the enemy harbor serious designs upon the Point, but that attempt, which blackens the record of 1780, both combatants subsequently would have been glad to repudiate and forget. "The posts in the Highlands are of infinite consequence," wrote Washington when they appeared to be threatened now in 1779. Those Highlands were the "mountains" which, on his own admission, appalled Sir Henry Clinton. They contained the Thermopylae of the field; but while nature has tossed them about in grand confusion, multiplying the peaks and domes and ridges and gorges, the British invader despaired of finding the unguarded pathway to the rear.

It was on the outskirts of this region that the enemy opened up their operations. For a strong coast diversion, such as Germaine proposed, General Matthews and Admiral Collier were sent into the Chesapeake where they desolated Norfolk and Portsmouth, Virginia, burned vessels and brought off much tobacco. Otherwise the diversion was of no military consequence.

IV

CLINTON'S STRATEGY—ADVANCE TO KING'S FERRY— THE CONNECTICUT RAID

Clinton proposed to force Washington to fight. If his strategy involved some intricacies which his antagonist never succeeded in unravelling it was not because of the latter's lack of military comprehension. What Clinton regarded as a clever game to play does not appear to have suggested itself to Washington as one of the probable alternatives of a campaign. It will be seen that what he thought to be Clinton's chief aim was never seriously contemplated by the British general, and that any other object that general might have had in view caused Washington little concern. The plan in simple terms was this: So manoeuvre against the Americans as to compel them to accept battle on open ground away from their mountains, or strike them while in motion. It depended on the manoeuvres, and in part on the early arrival of the promised reinforcement of six thousand men.

So far as Clinton's correspondence shows he does not seem to have divulged the details of his plan until after its complete miscarriage in mid-summer. He then unburdened his mind to General Haldimand, commanding in Canada, who had applied for three regiments of infantry for opera-

tions against our northern frontier at a moment when every available man was needed for the movements on the Hudson. In accounting for his failure he explained what he had hoped to accomplish.¹ It was to have been a campaign against Washington's line of supplies and not against West Point. For his grand operation Clinton had this in mind: Draw Washington well away from his strong position at Middlebrook, in New Jersey, then by rapid marches occupy that camp himself and threaten the American magazines at Easton to the west and Trenton below. The move would presumably recall Washington, and Clinton's opportunity to "beat him" to Germaine's satisfaction would be at hand.

The first part of the plan was successfully carried out by a manoeuvre well calculated to throw the American Commander off the scent. This was the seizure of King's Ferry at Stony and Verplanck's Points on the Hudson, thirteen miles below West Point. Ostensibly this meant an advance upon the latter position.

The enemy moved on King's Ferry with a combined land and naval expedition. The letters and accounts of General Clinton, Commodore Collier and General Pattison, commanding the British artillery, to be found among the documents in the Appendix, give many particulars of its approach up the river. Hardly less interesting are the re-

¹ See in Appendix, Document No. 15, Clinton to Haldimand, Sept 9, 1779

ports and messages from the American outposts and friendly Whigs who watched the enemy from the banks. The advance began from King's Bridge on Friday, May 28th, when a body of troops some four thousand strong, under command of Major-General Vaughan, marched out and encamped at the present Yonkers. The artillery took post to the east on Valentine's Hill. On the following evening General Matthews and Commodore Collier unexpectedly returned from their raid on the Virginia Coast and Clinton at once decided to utilize this force also in the Hudson movement. The ships and transports kept on to Yonkers where on Sunday, the 30th, General Vaughan likewise embarked with a portion of his command, and on the same day all sailed for Haverstraw Bay. This was the second and last of the enemy's expeditions to the Highlands during the war. Clinton conducted both. In the first, during the fall of 1777, he won some reputation by his bold attempt to relieve Burgoyne, in the course of which he captured Forts Clinton and Montgomery on the west bank of the river. The present move was more threatening in point of force and supposed objective, but the outcome afforded him much less satisfaction.

On Monday forenoon, the 31st, the enemy reached Haverstraw Bay and Vaughan's corps disembarked at Tellar's Point on the east side some seven miles below Verplanck's. Other troops under Clinton in person sailing further up landed on the

west side near Haverstraw and late in the afternoon marched to Stony Point above. The small American party stationed at that post burned the block house at the summit of the Point, and retreated over Donderberg Mountain. During the night the British artillerists dragged cannon to the top, established two batteries and early the next morning, June 1st, opened fire on the American Fort Lafayette opposite at Verplanck's. Vaughan meanwhile marched around to the rear and Commodore Collier stationed the sloop-of-war *Vulture* and row-galley *Cornwallis* above the point to cut off escape by water. The garrison replied to the enemy's cannonade, but finding itself in a net, surrendered about noon. It consisted of seventy men under Captain Thomas Armstrong of the North Carolina Line, whose misfortune, however, was to be avenged in the stirring event six weeks later in which their companions from the same State were to play a conspicuous part.

To Washington Clinton's movement was not altogether a surprise. He had been looking rather for predatory enterprises or the transfer of the main field from North to South, but as the campaign season opened he anticipated some demonstration in his vicinity were it to operate only as a blind. Washington was prepared for any move. Intimations of this Highland expedition had reached him some days in advance, his sources of information in the enemy's lines proving, as usual, infallible. His "confidential friends" had sent out

word that a large number of flat boats had been collected at Kingsbridge and that troops were concentrating in the vicinity apparently for some secret service. Hearing of the embarkation on the Hudson, he put his army in motion at once from Middlebrook toward West Point and halted within supporting distance. Breaking up quarters on May 30th the troops marched through Springfield, Troy, Pompton and Ringwood, New Jersey, and on June 6th were filing past Tuxedo Lake into the valley running northeasterly from that point, known in Revolutionary annals as "Smith's Clove." On the following day the Virginia division went into camp near June's Tavern, not far from the present Turner's station on the Erie Railway, covering the road to Haverstraw; the Pennsylvania division took post five miles beyond at "Widow Van Ambrose's," at the junction of the road leading to Ft. Montgomery by way of the Forest of Dean, and the Maryland division encamped between them. Here within easy reach of West Point, less than twelve miles distant, Washington awaited developments.

Equally alert were George Clinton, Governor of New York, and General McDougall, commanding the troops on the Hudson. The latter, whose headquarters were at Peekskill, five miles above King's Ferry, had already, under Washington's instructions, drawn in the exposed outposts on the line of the Croton. On May 29th a deserter brought him word of Vaughan's advance to Yonkers the previ-

ous day, and thereafter the enemy's doings were frequently reported to him. Why the garrison at Verplanck's was not withdrawn in time does not appear. Suspecting before this that the enemy would march up in force with designs on West Point, McDougall despatched an urgent request to the Governor, May 25th, to have the post immediately supplied with provisions. The chief need was teams for transportation. That stalwart patriot, one of the famous "war-governors" of the Revolution, needed little urging. His namesake's incursion in 1777, which he had bravely but fruitlessly attempted to check, and the disgrace and mortification entailed in the burning of Kingston, the capital of the State, had not been forgotten. The Governor's Scotch-Irish nature was stirred to its depths. All his efforts were bent to prevent a repetition of Sir Henry's jaunty dash through the Highlands. Moreover, what was not the case in '77, West Point had become the recognized and fortified key to the general situation and its protection, as Washington had written, was of "infinite consequence."

To McDougall Governor Clinton replied: "I have issued a general impress warrant to enable the Quartermaster-General to convey to the different posts sufficient supplies of provisions; and you may rely upon every other exertion in my power to forward the business." At the same time news came of Indian alarms to the westward requiring the Governor to warn Ulster and Albany

County troops to march to the scene if needed. The remainder of the State militia he ordered out to reinforce McDougall. The army supplies at Continental Village, five miles northeast of Peekskill, and even the larger magazines at Fishkill, on the east side, well above West Point, would be in danger if Clinton pushed on, and they must be secured. In the emergency everybody, quartermasters and commissaries, appealed to the Governor for assistance. The calls came with such persistence that in addition to what he had already done, he sent out a general order by express on May 31st directing the militia to turn out every team and wagon and hurry them to Fishkill. As the troops themselves would be needed for service, he grimly and laconically added that "unarmed Tories" must be taken along as team drivers. For loyalists and lukewarm patriots George Clinton had little consideration. Finally, hearing that the enemy had reached Verplanck's and that McDougall was falling back through Continental Village, the Governor determined to take the field himself. "I mean to be down to-morrow," he wrote from Poughkeepsie, May 31st; "I am endeavoring to get out all the militia with all possible despatch and hope to take down a very considerable force." Arriving the next day at Fishkill and finding his orders well obeyed in the presence of teams enough to remove the stores in case of necessity, he wrote to McDougall at midnight: "I propose to act under you in the character of a Brigadier

General in the Continental Army"; and he prepared to take post toward the Highlands below. As events proved, the enemy gave the Governor and his militiamen no opportunity to fight, but their high spirit and ready muster were appreciated. From Congress John Jay wrote to Clinton a flattering line: "The exertions of our State have placed her in a very respectable point of view, and permit me to tell you that your march to the Highlands has given occasion to many handsome things being said and written of you here."¹

Thus, on the first of June, the monotony of the situation on the Hudson had suddenly given way to something expectant. With the enemy in possession of King's Ferry, Washington out of his winter quarters and in the field, and New York State in arms, the next move on the board was awaited with lively interest. Clinton being on the war-path, obviously it was his play again. In reality no one but himself understood how ineffectual his opening would probably prove and that his next proposed play would expose it. Inaction would do the same. Reverting to his letter to Haldimand it will be observed that while his main objective was the camp at Middlebrook, Clinton had hopes that Washington would consider the recovery of King's Ferry of such importance as to risk a battle for it. The Ferry was a link in his short line of communication between New Eng-

¹From the MSS. letters of Governor Clinton, State Library, Albany.

land and the Middle States, and its loss would be a serious blow as affecting the food supplies for the Continental army. At least, so thought the enemy, and they made much of their General's capital stroke. It alone justified the expedition. Now nothing was further from Washington's mind than the intention which Clinton imagined he might be compelled to entertain. Quite true that the cutting of his lower line was no light matter, but far from vital. While the misfortune would entail inconvenience and some hardship, the cohesion of the army was not necessarily endangered. The utilization of interior and longer lines of communication would involve delays and larger expense, but at most the drawback would be but temporary; and who were more accustomed to meet difficulties of this nature and patiently abide a better day than Washington and his veterans of Valley Forge? To attempt to drive Clinton from his position was out of the question. Whatever he may have put on paper for Haldimand, Clinton could never have expected an open attack, involving a general engagement, especially if he lay under cover of his ships and fortified strongly, as he immediately proceeded to do. Washington's view of the situation is expressed in his letters from camp at Smith's Clove. To the President of Congress he wrote: "Our communication by King's Ferry, far the easiest, is at an end. The extent and difficulty of land transportation are considerably increased, a new resort and sanctuary afforded to the dis-

affected in these parts of the country, and a new door opened to draw supplies and to distress and corrupt the inhabitants. Reasons, which need not be explained, put it out of our power to prevent it beforehand or to remedy it now it has happened. We have taken post for the present with the main body of the army in this Clove, where we are as well situated as we could be anywhere else, to succour the forts (at West Point) in case the future operations of the enemy should be directed against them." Writing to Gates he said that an attempt to dislodge the British from their naturally strong positions on both sides of the Hudson "would require a greater force and apparatus than we are masters of." And again: "All we can do is to lament what we cannot remedy, endeavor to prevent a further progress on the river, and make the advantages of what they have now gained as limited as possible."

But if Clinton could not tempt Washington to battle around King's Ferry, he had drawn him out of his camp in the Jerseys, and the march upon Middlebrook remained. The merits of his "main design," as he called it, is a matter for purely military criticism. The proof of a plan lies in its success. In the history of warfare where theory would have discarded a certain line of strategy, resolution or genius or "the omnipotence of luck" have sometimes carried it brilliantly into effect. In the present case what timely and pre-eminent advantage would have accrued to Clinton in oc-

cupying the position Washington had just left? The Middlebrook camp lay twenty-three miles west of Perth Amboy, or the enemy's nearest posts on Staten Island, and Easton, Pennsylvania, where Continental supplies were stored, was on the right bank of the Delaware some forty miles west of Middlebrook. To strike at the magazines would take the British a three days' march away from their base and water communications, even if they met with no resistance. When, a year later, Kniphausen with a considerable force made his raid upon Springfield, New Jersey, no further away than Middlebrook, he was much annoyed and delayed by the neighboring militia alone. Assuming that Clinton's reinforcements had arrived in time and that he could throw a flying column of twelve thousand men into the Jerseys, reaching Middlebrook without difficulty, and assuming that Washington had declined to fall in with his "views" by stubbornly remaining where he was on the line of the Hudson, the only objective left to the British General would have been the Easton stores forty miles further inland. But the alarm would have preceded him and the greater part of the stores, easily removable by water carriage on the Delaware, could have been secured. Speculation turns on Washington's probable course. He could have repeated his tactics of June and July, 1777, by marching back and defending himself behind the hills, never risking a general engagement, or he might have ignored his antagonist's ma-

noeuvre as a vain threat, and moved in force on the King's Ferry garrisons, beginning seige operations, and thus recalling Clinton. Furthermore, had Clinton been reinforced it would have been possible for Washington to increase his own army before the former could have availed himself of his preponderance. The recall of Sullivan with his three thousand good troops from the Indian expedition and the temporary abandonment of various posts would have very nearly restored the relative proportion of forces. We may be certain that in no case would Washington have exposed himself to defeat, and that had the two armies approached each other in New Jersey, Clinton, with Monmouth in fresh recollection, would in all likelihood have been as deliberate and cautious as Howe had been on the same ground two years before.

The entire month of June passed with no advance from King's Ferry. What made the situation more perplexing was Clinton's apparent retirement to New York. After fortifying and manning Verplanck's and Stony Points he withdrew the main body of his army to the vicinity of Yonkers and Kingsbridge. Collier with all his fleet, except the *Vulture*, also returned. Clinton's excuse for this inaction was, of course, his lack of troops. All his plans, promises and expectations turned largely on an increase of force. To his friend and late co-commissioner, William Eden, at London, he complained bitterly: "July, and no

reinforcements arrived; inadequate as it may be, such as it is, it ought to have been here the first week in June at the furthest." "Good God!" he exclaims, "what could prevent the troops sailing in March or even in April!" He may never have been officially informed, but the fact was that the troops were detained at home in consequence of movements of the French in the English Channel. "If this cursed war continues," Clinton goes on, "great alteration must be made in the method of conducting it. If reinforcements do not arrive soon for sea and land I dread consequences. Not a word from Europe these three months, not a farthing of money, no information, no *army*, nothing but good spirits and a presentiment that all will go well, a determination at least that nothing shall be wanting on my part; and I sincerely hope this will be the last campaign of the war—it must be mine."

From New York Clinton now threw out another bait to Washington. Could he tempt him from West Point with a diversion to the east of the Hudson—a diversion of such a nature that he must needs take notice of it? It was worth trying with the result that Connecticut was treated to Tryon's famous July raid whose progress could be traced by the flames that rose from New Haven, East Haven, Fairfield, Green's Farms and Norwalk. We have commonly treated this expedition as a useless and ruthless proceeding, prosecuted without good military motive and intensifying the

bitterness of the State against the enemy. Clinton's object was legitimate, and the conflagrations, moreover, appear to have been no part of his program. What his purpose was is hinted at in his instructions to Tryon and made clear in his letters to Eden, Germaine and Haldimand. To the latter he wrote: "I sent expeditions into Connecticut, hoping that the strong invitation of that Province would have forced Washington to march to their assistance. Nothing, however, could withdraw him from New Windsor. Had he given in to my views and decidedly marched into Connecticut I should have been able to have taken possession of his Camp at Middlebrook even with the small force I had, and kept it for a certain time." To Eden he had written as early as July 4th: "Sir George Collier is sailed into the Sound on a desultory expedition. I need not say for what purpose. G. W.'s position in the mountains will explain it; and should he stir I hope the reinforcement from Europe will put it in my power to avail myself of any false move he may make." As to Tryon, his orders confined him to the destruction of ships and stores, and the impressment of cattle. "I expect from this move," are Clinton's words to that officer, "that Washington will either pass the North River with his whole army or strong detachments, and I wish you always to be within 24 or 48 hours of joining me." The Connecticut invasion was thus subsidiary to the original plan of the British Commander-in-Chief. His eye was still on Middle-

brook. Tryon and Collier sailed on the 3d of July and were gone ten days.¹ They burned two hundred and forty dwellings and seven churches, and destroyed many barns, mills, stores, shops and vessels. The blow fell most heavily on Fairfield and Norwalk. Preparations were then made to descend upon New London in larger force. To cover this Connecticut diversion and be in a better position for speedy concentration, as it would seem, Clinton, on the 9th moved his army close to the Connecticut border, encamping at Byram's Bridge and Mamaroneck. And there we must leave him until the 16th, when startling news will come down from King's Ferry.

¹Particulars of the Connecticut raid, with official papers, may be found in the valuable pamphlet: "The British Invasion of New Haven, Connecticut, by Charles Hervey Townsend." New Haven, 1879.

See also, at the close of this work, Appendix No. 55, in regard to Governor Tryon's conduct and defence of the invasion, some new facts and letters from "Observations on Judge Jones' Loyalist History of the Revolution," by the present writer.

V

WASHINGTON'S COUNTER MOVE—THE STORMING OF STONY POINT

The true master of the situation was Washington. His strength lay in his immobility; it lay in that unerring judgment and rare poise that enabled him to dismiss any passing inclination to defer to the usual risks of war and accept the enemy's repeated challenge. He was not likely to indulge in the "false move" which Clinton had hoped his own manoeuvres might, sooner or later, lead him to make. Why should he attempt the recovery of King's Ferry with the heavy losses involved, and in case of failure, the serious weakening of his West Point defensive? Why now should he march into Connecticut only to find her towns burned? Like Clinton, he measured his force. It was strong enough to hold the key to the Highlands, not strong enough to take the field.

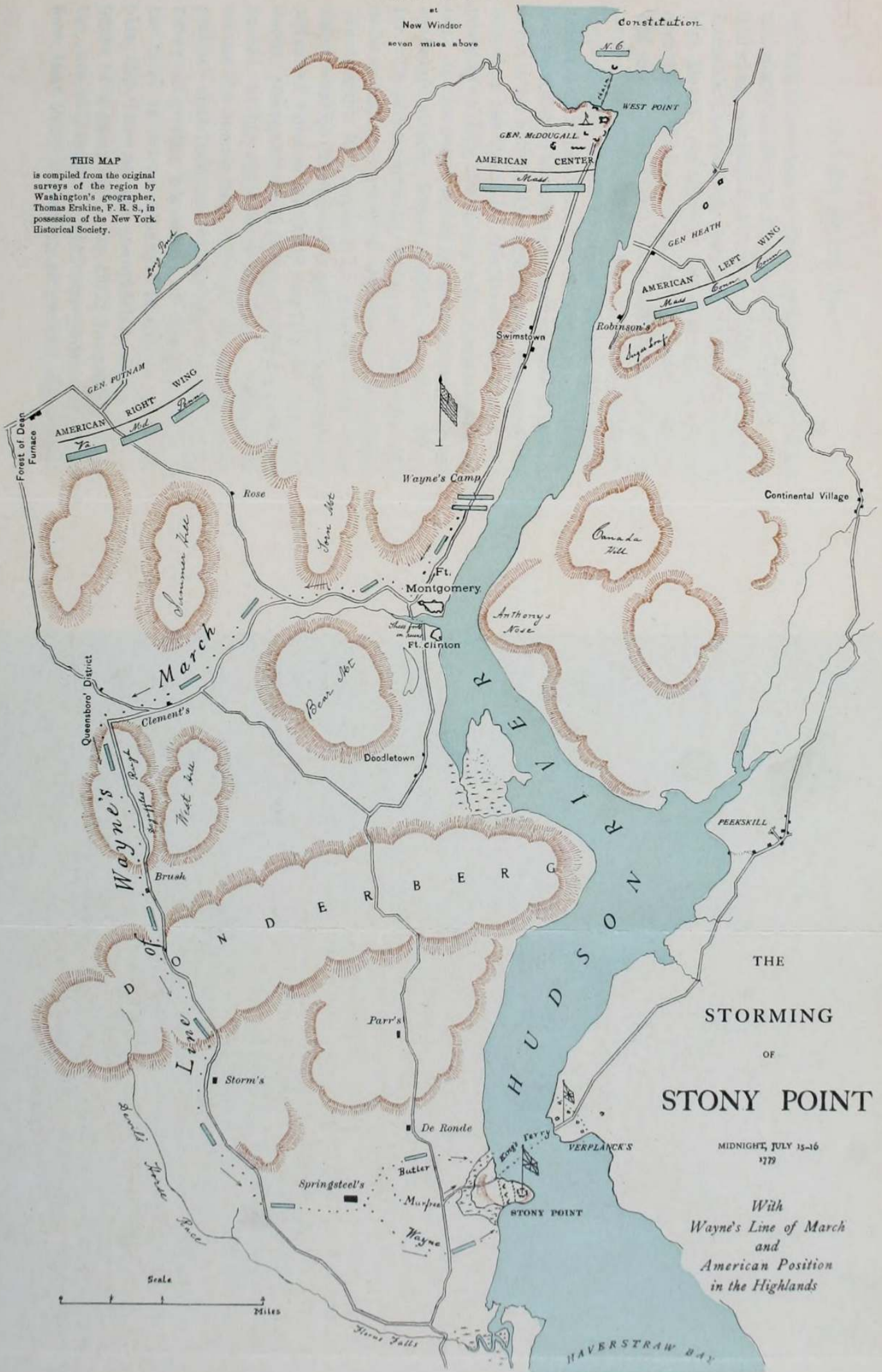
As the enemy had fortified themselves at Stony Point and Verplanck's and their main army might return at any moment for a further advance, Washington distributed his troops around West Point and strengthened its defences. The Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania divisions, under Sterling, De Kalb and St. Clair, constituted the right wing under Major-General Putnam. In

Washington's Head-Quarters

at
New Windsor
seven miles above

Constitution

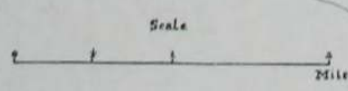
THIS MAP
is compiled from the original
surveys of the region by
Washington's geographer,
Thomas Erskine, F. R. S., in
possession of the New York
Historical Society.



THE
STORMING
OF
STONY POINT

MIDNIGHT, JULY 15-16
1779

With
Wayne's Line of March
and
American Position
in the Highlands



Smith's Clove and at the Furnace they guarded the roads leading to the rear of the Point. The left wing, composed of Howe's Massachusetts and Parson's Connecticut divisions under Major-General Heath, commanded the approaches on the east side of the river as far as Continental Village. The garrison of West Point and Constitution Island opposite, including three brigades of Massachusetts and North Carolina troops, formed the center under Major-General McDougall. Washington established his headquarters at New Windsor, seven miles above. His army about him mustered less than ten thousand effectives, but it was in a position to defy the enemy with double the number. It now remained to be seen whether the latter would attack. There could be no other objective. There was nothing else in the Northern field to be so jealously guarded as these interior passes. Washington had repeatedly written that West Point must be Clinton's aim, and that this was the universal opinion in camp can hardly admit of doubt. Baron Steuben reflected it in a paper submitted to his chief later in July. "Whatever means the enemy may employ," he wrote, "I am positive that their operations are directed exclusively to getting possession of this post, and of the river as far as Albany. If this is not their plan, they have not got one which is worth the expense of a campaign. On their success depends the fate of America. The consequence is, therefore, that there is nothing of greater importance

to us than to avert this blow. Let them burn whatever they have not burned already, and this campaign will add to their shame, but not to their success. Were West Point strongly fortified, supplied with sufficient artillery, ammunition and provisions, and a garrison of two thousand men, we ought not to be induced to take our forces more than a day's march from it. I go farther and say that our army should be destroyed or taken before we allow them to commence an attack on West Point. Let us defend the North river and hold this center and the end of our Campaign will be glorious." With what surprise and curious interest would these American generals have read the outlines of Clinton's projected campaign as he had privately confided them to Haldimand! West Point was not his object. "Without a fleet and a very superior army it is not attackable, and, for other motives, I should never form an idea of attacking it," he had written. The situation lay in a nut shell: Clinton would not march into the mountains; Washington could not be drawn into the open.

There was a certain tension in this attitude which might continue without incident through the campaign season or recoil in an unexpected way. It was the latter that happened. We presently reach, not a climax, for movements thus far had been, as it were, of an *ex-parte* character, but a piece of side-play, a brilliant surprise which had

all the effect of a grand operation. It was the storming of Stony Point by the American Light Infantry at midnight of July 15th.

Washington watched his opportunities. His enforced inactivity through the summer, by being misinterpreted, might have a depressing effect upon the country. He felt called upon to say to Governor Trumbull, of Connecticut, that while he deplored the damage and distress occasioned by Tryon's invasion, it had been out of his power to prevent it, and that for sound military reasons he could not uncover the Highlands. Doubtless he would have said the same to Governor Livingston, of New Jersey, had Clinton marched across that State to Middlebrook or Easton and plundered its inhabitants. The enemy could be checked only on the line of the Hudson. Might not they themselves make a "false move" in that vicinity of which he could take advantage? From the moment they retired to New York early in June Washington had been harboring the feasibility of a bold stroke upon their garrisons at the Ferry. While Clinton's step backward was a puzzle, it was an interesting question whether in a strictly tactical sense those garrisons were not exposed. There they lay on an American line of communication, affecting a certain haughty indifference to the fact that they were much nearer their enemy than their own supports at New York. To use the British military term of the day they were a

standing "affront" to Washington. It was not in resentment, but to achieve some needed, inspiring success, like that of Trenton or Bennington, that the latter soon determined on an enterprise against them.

Washington's first thought was to surprise both garrisons simultaneously. This he abandoned as too difficult to effect. An assault on one beginning a few minutes in advance of time would give the alarm to the other. He decided to attempt Stony Point alone and then, if circumstances favored, to move openly on Verplanck's. By the tenth of July he had learned enough about each—their fortifications, number of troops, position of pickets and degree of vigilance—to enable him to draw up a plan of attack in minute detail. His information, as the event proved, was remarkably accurate. At an early day Major Harry Lee, one of the famous partizan officers of the Revolution, was instructed to patrol the region and report all incidents and appearances to headquarters. His Legion of one hundred and fifty troopers and riflemen scattered in companies among the hills and along the pathways over Donderberg, encountered the enemy's foraging parties, picked up deserters, and obtained intelligence from farmers who were permitted to take fruit and vegetables to the garrison. Lee's most active officer, Captain Allen McLane, was not prevented on one occasion from closely approaching the post with a flag of truce, and his quick eye caught important points in the

position. Colonel Rufus Putnam, formerly Washington's Chief Engineer, made a careful survey of the ground from the surrounding hills and at a later date surveyed Verplanck's. His rough draft of Stony Point is reproduced in these pages. Still later, Wayne and other officers who were to lead the assault, made observations for their personal guidance, and on July 6th Washington himself rode down with an escort and under cover of McLane's riflemen spent the day reconnoitering the vicinity before giving the final order for the attempt.¹

Stony Point, shooting out into the river, a defiant promontory with rocky and wooded faces, has been fittingly described as a natural sentinel guarding the gateway of the far-famed Highlands of the Hudson. Rising about one hundred and fifty feet at its highest point it projects more than half a mile from the line of the shore, but is of

¹ From Washington's Account Book, Revolutionary War :

		DOLLARS.	LAWFUL MONEY.
June, 1779. No. 55.	To expenses in going from the canton ^t at Middlebrook in the Jerseys to New Windsor & to West Point, preceeding the army upon Gen'l Clinton's movem ^t up the N ^o . River to Verplanks Point.....	1,400	
July. No. 57.	To expences in Recong the enemy's Post at Stony Point previous to the assault of it & on a visit to it after it was taken.....		10

nearly double the length as an isolated feature in the scenery. Its westerly or inland slope falls off irregularly to a marsh, extending in a bended shape from the river above to the river below. During the Revolution this marsh was deep and difficult of passage, especially so at high water, over which the King's Ferry road crossed along a causeway. The Ferry landing was at the foot of a depression on the northern side of the Point. As the surrounding ground on the mainland did not command the promontory, with the artillery then available to the Americans, the position was in effect an insular one and possessed great defensive strength. The enemy fortified it with two sets of works. On the uneven summit were erected seven or eight detached batteries which with a few connecting trenches would have formed a large enclosed fort. At the east end it included the site of the destroyed American blockhouse, now occupied by the Government lighthouse, and at the west end a natural rock formation was converted into a strong bastion. Directly in front of these batteries ran a line of abattis across the Point from water to water. Lower down toward the mainland were three outer works on natural projections with a second line of abattis in front, and all the woods around were cut down. The garrison consisted of the Seventeenth regiment of British Infantry, the grenadier company of the Seventy-first, a body of Loyal Americans and detachments of artillery, in all something over six hun-

dred men, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Johnson, a young officer of approved merit. They regarded the post as impregnable and called it their "little Gibraltar." In fact it was a formidable object, on which no sane commander would think of making an open daylight assault. As for a night attack by the rebels, the British little dreamed of it, though never relaxing ordinary vigilance.

It was a night attack, however, that Washington meditated. He had chosen Stony Point for the enterprise for the reasons that Verplanck's was on lower ground and could be cannonaded from the opposite side after capture; that in its fancied security the Stony Point garrison might be open to a surprise, and that the moral effect of success in the case would be increased by the dangers of the undertaking. In making preparations for it profound secrecy was necessary. Washington confided his plans only to General Wayne and a few trusty subordinates who were to be immediately concerned in their execution. His letters and orders referring to the matter are all in his own hand. By the tenth of July his views had matured and he communicated them to Wayne in the form of "instructions." The assault, he said, should be attempted by the Light Infantry alone—a body of select troops then in process of organization. Marching "under cover of the night" to the enemy's lines, securing every person they found to prevent discovery and rapidly driving in sentries

and guards, they were to make the final charge, "the whole of them," with fixed bayonets and muskets unloaded. From the information of a deserter and his own observation he judged that the main approach should be on the south side of the Point along a beach, or rather sunken sand bar in which the marsh there terminated, and which was usually covered with water. This beach has since been built up by the debris of the river and forms a roadway to the lighthouse, as may be seen from the accompanying illustration of the site. It reaches the Point just west of the line of rocks at its base about where the advanced line of abattis came down to the edge. For the first rush or surprise Washington considered two hundred chosen men and officers sufficient, to be preceded by small vanguards of prudent and determined men to remove obstructions, with the main body following at a short distance. The officers in the lead "are to know precisely what batteries or particular parts of the line they are respectively to possess, that Confusion and the consequences of indecision may be avoided." Smaller detachments might advance by the causeway and on the north side of the Point to distract the enemy in their defence and cut off their retreat, but not to show themselves until the assault had opened. "The usual time for exploits of this kind," continues Washington, "is a little before day, for which reason a vigilant officer is then more on the watch; I therefore recommend a midnight hour. . . . A

dark night and even a rainy one, if you can find the way, will contribute to your success. . . . As it is in the power of a single deserter to betray the design, defeat the project, and involve the parties in difficulties and danger, too much caution cannot be used to conceal the intended enterprise to the latest hour from all but the principal officers of your corps, and from the men till the moment of execution. . . . A white feather or cockade or some other visible badge of distinction for the night should be worn by our troops, and a watchword agreed on to distinguish friends from foes." This general plan Wayne was informed he might improve or change as occasion required, which, after another close examination of the enemy's position, that officer modified in two respects. He proposed that there should be two attacking columns—the right and stronger one to advance on the south side by the beach, as Washington had indicated, and the left to strike by way of the north face at the same time. The third detachment forming a center and pushing along the causeway, was to act as a feint and open a rapid fire on the outworks to divert the enemy while the two other parties, silently charging up the flanks and rear, completed the business bayonet in hand.

The troops now to be called upon to storm Stony Point formed the picked corps in the Continental army known as the Light Infantry. Had modern methods then prevailed, had the country been

flooded with dailies and magazines and kodaks and war correspondents and hero-worshippers, these soldiers and their exploits would have been extolled to the skies. Our books contain little about them. The corps was modelled after a similar body in the British army which became noted for its conspicuous service in that war. The two end companies of a regiment of "regulars" were called the Light Infantry and Grenadiers and were composed of chosen men commanded by brave and experienced officers. During active service these companies were detached and organized into separate battalions, and again into brigades, known collectively as the Light Infantry and Grenadiers. In the field they formed the van of the army, the Infantry in advance, and were expected to guard against surprises and be the first in action. They were extensively engaged all through the conflict and suffered heavy losses, which were repaired by drafts from the regiments they represented. In Washington's army this advanced corps was not so elaborately organized. It contained no grenadiers, and the Light Infantry kept its formation only during the campaign season. For 1775 and 1776 such detachments were not attempted, the inexperience and brief terms of the troops preventing. In their place were Knowlton's "Rangers" who distinguished themselves at Harlem Heights, and Morgan's well-known "Riflemen," so effective at Saratoga. In 1777 we have the first regular American Light

Corps, about a thousand strong, under General Maxwell, of New Jersey, which was present at Brandywine, and, in 1778, a similar body under General Scott, of Virginia, organized after the battle of Monmouth. During the next three years, however,—1779, '80, '81—the Infantry were selected earlier and more carefully, and in two campaigns made a name for themselves.

Wayne's corps was drawn from the forty-six small battalions now under Washington's immediate command. Organized into four regiments of three hundred and forty men and officers each it represented the elite of the army. All were veterans of from one to four years' service. Had they carried banners inscribed with the names of their battles hardly a field of the war to that date, from Lexington to Monmouth, could have been omitted. Each regiment being divided into two battalions three field officers were assigned to it. The first was commanded by Colonel Christian Febiger, a young Dane of fortune, who came to this country on a mercantile venture in 1774 and when the war broke out stepped to the front with the Colonists. He had proved himself every inch a soldier at Bunker Hill and Quebec. His first battalion commander was Lieutenant-Colonel Fleury, a valiant Frenchman, and for the second battalion Major Thomas Posey, of Virginia, was selected—Posey, who kept adding to his laurels and, going west after the war, became Major-General, in 1812, and later the second Governor of Indiana. This

regiment was composed of Virginia troops with two companies from Pennsylvania. The Colonel of the second regiment was Richard Butler, probably the ablest, bravest and most reliable field-officer of the Pennsylvania line. Troops from his own State composed the first battalion commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel Hay who had gallantly served with Wayne since 1776. The second battalion, Maryland men, with a few from Delaware, was under Major "Jack" Steward who carried himself with the jaunty air of a Baltimore "Macaroni" of the day and knew no such thing as fear. The third regiment was made up wholly of Connecticut companies, representing the comparatively large division from that State and placed under the command of Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs. He knew something about storming as he had charged under Montgomery upon Quebec and after his exchange as a prisoner made a clever descent on the enemy's shipping at Sag Harbor. Lieutenant-Colonel Isaac Sherman, son of Roger Sherman, one of the "Signers," a veteran of four years' continuous service, active at Trenton and Princeton, commanded the first battalion, and Captain Henry Champion the second, no field officer being appointed to it until later. The fourth regiment was not fully organized at the time of the assault. It was subsequently commanded by Colonel Rufus Putnam, of Massachusetts, with Lieutenant-Colonel William Hull, of the same line, and Major Hardy Murfree, of North Carolina, as

battalion commanders. At this date it was under Hull, who, with seven Massachusetts Light Companies, had been in command of the outposts on the east side of the Hudson and had lately been transferred to the vicinity of West Point, where he was joined by Major Murfree and two companies of his own line. Putnam and Hull had been through the Saratoga campaign and had experienced much hard service, while Murfree is remembered by the merchant and traveler, Elkanah Watson, as "an intrepid officer of the Revolution" who afterwards settled on a plantation on the Meherrin, where the town of Murfreesboro has since grown up. Why New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey were not represented in this draft of officers and men is explained by the fact that the troops from those States formed the bulk of Sullivan's force now well on its way against the western Indians.

All these officers of the Light Infantry had been selected by Washington, as before he had selected their leader. His choice fell upon one who would have been the choice of every man who witnessed his conduct on the field of Monmouth. With a growing reputation among the troops of his own State, he had at this period become well known throughout the Continental army as one of the most capable, dashing and magnetic of its Brigadiers. What he now successfully accomplished gave him national fame. Anthony Wayne was the ideal chief of a Light Corps, the soldier above all others to execute the difficult task at Stony Point.

The first and second regiments of Infantry were the first organized, and being on the west side, were stationed as an advanced guard on the road from Fort Montgomery, on the Hudson, to Putnam's wing, at the Forest of Dean. Later they encamped at a place called Sandy Beach, two miles above the fort and five miles below West Point. The third and fourth regiments were kept at separate points until the day before the action, so that no spy or deserter could report to the enemy the massing of a dangerous corps only a few hours' march above them. The night of the 15th had been named for the attempt, but Meigs and Hull were not ordered to Wayne's Camp until the 14th. At the same time, by Washington's direction, Captains Pendleton and Barr and twenty-four men of the Artillery joined the troops, taking two small field pieces with them for appearance's sake. The detachment, it was hoped, would presently be handling some captured garrison guns below. All told, Wayne's force mustered about thirteen hundred and fifty strong, and on the forenoon of the 15th it was drawn up as a completed body for general inspection. It was the first time, as Wayne stated in his orders, that he had the opportunity of reviewing them as a whole, and he required the entire command, officers and men, old guards and new, to appear, "fresh shaved and well powdered," and fully equipped and rationed, that he might judge of their provision and readiness for service.

At noon the inspection was over, but instead of being dismissed to its quarters the corps was wheeled into the road with the head of column facing southward, and the march upon Stony Point had begun. Passing the ruins of Fort Montgomery, the troops turned westerly towards the present village of Queensboro, four miles distant. This took them under Torn Mountain and around the base of rugged Bear Mountain into the back road, which effectually screened them from observation from the river. The route nearer the Hudson, by Fort Clinton and through Doodletown, was more direct but more exposed, and by following it the men might the sooner have suspected the object of their march, which Wayne wished to keep from them as long as possible. At Queensboro, near the house of one Clement, who seems to have been the solitary inhabitant of the district, the column, as the orders directed, halted for a brief rest. The road at this time was unrepaired and little travelled. Narrow and rough at best, it fell off at points into the merest pathway, which led up wild and precipitous hillsides or over deep swamps or through dense and sweltering ravines. It was not the region for a midsummer's afternoon parade and drill, and as the men picked their way through it, more often than not in single file, along the crest of Degaffles Rugh¹ and over massive Don-

¹ The name of the long elevation, just south of Queensboro, which Washington's surveyor, Erskine, gives it on the charts of the region. The several points here named appear on the accompanying map.

derberg at its western end, they may have half solved the meaning of the march. In addition, why the strict orders on that tedious tramp that not a soldier was to quit the ranks on any pretext whatsoever, except at a general halt, and then only in the company of an officer? Passing Storm's house, where Wayne was to meet Major Lee with the latest information, the troops came to a final halt at eight o'clock in the evening, thirteen miles from camp, at the farm of David Springsteel, one mile and a half directly back or west of Stony Point.

All precautions meanwhile had been taken to veil the movement from the enemy. "Knowledge of your intention ten minutes previously obtained," Washington had written to Wayne, "blasts all your hopes," and he cautioned him to guard every avenue of approach to the British works by which spies or deserters could pass. Wayne detailed some faithful men for this duty. Before the Light Corps left camp, Captain James Chrystie, of the Pennsylvania battalion, had been directed to proceed with a small detachment by the Doodletown road, and at night station sentries close to the Point from the river above to an old mill near the causeway. He was also "to take and keep" all the male inhabitants in the vicinity, one suspected person in particular, and await further orders. "You'll hear from me this evening," added the General. Captain McLane, already referred to, now perfectly familiar with the country

around, had also been keeping watch, and the day before had deprived the garrison of some camp luxuries. "Took the widow Calhoun," he quaintly notes, "and another widow going to the enemy with chickens and greens. Drove off twenty head of horned cattle from their pasture." Then with his company he lay in the woods the night through, only to be on hand the next evening to complete the cordon of sentries around the garrison. Colonel Butler and Majors Posey and Lee had also come down in advance of the troops, once more to make the most careful observations; and, finally, Wayne himself, with several field officers, upon arriving with the column, proceeded to the front for the third time, inspected the points of approach as they appeared in the shadows of the night, and, returning to Springsteel's, prepared for the assault. The secret of the enterprise had been kept to the last moment. Not a breath of suspicion had reached the enemy. It may be doubted whether even a single American sentry knew of the thunderbolt behind him which was about to be launched against the garrison. The movement to the point of execution had been most skilfully planned and conducted, and Wayne's only thought now was the charge and his personal fate. Bravely conscious of the hazard of the attempt and calmly alive to his closer obligations, he sketched out his will just before the start and inclosed it to an intimate friend. "I know," he wrote him, "that friendship will induce you to attend

to the education of my little son and daughter. I fear their tender mother will not survive this stroke. I am called to sup, but where to breakfast? Either within the enemy's lines in triumph, or in another world—then farewell.”¹

The final dispositions were now made. As the troops arrived at Springsteel's they formed in two columns in rear of a hill. Somewhat later they were called to attention to hear Wayne's order of battle read, and the men for the first time knew what was before them. Then came an hour's suppressed excitement and rapid preparation. White paper was passed around and each man fixed a piece in his hat that he might know his comrades from the foe in the thick of the melee. Not a gun, with the exceptions to be noted, was loaded. Steuben, their Valley Forge drillmaster, had been insisting that they must learn to use and depend upon the bayonet, like the British regular, and here was their opportunity. The officers carried esontoons or spears. Very stern and sobering was the order that if any soldier presumed to load and fire from the ranks, or begin the battle by any act of his own, or be so lost to every feeling of honor as to attempt to retreat one single foot, or skulk in the face of danger, he was immediately to be put to death by the officer nearest him. On the

¹ Wayne dated his letter at “Springsteel's 11 o'clock P. M. & near the hour & scene of carnage.” Among the officers, Col. Febiger left a brief note the day before disposing of his effects in case he was called upon to take his place, as he expressed it, “among the de-ceas'd heroes of America.”

other hand, their General not only expressed the fullest confidence in the bravery and soldiership of the troops, not doubting that they would do honor to the army and their States by winning a glorious victory; but, following military precedent, he offered them rewards. Five hundred dollars and immediate promotion was to be the prize of the first man entering the enemy's works; lesser sums to the next four in order, and, in general, all who specially distinguished themselves were to be brought to the favorable notice of the Commander-in-Chief. To the right column were assigned the regiments under Febiger, Meigs and Hull. Butler's regiment composed the smaller left column. Major Murfree, with his two companies, the only ones to carry loaded guns, was to conduct the feint in the center. Each column, marching with half-platoon front, was headed by a strong vanguard of determined men, all volunteers, one hundred and fifty for the right and one hundred for the left, who, with axes in hand and muskets slung, were to tear away obstructions; while these in turn were preceded by two parties of an officer and twenty men, forlorn hopes, to cover the others and be the first to rush headlong into the hand-to-hand encounter. The officers selected to lead were those who had already reconnoitered the ground, and were in consequence taken from Febiger's and Butler's regiments. The gallant Fleury was on the right, Steward on the left, and each was to aim for a given point as marked on diagrams of

the works. When Lieutenant Gibbon, of Butler's, learned that an officer had been appointed to the "forlorn" in his column, he protested that lots should be cast for the honor. This was granted, and the lot fell to himself, to the keen disappointment of the others. Lieutenant Knox, of Febiger's, led the twenty on the right. Wayne announced to the command that he should head the larger column in person; also assuring the troops that General Muhlenberg's Brigade would follow in their rear as a support in case of reverse. Finally, just as the victorious troops closed in on the enemy and dashed into the works, they were all to shout and keep shouting the watchword for the night, "The Fort's our own."

At half-past eleven o'clock the corps advanced from Springsteel's, allowing thirty minutes to reach the marsh at the base of the Point. The order of battle and the traditions of the neighborhood indicate that the two columns diverged at the start, the right under Wayne coming around through the present Stony Point Village, and the left under Butler following a farm lane, now a road, toward the northerly side. As the latter neared the river, Murfree in the rear broke off by the right to the causeway. All marched in perfect silence and reached their destined points at the edge of the marsh promptly at midnight, the hour set by Washington for the assault. The garrison extended their pickets to that side only in the day time. The critical moment had come, and to

Wayne's column it must have been more impressive than to the others. To this southern approach the enemy's position presented its most forbidding aspect, the promontory standing out in black and threatening relief against the darkness. The approach, too, was immediately covered by the outer works and assailants would be received at once with a heavy fire, while Butler and Murfree would first have to drive in the sentries some little distance.

When Wayne's troops reached the marsh it was found that the water covering the beach at the river's edge, already referred to, was deeper than anticipated and the quick advance would be delayed in the wading. But forward they went, and right there "the storm" as Wayne called it, broke upon the night. It was two hundred yards across and as they entered the water—one officer states it was a little before—they were discovered by the enemy's pickets opposite, who instantly opened upon them and gave the general alarm. Without responding straight on the column moved, preserving its formation remarkably, and seeming to gather momentum although the water in places was waist deep. At exactly half-past twelve—as a Captain who looked at his watch at the time informs us—the column had crossed the beach and was close to the outer abattis. The enemy were now pouring in an incessant fire of cannon balls, grape shot and musketry, but Fleury and Knox in advance of every one led with great

courage and dash; the vanguard tore away the abattis in part—time was too precious for delay there—and throwing away their axes unslung their muskets; the main body followed closely clambering over the trunks and stakes and forming on the other side, and, passing the outer battery, all pushed up the steep and broken ascent for the main works at the summit. In a few minutes there would be more trying business, but with the game half in hand there was no flinching. It was the moment for the Continental soldier to prove his worth. These men represented the best blood of the land. Here, as on many a field in the wars to come, class distinctions were lost in the companionship which patriotism breeds, and charging up into the teeth of the finest troops in the world could have been found, side by side, farmers and merchants, frontiersmen and college graduates, artisans and planters, good colonial stock, polished and in the rough, and every man conscious that it was not for glory but for fireside and country that he must now strike a winning blow. Brave fellows were falling, but in the darkness and swift advance the enemy's fire failed of serious effect. Wayne himself received a flesh wound on the head at the second abattis, but through his aids and with the point of his spear he still gave directions. The handsome Captain Selden, of Meigs' regiment, was cruelly shot in the side, surviving, however, to be given the command of Stony Point later in the war. Captain Phelps, Lieutenant Palmer and En-

sign Hall, of the same command, fell, shot in arms and hips. On the left Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel Hay, of the Pennsylvania battalion, was also wounded, not fatally; and as for narrow escapes, there were marks enough to show—Febiger with a bullet furrow on his nose, Hull, shot through hat and boot, clothes riddled up and down the ranks, swords bent, muskets scarred. But these things were unnoticed—the column was just under the frowning crest.

Meanwhile the garrison was up in arms. At the first alarm the artillerists manned the batteries and the infantry took to their stations and prepared for defence only to be presently amazed at what was going on around them. Colonel Johnson, the commandant, hurried down with a detachment to the outer line under the impression that the Americans were attacking at the center. Here the value of Wayne's suggestion that there should be a feint made in front was obvious. It was clearly Major Murfree and his two companies who were firing and making a great show of forcing through at that point. The Major's instructions were to open "a galling fire" after crossing the causeway the moment he heard the enemy's alarm sounded on Wayne's approach. He played his part admirably. Colonel Butler also appeared on the left at the right moment. After crossing the marsh at the upper end he rapidly made his way along the northern face of the Point without meeting much opposition until the first abattis was

reached. He was but a few minutes behind Wayne although they had been separated for an hour and were half a mile apart, so well had the movement been planned and timed. Major Steward, leading the column, after avoiding the outer battery on that flank, directed Lieutenant Gibbon with the forlorn hope to incline to the right toward the main works while he kept on to their upper side. Gibbon, with his clothes "muddy to the neck and almost torn to rags," attacked and lost seventeen of his twenty men, killed or wounded. With him as a volunteer was Major Noirmont de Laneuville, an enthusiastic Frenchman, who wished to share the dangers of the night.

Quick and desperate work now at the summit. The right column reached it first. Its vanguard struck the works near the rock or flag bastion at the western end and rushed through the sally port or over the parapet. Lieutenant-Colonel Fleury was the first man in and to him fell the honor of lowering the enemy's standard. Right after came Knox of the forlorn hope with Sergeant Baker, of Virginia, four times wounded during the action, as the third. Sergeant Spencer, from the same State, and Sergeant Donlop, of Pennsylvania, each twice wounded, were fourth and fifth. On their heels followed the rest swarming in, Major Posey and Captain Shelton leading. Immediately the shout arose, startling the defenders: "The fort's our own," "The fort's our own!" Clashing of weapons followed. Bayonet, sword and spear

were pushed with unsparing thrust where surrender was not instant. The garrison was not to be allowed to concentrate or rally. With such terrible energy did the Continentals plunge into the affray that the enemy, scattering into groups, were soon raising the cry here and there, "Mercy, Mercy, dear Americans; Quarter, Quarter!" At the point where the entrance was effected there appear to have been two companies of the Seventeenth regulars, whose resistance was short lived, and upon their surrender Major Posey with his battalion pushed across the enclosure, that is to the northerly side, while Febiger seized other points. Meigs at the head of his regiment, and Hull following, overcame opposition at the east end around the site of the present lighthouse, apparently capturing the Loyalist corps and retreating parties. It would also appear that about half the garrison, six companies of the Seventeenth, were at this juncture below at the outer redoubts with Colonel Johnson, looking, as stated, for the main attack there, when suddenly the shouts of victory and the din of arms above and behind woke them to the fact that they were entirely surrounded, entrapped, with the rebels in possession of their main defences. Johnson turned back only to fall into the hands of Febiger, to whom he surrendered in person. He was ordered to his tent under guard. The Seventeenth had a fighting reputation in the British army and at points it resisted desperately. Captain Tew, one of its oldest

and most distinguished officers, gallantly held out, and refusing to yield, fell at his post. If the detached and bewildered companies attempted to reach their central works it was only to meet one or the other of the American wings and be overpowered. It took but thirty minutes from the time the beach was crossed to bring matters to this turn, and, as we have seen, it was mainly effected by Wayne's larger column. The left contributed by sweeping along the northern flank and driving parties of the enemy into the clutches of the right. As Major Steward came through the embrasure of a battery of two large guns, looking up the river, Posey was there to greet and help him in. With him among the first on that side was Captain Jordan of the vanguard. Both columns, as Wayne reported reached the summit substantially at the same time—ten minutes apart. At exactly one o'clock the work was over. Stony Point was taken.

Ringling cheers from the Continentals announced their victory. Hull tells us that they were quickly answered by the garrison at Verplanck's and from the *Vulture* in the river, in the belief that the assailants were repulsed. Word of their loss reached them through two of the enemy's officers. The only man to escape from Stony Point was Lieutenant Roberts, of the Artillery, who swam nearly a mile to the man-of-war and enlightened its commander. He could give no particulars of what had happened beyond his own good luck.

At Verplanck's, upon hearing the firing opposite, Brigade-Major Benson rowed across and climbed up the Point only to find himself among Americans. Darkness helped him out and he found his way back to be sent with the news of the disaster to Sir Henry Clinton whom he reached the next morning at eight. There was no sleep at Stony Point that night. Wayne's aids, Majors Fishbourne and Archer, and other officers helped their wounded Commander into the captured works and immediately he despatched the news to Washington in a soldierly note:

"STONEY POINT, 16th July, 1779,
"2 O'Clock A. M.

"*Dear Gen'l:*

"The fort & garrison with Col. Johnston are ours.

"Our officers & men behaved like men who are determined to be free.

"Yours most sincerely,

"ANT'Y WAYNE."

"GEN'L WASHINGTON."

Fishbourne bore the message with all speed to Headquarters, as at a later date Archer was honored as bearer of full particulars to Congress at Philadelphia. The General's congratulatory order to his own command was equally brief:

"HEAD QUARTERS LIGHT INFANTRY,
"STONY POINT, July 16, 1779.

"Field officer for to-morrow—Col Febiger:

"Gen. Wayne returns his warmest thanks to the officers and soldiers for their coolness and intrepidity in the storm

on the enemies works at this place, on the night of the 15th inst.

“The perfect execution of orders and the superior gallantry exhibited on the occasion reflects the highest honor on the troops engaged.”¹

Washington immediately sent the news to all the camps.

“ HEAD QUARTERS,

“ NEW WINDSOR, July 16, 1779.

“Parole, *Wayne*.

“Countersign, *Light Infantry*.

“The Commander-in-Chief is happy to congratulate the army on the success of the troops under Brigadier-General Wayne, who, last night, with the corps of Light Infantry, surprised and took the enemy’s post at Stony Point, with the whole garrison, cannon and stores, with very inconsiderable loss on our side. The General has not yet received the particulars of the affair, but he has the satisfaction to learn that the officers and men in general gloriously distinguished themselves in the attack.

“He requests the Brigadier and his whole corps to accept his warmest thanks for the good conduct and signal bravery manifested upon the occasion.”

At the same time the entire right wing was put under marching orders with three days’ rations, tents and baggage packed, to be ready to meet any counter move on the part of the enemy.

Hardly was the capture effected when the American detachment of artillery, under Captains

¹ From the only known original in order book of Lieutenant Benjamin, Adjutant to Meigs’ Light regiment.

Pendleton and Barr, turned the garrison guns on Verplanck's Point opposite and bombarded it, but without eliciting reply. The *Vulture* they drove from her moorings down stream. As to losses and material results it was found after daylight that the prisoners taken numbered five hundred and forty-three. They were sent to Easton, Pennsylvania. Of the enemy sixty-three were killed, and according to their own reports, over seventy wounded. Of the Americans, fifteen were killed and eighty-three wounded, two-thirds of the loss falling on the right column. Fifteen fine pieces of artillery of various calibres and a considerable quantity of military stores were captured. The money value of the latter, by direction of Congress, was subsequently divided "among the gallant troops by whom the post was reduced."

VI

EFFECT OF STONY POINT—THE YEAR'S RESULTS AT HOME AND ABROAD

Two days after its capture, July 17th, Washington, Greene, Steuben and other officers rode down to Stony Point. It was always fresh in Hull's recollection how cordially the Commander-in-Chief took his comrades by the hand and with what joy his countenance glowed. He minutely examined every part of the fortifications, his attention being particularly drawn to those places where the two columns ascended the hill, mounted the parapets and first entered the works. The comparatively small sacrifice of life among his troops astonished him. High praise poured in from all quarters, such as is noticed in the Preface and much more. Congress voted gold medals and promotion to the officers in the van which they conducted so fearlessly and skilfully—medals to Wayne, Fleury, and Steward; promotion to Knox and Gibbon.¹ Even the enemy applauded the achievement and especially commented on the humanity of the assailants in granting quarter in every case when military custom of the time justified the massacre of gar-

¹The resolutions of Congress are given in Dawson's "Stony Point"; cuts of the medals may be found in Lossing's "Field Book of the Revolution."



SOUTHERN VIEW OF STONY POINT

Showing line of Wayne's Approach along the Beach on the left. The troops charged up the hill to the top at center of the picture.

risons surprised at night. The moral effect of the event was far reaching in the American camp. It showed that patience and discipline were bearing fruit, that with such soldiers the Continental army, small as it was, would be always a power and right arm on which the cause could depend. It was the ambition of similar corps in after years to emulate the Light Infantry of 'Seventy-nine. The British soldier, too, showed an increased respect for his antagonist. It was a compliment, hardly in disguise, when generals in New York were inquiring a little later where "Mr. Wayne" was stationed.

Respecting Verplanck's Point it will suffice to say that Washington was disappointed at the failure of his plan to attack it as soon as Wayne had succeeded. A diversion was made there during the assault to be followed up, if possible, with something more. Colonel Rufus Putnam had been directed to approach the position with a detachment on the night of the 15th and alarm the garrison the moment he heard the firing at Stony Point. This service he performed.¹ It was expected that Nixon's and Paterson's brigades would be on hand the next day to close on Verplanck's and capture it by the slower process of a seige. The failure is thus explained by Washington: "The evening appointed for the attack I directed Major-General McDougall (at West Point) to put two brigades

¹ See Colonel Putnam's own account in the Appendix, No. 56, from the original MSS., with plan of Verplanck's.

under marching orders to be moved down towards Verplanck's, as soon as he should receive intelligence of the success of the attempt on this side, and requested General Wayne to let his despatches to me pass through General McDougall, that he might have the earliest advice of the event. But by some misconception, they came directly to headquarters, which occasioned a loss of several hours. The next morning, Major-General Howe was sent to take command of those troops, with orders to advance to the vicinity of the enemy's works, and open batteries against them. I was in hopes that this might either awe them, under the impression of what had happened on the other side, to surrender, or prepare the way for an assault. But some accidental delays, in bringing on the heavy cannon and intrenching tools necessary for an operation of this kind, unavoidably retarded its execution, till the approach of the enemy's main body made it too late. General Howe, to avoid being intercepted, found himself under the necessity of relinquishing his project and returning to a place of security." This operation would have come under the immediate superintendence of General Heath, who commanded on that side, but at that moment he was away with the Connecticut Division, watching the enemy's main force at Mamaroneck. Washington recalled him on the 16th, to supercede Howe, but on his arrival on the 18th he found that officer retreating. It was then too late to effect the object.

When Sir Henry Clinton learned what had happened at King's Ferry he turned about as if panic-struck. The distant sounds of the midnight cannon at Stony Point were heard across the hills and fields of Westchester County in his camp at Mamaroneck—so says Colonel Simcoe, one of his daring troopers—but what they forebode no one could tell until Benson brought the news the next forenoon. Immediately Clinton broke up camp, marched his army back to the Hudson, started a portion of it by land for Verplanck's, which he feared would also fall, recalled Tryon and Collier who were on the point of sailing for New London from White-stone, Long Island, and assembled his fleet and transports off Yonkers again for another but enforced embarkation up the river. Head winds delayed them until the 19th, when they arrived in Haverstraw Bay.

Washington had no intention of holding Stony Point, as the enemy could besiege it by land and water, and on the 18th the place was evacuated. His efficient aids, Colonels Tench Tilghman and Alexander Hamilton, and other officers superintended the removal of the wounded, prisoners and stores, the works were dismantled and very little left to the foe but the bare rock of their late "Gibraltar." Clinton reoccupied it at once, put in a larger garrison and strengthened the works. His engineers recognized the defect in their previous defences by constructing a completely enclosed work at the summit. At the assault parties of

Wayne's men entered between the detached batteries. Another mistake would seem to have been the withdrawal of their night sentries to the inner edge of the marsh and in having no patrols beyond. They had shut themselves up in too narrow a compass. The garrison officers, otherwise, disclaimed having been caught napping.¹ One of them, Lieutenant Armstrong, was permitted to go into New York on parole and his report is thus briefly summarized by Adjutant-General Kemble:

"Saturday, July 24th.

"Received advice by Lieut. Armstrong, 17th, who was made prisoner at Stony Point, that the Garrison was not surprised, but was all under arms; that upon the first alarm Colonel Johnson marched with a Detachment to the place from whence the firing was heard in front; that the Rebels entered on their left by the Water, got in the rear, and were in the principal Redoubt before they knew anything of the matter, supposing them to be part of the Garrison; that another party of Rebels got between the principal Redoubts and out works, by which means the retreat from the latter was cut off."²

¹ Irving, Lossing and some others, describing the capture, repeat a story of the neighborhood that the British pickets were surprised and gagged by men in disguise, and that the assailants were thus able to approach very near the main lines before discovery. The tale is hardly worth considering, a poor tradition. The exploit would have been mentioned at the time among the numerous other incidents. Besides, the story requires us to believe that sentinels were gagged by three different parties at the three different points where the columns crossed the marsh. If the movements were to be simultaneous, why a picket surprise at one point only?

² "Kemble Papers," N. Y. Historical Soc. Vol. I, p. 181. See also Hull's account containing his conversation with Johnson.

Colonel Johnson, of course, defended himself, reporting to his Chief that he believed that "upon a just representation you will be fully convinced that it was not any neglect on my part, nor of the troops under my command, but the very superior force of the enemy that caused the capture." Upon his exchange more than a year later he called for a Court of Inquiry,¹ whose decision cannot be found on record, but the report was credited that the Colonel received a reprimand. He certainly returned to duty, to be taken prisoner again at Yorktown. Subsequently he rose to the grade of General in the British army, and was created a Baronet.

That the enemy, from the Commander-in-Chief down, keenly felt the blow, is beyond question. It was more than an "affront." Clinton admitted that it paralyzed his operations with the force he then had. The Connecticut raid and Stony Point had cost him a thousand men. He could no longer think of Middlebrook, although reports of the approach of a French fleet would have required him to suspend that plan. To Haldimand he wrote: "The unfortunate affair of Stony Point, tho' the enemy quitted it again upon our approach, not daring to risk a battle for it, retarded me much, and I was obliged to leave a strong garrison there to repair the works which two day's foul wind had

¹ The writer is indebted to Mr. John W. Jordan, Librarian of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, for the order appointing the Court as given in Document 16, Appendix.

given the enemy time to demolish. About this period the Minister puts me on my guard respecting La Motte Piquet's destination. I was therefore obliged to collect my army nearer King's Bridge. I am disappointed in my expectations of a reinforcement from the West Indies, and weak and miserable as I am, I am obliged to comply with your requisition." To Germaine he wrote in August: "I now find myself obliged by many cogent reasons to abandon every view of making an effort in this quarter"; and among the reasons, he names the waste of the season and "the operations of the enemy."¹ In his official report on the King's Ferry situation, dated July 25th, to be read in London, he acknowledges that he could not as yet form a satisfactory opinion as to the "accident," puts a fair face on the matter and makes a point of the fact that Washington declined to remain and accept battle by attempting to hold Stony Point. His report, with some important omissions, was published at home, and from that the English public derived about all it ever knew of the summer's operations. But within "Administration" circles the situation could have borne anything but a roseate hue. What Germaine wrote in reply is doubly interesting as conveying a rebuke and as containing one of the very few comments made by King George on the individual occurrences of the war in America. The letter is as follows:

¹ See this letter in full, No. 14, Appendix.

WHITEHALL, November 4th, 1779.

Sir:

. The King was much surprised and concerned to hear of the Rebels having assaulted and carried the Lines at Stony Point, and yet more so at the aggravating circumstance of the loss of the whole garrison. If you cannot upon the spot, yet less can I form a decisive judgment upon this Misfortune, but upon the present appearance of the transaction it seems extraordinary that an Enemy who could abandon their undertaking with precipitation and with circumstances of disgrace should have made a successful attempt against so strong a Fort. The loss of such a body of men must be severely felt and lamented. At the same time it did not escape the King's attention that you acted with your usual Zeal and Activity upon the occasion, and it would, indeed, have been a happy event had this Misfortune been the means of bringing Mr. Washington to a decisive engagement.

I am, &c.,

GEO. GERMAINE."¹

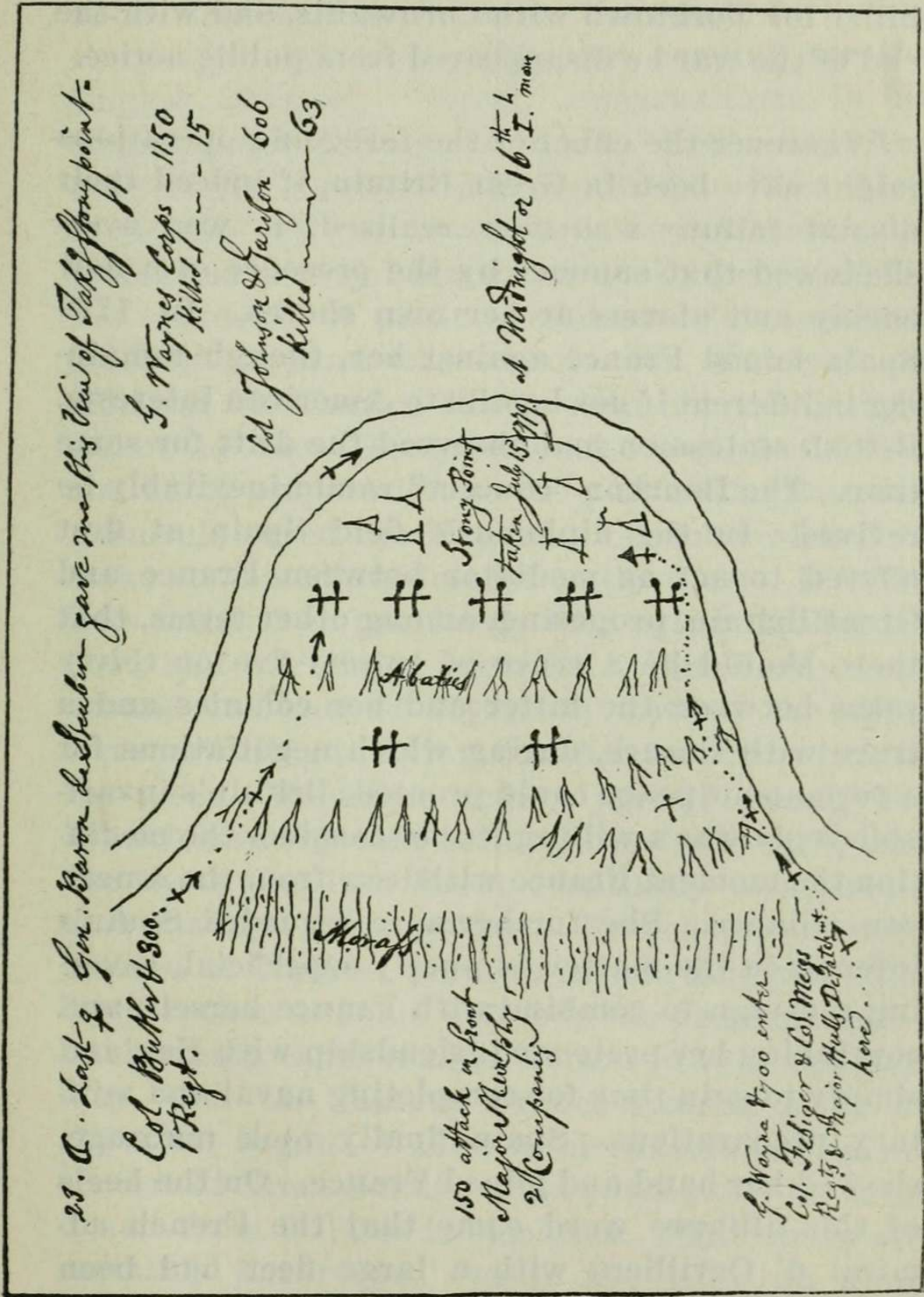
And thus the situation stood for 1779 in the all important northern field: With neither army materially reinforced, Washington commanding about ten thousand men in the Highlands foiled Sir Henry Clinton commanding about fourteen thousand effectives including the garrisons about New York. Had Stony Point not occurred the campaign would have been described as terminating in a drawn game. But Stony Point gave it character. The enemy were defeated and humiliated. Their desultory raids ceased. New London

¹ Spark's MSS. Collection, Harvard University.

was saved. New Jersey was spared. The campaign closed in midsummer—a boon to the Continental army which was ill-prepared for long and hard field service. It had suffered but trifling loss as against the thousand lost to the British. In prestige the American soldier gained immensely. The country at large was correspondingly exhilarated and its confidence more firmly grounded. Washington had outmanoeuvred his antagonist in masterly fashion and still held the key to the Continent.

Clinton's dejection is brought out in his correspondence. A few reinforcements finally reached him in August under convoy of Admiral Arbuthnot, but they were insufficient and, as we have seen, he gave up the field for that year. Moreover, some camp disorder put many of his troops on the sick list, or as Clinton afterwards claimed, "the Admiral brought in his fleet a jail fever which sent 6,000 men to the hospital immediately."¹ Not surprising that he decided to resign in favor of Lord Cornwallis. His letter requesting the relief, No. 13 in Appendix, comes from a soldier whose spirits were broken. But the King insisted on retaining him in command, and at the close of the year he recovered himself with the capture of Charleston, South Carolina, and the opening of an active campaign in that section. In the following year, however, he was made to share the responsi-

¹ In Clinton's "Observations on Stedman's History of the American War," London, 1794—a rare pamphlet.



SKETCH OF THE STORMING OF STONY POINT, 1779. From President Stiles' Diary, Library Yale University.

bility for Yorktown with Cornwallis, and with the end of the war he disappeared from public notice.

Whatever the effect of the foregoing operations might have been in Great Britain, if indeed their dismal failure was ever realized, it was overshadowed that summer by the presence of a new enemy and alarms at her own shores. In 1779 Spain joined France against her, though remaining indifferent if not hostile to American interests. British statesmen had observed the drift for some time. The Bourbon "concert" would inevitably be revived. In the diplomatic field Spain at first offered to act as mediator between France and Great Britain, proposing, among other terms, that there should be a truce of twenty-five or thirty years between the latter and her colonies and a truce with France, during which negotiations for a permanent peace could proceed. Britain's invariable reply was a willingness to consider the mediation the moment France withdrew from the American alliance. She furthermore regarded Spain's interest in the matter as purely superficial, covering a design to combine with France herself, and continuing her pretended friendship with England simply to gain time for completing naval and military preparations. Spain finally took umbrage, showed her hand and joined France. On the heels of this alliance word came that the French admiral d'Orvilliers with a large fleet had been joined at Cadiz by a Spanish one equally large

under Don Luis de Cordoba, the whole including sixty-eight sail of the line and heading for the English Channel. "Never," remarks Coxe, in his memoirs of the Kings of Spain, "Never since the time of the Armada had the British isles been threatened with so tremendous an armament and seldom have they been so unequally prepared for the contest." A panic spread over the southern coast of England whose protection devolved on Admiral Sir Charles Hardy with but thirty-eight sail of the line. Disagreement as to plan of action and hasty preparation on the part of the Bourbon Admirals saved the English. Cordoba wished to make an immediate descent on the coast. D'Orvilliers insisted on previously destroying the British fleet, and his advice prevailed. But Hardy kept around and east of Plymouth whither the allies were unwilling to follow and risk an action in narrow seas. Meantime scurvy spread among the French and Spanish sailors, hundreds died, and the fleets put into Brest eventually to separate and abandon their project. French troops were massed at Channel ports to invade England—Lafayette, then at home, active in the preparations—but nothing came of this. It was in that summer, also, that the famous Franco-Spanish siege of Gibraltar began. Under the circumstances the attention of Great Britain could pardonably be withdrawn from failures in America. "The times are certainly hazardous," wrote the King on June 16th, "but that ought to rouse the spirit of every

Englishman to support me, who have no wish but for the prosperity of my people, and no view but to do my duty and to shew by firmness in difficulties that I am not unworthy of the station in which it has pleased Providence to place me." In adding Spain to her enemies England's task became herculean. She bore up for two years longer, but the end was clearly forecast from 1779.

As for "Mr. Wayne" and his Light Corps, for whom we must reserve a closing word, they were the lions of the day in camp and social circles. When Major Archer and his escort entered Philadelphia with despatches for Congress it was with colors flying, trumpet sounding and hearts elated with the news. The names of Wayne and his comrades were toasted and cheered at dinners, fetes and town-meetings. To the country at large his victory had come like a refreshing tonic. "I congratulate you on our happy success. The Lord reigneth, let us rejoyce," wrote the sedate governor of Connecticut. The corps remained in the advance around Fort Montgomery until early in October when Washington proposed a second attempt on Stony Point. With other troops in support they marched down in bold view of the enemy, but prudent counsels prevailed and Wayne moved on. When Clinton heard of it—he was then at New York—it was characteristic of him to write: "I am going to watch Washington." In a few days he abandoned King's Ferry. On October 15th the

Infantry were at Haverstraw Heights where Wayne informed the command that thereafter it must always appear at its best, as movements would take it through towns and villages. "As the eyes of the Citizens and Country," runs his order, "will be more full upon the American Light Infantry than any other part of the army, the General can't doubt but that every officer without distinction will exert himself and require his men immediately to furbish up their arms and clothing in the best and neatest manner possible." The unshaven and the unpowdered especially received a reprimand; and he offered all his Stony Point prize share for the purchase of needles and thread with which to mend themselves up. While they were at Haverstraw the gallant Major Harry Lee, whose riflemen had followed them in the assault of the 15th, made his daring attack on Paulus Hook, now Jersey City, adding to the glory of the American soldier. Wayne then patrolled the country below, marched by Fort Lee, showing himself down around Staten Island and finally taking post at Second River, or the present Orange, New Jersey. There he remained until the respective armies went into winter quarters. In December, '79, his corps broke up to be merged again in the main army. In the following year, 1780, a larger Light Infantry Corps was organized with Lafayette at its head, but Clinton, his army still further depleted by drafts to the South, gave that ambitious body no opportunity to distinguish itself. In

the year after, however, 1781, the Light Corps, again under Lafayette, accomplished great things in doing more than others to bring Cornwallis to terms.

It is a mistake to suppose that the Revolution was won by enthusiasm, by "a handful of undisciplined yeomanry." The Continental veteran came to be the equal of any in the field—English, French, Hessian, the best in Europe. It was the result of discipline. Like Cromwell, Washington, by his insistence, developed a soldier who would be the proper representative of his cause. If the cause was worth fighting for, men must fight. In the closing years of the war, on fields like Stony Point and Yorktown, the British regular found that the trained provincial would measure arms with him. In a way, the Cavaliers were finally met by Ironsides.

AUTHORITIES

THE STORMING OF STONY POINT

AUTHORITIES

No. 1

KING GEORGE TO LORD NORTH ON THE AMERICAN WAR

Kew, June 11, 1779, 25 mins. pt. 10 A. M.

. . . . I should think it the greatest instance among the many I have met with of ingratitude and injustice, if it could be supposed that any man in my dominions more ardently desired the restoration of peace and solid happiness in every part of this empire than I do; there is no personal sacrifice I could not readily yield for so desirable an object; but at the same time no inclination to get out of the present difficulties, which certainly keep my mind very far from a state of ease, can incline me to enter into what I look upon as the destruction of the empire.

I have heard Lord North frequently drop that the advantages to be gained by this contest could never repay the expence; I owne that, let any war be ever so successful, if persons will sit down and weigh the expences, they will find, as in the last, that it has impoverished the State, enriched individuals, and perhaps raised the name only of the conquerors; but this is only weighing such events in the scale of a tradesman behind the counter; it is necessary for those in the station it has pleased Divine Providence to place me to weigh whether expences, though very great, are not sometimes necessary to prevent what might be more ruinous to a country than the loss of money.

The present contest with America I cannot help seeing as the most serious in which any country was ever engaged; it contains such a train of consequences that they must be examined to feel its real weight. Whether the laying a tax was deserving all the evils that have arisen from it, I should suppose no man could alledge that without being thought more fit for Bedlam than a seat in the Senate; but step by step the demands of America have risen: independence is their object; that certainly is one which every man not willing to sacrifice every object to a momentary and inglorious peace must concur with me in thinking that this country can never submit to. Should America succeed in that, the West Indies must follow them, not independence, but must for its own interest be dependent on North America. Ireland would soon follow the same plan and be a separate state; then this island would be reduced to itself and soon would be a poor island indeed, for, reduced in her trade, merchants would retire with their wealth to climates more to their advantage, and shoals of manufacturers would leave this country for the new empire. These self-evident consequences are not worse than what can arise should the Almighty permit every event to turn to our disadvantage. Consequently this country has but one sensible, one great line to follow, the being ever ready to make peace when to be obtained without submitting to terms that in their consequences must annihilate this empire, and with firmness to make every effort to deserve success.

[Donne's "Correspondence with Lord North," Vol. II.]

No. 2

PEACE COMMISSIONER WILLIAM EDEN TO ATTORNEY-
GENERAL WEDDERBURN, LONDON, ON THE
FAILURES OF THE BRITISH

GREENWICH, July 17, 1779.

My Dear Sir,

It is my lot to have a restless mind which must, and will, employ itself. Instead therefore of resting on my oars and enjoying my return to this poor old island, I have waded thro' all the printed representations and misrepresentations of every transaction that took place during my absence. I have endeavored, too, to collect some idea of our actual situation, so far as the exertions and views of government and the hazards and interests of the King's Dominions are respectively concerned.

Perhaps, as I am more removed from affairs than I have formerly been and can only see them indistinctly, the prospect appears to me rather gloomier than it ought to do. . . . The picture, however, which I conceive of it is such as I am extremely anxious to bring before your eyes if I can find words to describe it.

1. Every information to be obtained on the other side of the Atlantic tends to show that the Rebellion became formidable only by the waverings and delays of this side, and by the deference paid in Parliament to the bold assertions of men, who perhaps would not have declaimed or acted as they did, if they could have foreseen all the extent of the mischiefs which they were fomenting.

2. It is equally clear, that tho' our exertions always came interrupted and late, and consequently were greater than would otherwise have been necessary; yet when made, they were sufficient for the purpose, and failed only thro'

the ill-judgment or the misconduct of the Commanders employed.

3. I am also well convinced that the business is still practicable; indeed I shall be unwilling not to think it so, even if it were in some degree a Quixotism; for our total failure will be calamitous to an extent which no man can foresee or conceive.

4. It must, however, be confessed that our difficulties are greatly multiplied by the continued strain on our funds, by the war with France, and by the menacing appearance of Spain; and it is but too probable that the effort of this year is the last that we shall be able to make, unless it shall be attended with considerable successes.

5. It must also be confessed that the continued ill-fortune of the present Government has greatly shaken the confidence of its best disposed friends, and of the nation in general. Of this I have shown you some very respectable instances, and you must have had occasion to observe many others.

6. In short, we are entering upon the last struggle of the empire under infinite disadvantages, and I own frankly to you that I think the Cabinet as at present constituted totally unequal to the undertaking. It is unpleasant to go into particulars even in writing to you, but it is not too much to say of Individuals, that the Person who stands at the head of the Naval Department and is to direct a Naval war in which we fight for our existence as a Nation, is become to the last degree unpopular among the class of men who are to act under him; besides which professional knowledge is perhaps necessary in times of real pressure, and Lord Sandwich, who could name Admiral Graves, Lord Shulldham and Admiral Gambier to the chief commands in the most interesting stations, must either plead professional ignorance or must admit some other motive.

It is but too true, also, that the person who presides in the American office [Lord North] at the same time that he precludes every accession of strength from any other quarter to the King's Government, has contrived to lose the esteem and reliance of every description of men, civil or military, who are to serve with him or under him.

In plain English, the times require an unparalleled exertion of activity, spirit, invention, enterprize, judgment and concert; of which, when I look at the present Ministry, I see neither the existence nor the possibility. . . .

Faithfully and affectionately yours,

WM. EDEN.

[Stevens' "Facsimiles of MSS."]

No. 3.

SIR HENRY CLINTON TO GERMAINE.

HEADQUARTERS PHILLIPSBURG [near
Yonkers, N. Y.], June 18, 1779.

Sir:

. . . . Having ever been sensible of the importance of the posts of Stony Point and Verplank, the most direct and convenient communication between the provinces on either side of Hudson River, I have conceived no hour could be better chosen to possess myself of them, than when the enemy's works should be nearly completed; in these opinions, it has been made the first operation of the campaign. With the advantages derived from the enemy's

labor, I have been able, with little work and few materials, to establish at this place a post of tolerable security.

I shall not trouble your Lordship with a detail of the movements for this purpose, but content myself with informing you, that the troops destined for this service, under Major-General Vaughan, were joined after their embarkation by the corps from Virginia, which arrived in just time to proceed with him up the North River on the 30th of May.

In the morning of the 31st Major-General Vaughan landed with the gross of his command on the east side of the river, eight miles below Verplanks, whilst the Seventeenth, Sixty-third and Sixty-fourth regiments, with one hundred Yagers, which I accompanied, proceeded to within three miles of Stony Point, where they landed under Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson. On the ships coming in view, the rebels evacuated their works, which were in some forwardness, and set fire to a large blockhouse. As the troops approached to take possession, they made some show of resistance, by drawing up upon the hills, but did not wait a conflict.

Sir George Collier favored the expedition with the assistance of the galleys and gunboats of the fleet under his own direction, these exchanged some shot with Fort la Fayette, a small but compleat work on the east side of the river, whilst the troops were possessing themselves of the heights of Stony Point, which commanded it.

In the night, the artillery, which I found necessary, was landed, and Major-General Pattison assumed the command. His exertions and good arrangements, seconded by the cheerful labor of the troops, gave me the satisfaction of seeing a battery of cannon and mortars opened at five the next morning on the summit of this difficult rock. Their effect was soon perceived, as well as that of the galleys. General

Vaughan appearing at this time in the rear of the fort, prevented the retreat which the enemy were concerting. Under these circumstances, they delivered themselves into our hands upon the terms of humane treatment, which I promised them.

The fort mounted four pieces of artillery, and the garrison consisted of one Captain, three Lieutenants, a Surgeon's mate, and seventy privates.

I have much satisfaction in acquainting your Lordship, that this little success was effected without the loss of a single man, and that only one Yager was wounded on the occasion.

[From the *London Gazette*, July 10, 1779.]

No. 4

COMMODORE SIR GEORGE COLLIER TO THE ENGLISH
ADMIRALTY

RAISONABLE, off New York, June 14, 1779.

In my letter to you of yesterday, I mentioned the men-of-war and transports under my command arriving here on the 29th of last month from Virginia; you will be pleased to acquaint their lordships, that immediately on my anchoring, the Commander-in-Chief of the army informed me of his intention to proceed on an expedition up the North River, to reduce the works the rebels had thrown up at Verplanks and Stony Point, for the security of the important pass of King's Ferry; the General express-

ing a wish for my being present, and to have the assistance of the troops returned from Virginia, I directed the transports to move up Hudson River immediately, and accompanied them in the *Raisable*, having also with me the *Camilla*, *Vulture* sloop, *Cornwallis*, *Crane* and *Philadelphia* galleys and two gunboats. We passed the *chevaux-de-frise* without any accident, and came to, with the *Raisable*, about eight miles above *Dobb's Ferry*; I then went into the *Camilla*, and proceeding on with the transports, anchored just out of random shot of *Fort la Fayette*, which the rebels had erected on *Verplank's Point*; *Major-General Vaughan*, with a part of the army, landing on the east side, and *Sir Henry Clinton*, with *Major-General Pattison* and the remainder of the troops, on the opposite shore, about a mile and a half from *Stony Point*, an exceeding strong post, where the rebels were erecting a blockhouse, and fortifying the heights. On our approach they quitted their works and set them on fire, escaping to the mountains. The troops soon took possession, and, with infinite fatigue and labor, heavy cannon were dragged up a steep precipice from a very bad landing-place; the three galleys being advanced fired upon *Fort la Fayette*, which was returned by the rebels. *Major-General Pattison*, of the artillery, had, with indefatigable perseverance, erected two batteries (one of which were mortars) during the night, and at dawn of day began to play upon the rebel fort; the distance across the river being about a thousand yards, and was commanded by the high ground of *Stony Point*; the cannonading continued all day, during which *General Vaughan* and his division marched round and completely invested the enemy's post.

So soon as it was dark I ordered the *Vulture* and *Cornwallis* galley to pass the fort and anchor above it, to prevent the escape of the rebels by water; this was done with-

out damage, and had the intended effect; the fire from our batteries and galleys being now much superior to that of the enemy, they beat the chamade; the cannonading ceased; a flag of truce was sent in to summons them, and they consented to surrender the fort and their arms and become prisoners of war. We found the fort a small, complete little work, with a blockhouse, double ditch, chevaux-de-frise and abatis. His Majesty's troops have taken possession of it, and are also fortifying the strong post of Stony Point, by which we are masters of King's Ferry, and oblige the rebels to make a detour of ninety miles across the mountains to communicate with the country east of Hudson's River.

[From the *London Gazette*, July 13, 1779.]

No. 5

GENERAL PATTISON, COMMANDING BRITISH ARTILLERY,
TO LORD TOWNSEND

CAMP AT STONEY POINT, 9th June, 1779.

My Lord:

All the troops on Long Island, except one Provincial Battalion, having quitted their Cantonments, and crossed over the East River to York Island, a movement was made on Friday the 28th May, of the following corps, which marched from the lines of Kingsbridge in four columns, viz.:

<i>Left Column</i>	<i>Left Center Column</i>	<i>Right Center Column</i>	<i>Right Column</i>
Mounted Jagers	Ferguson's Corps	Emerick's Corps	Queen's Rangers
3rd Battn Hessn Grenadiers	Light Infantry of the Line	17th Foot	Legion
Regt of Bose	Loyl American Regt	23rd do	7th Foot
		33rd do	63rd Foot
		64th do	

and form'd a Camp about five Miles beyond it on a very strong ground, the right extending to East Chester Creek, and the left to Phillips's House on the North River. The British Grenadiers marched from Jamaica to Whitestone, and, passing over the Sound to East Chester, joined the Encampment. The little Park of Artillery consisting of 4 light 12 Ps', 2 Royal Howitzers and a Cohorn Mortar on a traveling carriage, under the command of Captain Rochfort, marched the day following, and was placed in the Center of the Camp on a very Commanding Height, called Valentine's Hill. The Command of the British Troops at this Camp was given to Major-General Vaughan, and the Light Troops and Cavalry to Sir William Erskine. The Troops left within the Lines of Kingsbridge were the 44th and 57th Regts. and 3 Hessian Regts. under the Command of General Knyphansen, the two Battalions of Guards and 3 Hessian Regts. to Garrison New York, and the 26th and 37th Regts. with 2 Provincial Battalions remained on Staten Island, under Major-General Leslie.

About a fortnight previous to putting the Army in Motion Sir Henry Clinton communicated to me his Design of attempting to reduce a Rebel Fort, called La Fayette, situated at Verplank's Point on the East Side of the North River, in the narrow Part of Haverstraw Bay, and that he intended to give me the command of a Corps, to be employed on this Service.

This Fort being erected for the Protection of the Passage from the King's Ferry on the opposite Side, it was considered as an Object of Importance, to become Masters

of it, since it would cut off the principal communication between the Eastern and Western Colonies, and oblige all the Supply's of Provisions or Troops for Mr. Washington from Connecticut and New England to make a large Detour over the Highlands. On the West Side of the River directly opposite to Fort La Fayette is a very high Bluff Rock, call'd Stony Point, which commands it, and upon which the Rebels were raising Works, the General therefore determined to get Possession first of this Post, as the surest Means of reducing the other.

The flank Company's of the Guards, 42d Regt. Volunteers of Ireland and Regt. of Prince Charles arriving very opportunely from Virginia on Saturday Evening, the 29th of May, Sir Henry Clinton resolved to carry the intended Operations up the North River into immediate Execution, and accordingly ordered the Transports with those Troops to move up the River that night to Phillips's House, where they were to be joined by another Corps, that was to embark there the next Morning from Camp, consisting of the Light Infantry and Grenadiers of the Line, the Hessian Grenadiers, 33d Regt. dismounted Legion, Loyal Americans and Ferguson's Corps, under the Orders of Major Gen. Vaughan.

The Artillery destined for this Service to be commanded by Capt. Traille, was 3 heavy and 1 light 12 Pr, one light 3 Pr, one 8 Inch Howitzer, one Inch Mortar, four Royals and two Cohorns. The whole of these, with their Ammunition and Stores had been embarked on board a Brig for several Days, except one Light and one Heavy 12 Pr, the 8 Inch Howitzer, two Royals and light 3 Pr intended to be carried in Gun Boats for the first Landing, and on the following Day, (Sunday the 30th) they were accordingly put on board the Gun Boats, and proceeded with the Brig that Evening up the River, under the care of the Vulture Sloop

of War. The Reasonable Commodore Sir George Collier and the Camilla Frigate went up the same Evening.

Sir Henry Clinton left New York that Day about Noon, and went in one of his own Vessels to His Head Quarters at Phillips's House. I was myself on board the Reasonable, but as it was inconvenient for that large Ship to move up higher than Tarry Town, the Commodore there shifted his Broad Pendant to the Camilla and we proceeded to Haverstraw Bay, which we reached about 12 o'Clock on Monday noon. As soon as the Enemy discovered our Fleet, we could perceive they began to draw off many Things from Stony Point, but whether Guns or Stores, we could not discover, and very soon after they set fire to their Works & abandoned the Place.—About 4 o'Clock this Afternoon, the 17th, 63rd, and 64th Regiment and a Detachment of 120 Jagers landed without Opposition in a small Bay near Stony Point, whither we marched directly and took Post. The Commander in Chief went on Shore in Person, and was pleased to put the Troops under my Command. A small Body of the Enemy made their appearance, but retired immediately on our landing—the Guns from the Opposite Fort fired a great many Shot upon the Armed Galley's that were stationed to cover our landing, but without effect.—The Troops had no sooner gained the Heights of Stony Point, than Measures were taken to land the Artillery.—The Moon favored this Operation, and admitted of its being carried on during the Whole Night.—The Landing place for the Cannon was very inconvenient, being of deep Mud, and the Hill they were to be drawn up craggy, and of uncommon Steep Ascent, 58 Men in Harness, besides many more shoving at the Wheels, were scarcely able to get up a heavy 12 Pr, but the Zeal and Activity of the Officers which I cannot sufficiently commend, and the good Disposition of the Soldiers overcome a¹¹ Difficultys with so

much Expedition that by 5 o'Clock next Morning, Batteries were prepared and open'd with a 10 Inch Mortar, an 8 Inch Howitzer & 12 Prs and the Cannonading Bombardment carried on at the same Time.—The Distance from this Point to the Fort was reported not to exceed eight or nine hundred yards, but being found to be full fifteen hundred, the light 12 Pr & small Mortars were of little or no use, but the 10 Inch Mortar, 8 Inch Howitzer & Heavy 12 Pr were serv'd to very good effect.

The Commander in Chief, who came on shore from on board his own Ship early in the Morning, and staid near an hour on the Battery's, had the Pleasure to see both Shot & Shells take Place.—About noon upon a 10 Inch Shell falling into the Body of their Work, and as we since learn'd, Killing 3 Men, the Enemy ran off and evacuated the Fort, after throwing some Barrels of Powder into the River.—Sir Henry Clinton who was with Gen'l Vaughan on the other Side, perceiving the Fort abandoned, sent me Notice of it, & orders to stop firing.—But Gen'l Vaughans Corps, which had march'd from Teller's Point, where they landed the evening before, now appearing in Sight, the Rebels found that their Retreat was cut off, and therefore return'd to the Fort, and again fired their Cannon.—Sir Henry Clinton sent Cap't Andre, his Aide-de-Camp with a Flag of Truce to demand the Surrender of the Fort.—The Commandant asked to march out with the Honors of War, but finding that no other Terms would be granted than Surrendering Prisoners of War, they were after a Short Parly, consented to, and the British Colours hoisted in the Fort.—The little Garrison consisted of One Captain, 3 Lieutenants, a Surgeon & 70 Men.—They had one Officer and 3 Men Killed, but we had fortunately neither Officer or Man hurt.—Their Guns were fired in a good Direction, but generally so much elevated, on account of our superior

Height, that the shot went over our Heads.—This small Fort appears to have been originally intended as a Block House, to be defended by Infantry, but a thick Parapet fraiz'd has since been rais'd round it, under which towards the River is a Barbette Battery, mounting one 18 Pr & two 4 Pr.—The Scarp of the Ditch has a Revetement of Stone, & is Stockaded, the Whole encompassed besides with a very strong Chevaux de Fraize, & an Abbatis.

The two first Day's the militia were impertinently troublesome by coming down in small Bodies, and firing upon our Jager Post, but five or Six of them having been dropt by our Rifle Shot, they thought fit to disappear, and have given us no further Disturbance, not even to the advanced Picquet.—One Jager was wounded.

Stony Point is by Nature exceedingly strong, from the several Commanding Heights, and being almost insular, by means of a Swamp & Creek from the River, is very inaccessible; and the Commander in Chief having determined to maintain this Post, and to render it as strong as possible, gave Orders for Battery's to be erected on the several Eminencies.—Working Parties were immediately employed under the Direction of the Engineer's (Cap't Mercer & L' Fyers) and so much Diligence has been used, that there are already Seven Facine-Batteries nearly completed.—The Guns intended for These works are two 24 Prs. and two 18 Prs., four 12 Prs., six 6 Prs. and one 3 Pr., one 10 Inch Mortar, one 8 Inch Howitzer, two Royal Mortars, and two Cohorns do—and the Platforms will be ready to receive them in a few Days.—I have the Honor to send Your Lordship a Plan of this Post, shewing how the whole is at present fortified.—There is no Ground that can be said to Command it, except one Hill which is at upwards of a Mile Distance, but the almost unsurmountable Difficulty's which must attend bringing heavy Cannon over the Haver-

straw Mountains makes any serious attack little to be expected, however I have Order'd all the Woods in our Front and on our rightflank to be cut down, and Abbatis to be made in every Part of practicable Approach.—A Few Days ago one of the Refugees employ'd to bring in Intelligence, having given me Information that 300 Head of Cattle, which had been driven back by the Rebels, were collected at a place about Six Miles Distance, under a small Guard of Militia, I sent out a Detachment of 500 Men under Lt. Col. Johnson that Night, in hopes of taking them by surprise, but whether thro' accident or from Intelligence their March was soon discovered, when in great Part defeated the Design, however they brought in the next morning between Forty & Fifty Head of Cattle, with a Number of Calves, Hogs & without Loss of a Man Killed or Wounded, tho' they were fired upon by scattering Parties upon their March.

The Commander-in-Chief return'd by Water to his Quarters at Phillips's House, after the Celebration of His Majesty's Birth Day, which was performed here, on both sides of the River by Royal Salutes of Cannon, Volleys of Musketry and every other Demonstration of Joy.

Our present Operations have certainly had one Effect much wish'd for, that of obliging Mr. Washington to Assemble his Troops and quit his Position in the Jerseys.—By the accounts I have receiv'd from all the Deserters, who have come into this Camp, his Army, which they say, does not exceed 6,000, is now march'd as far as Smith's Clove, a Narrow Pass of the Highlands, and about ten miles from hence; that he is to halt 'till he can judge of the Designs of the British Commander, as in that situation he will be able to return back to the Jerseys or proceed to West Point, the only Communication they have now left with Connecticut.—This Place is a great Object of their Jealousy & At-

tention, and they have been long laboring to render it as strong as Art can make it.—A Deserter who came in Yesterday was so very accurate and distinct in the Description he gave of the Nature and Situation of their Several Works as to admit of a Sketch being made of them, which I take the Liberty of enclosing, as it may serve (if your Lordship is not in possession of a better Plan) to give a general idea of those Forts.—He reports that Gen'l Parsons commands at West Point, and the Garrison in the different Works consists of Seven Reg'ts from Massachusetts Bay, & two from North Carolina, besides the Militia who are posted in the Woods.—That they are Working Night and Day to strengthen their Works, have got Pikes for the whole Garrison, and have stopt up all the Avenues to the Forts with felled Trees, & that the Chain which runs across the River to Fort Constitution is much stronger than that which was at Fort Montgomery, each link weighing above Seventy Pounds.

The Troops I have already mentioned under Gen'l Vaughan (except the Flank Company's of the Guards, 42nd Reg't Volunteers of Ireland, & Reg't of Prince Charles, which were sent back to the Camp at Valentine's Hill) occupy at present the opposite Posts of Verplank's Point, where they have a very strong Position, and as it is intended, to maintain this Post, at least for a time, Block Houses are erecting on two Eminences near to Fort La Fayette.—General McDougal with three Brigades is said to be at Continental Valley near Peck's Kiln River, about five miles distant.

As the Works carrying on at Stony Point are nearly finished and every cautionary step taken to give the fullest Security to this Post, I shall in a few Days, with the Commander-in-Chief's Permission return to New York.

I am truly sorry to inform your Lordship of the death

of Captain Fenwick, who died at N. York, the 23rd of May, and was interr'd there with Military Honors.—He is really a Publick as well as a Private loss, as he was a very able Officer and a most worthy Man.—He has left a Widow and Seven Children. Sir Henry Clinton, is so good to attend a Commission for the eldest Son (The second Boy is now 13 years of Age and very forward in his Learning, his Father having taken great Pains himself with his Education, may I presume to recommend him to your Lordship for the Royal Academy?

Lieut. Lawson being the Senior First Lieut. of the whole Reg't, I have appointed him to do duty as Capt'a. Lieut. in the room of Capt'a. Fenwick 'till further Orders.

I have the Honor to be, &c.,

JAMES PATTISON.

Lord Viscount Townshend.

[New York Historical Society Collections. 1875.]

No. 6

SIR HENRY CLINTON TO WILLIAM EDEN, LONDON

NEW YORK, July 8, 1779.

Sir:

. . . . July and no reenforcement arrived; inadequate as it may be, such as it is it ought to have been here the first week in June at the furthest. I was lucky in my attempt at Stony Point, &c. Every day proves more and more its importance. Had the reenforcement arrived in

time to have enabled me to follow it up a general action would probably have been the consequence; as it is I despair of that.

I must refer you to Sir Wm. Erskine. I am sorry he leaves us, much so indeed; his health is, however, of too much consequence to his family and friends for him to neglect it; from him you will learn our situation, our hopes, our fears—too needless to complain of the total neglect of us. With what you send us when it arrives we will do the best. We are told part of Grant's corps returns to us; for what we get we shall be most thankfull, and as I must stay this campaign, I will work my utmost; but you can expect nothing from our army—in fact at least 20,000 men less than S. W. H. [Howe] had and Washington very little diminished.

If this cursed war continues great alteration must be made in the method of conducting it. . . . If reinforcements does not arrive soon for sea and land I dread consequences. Not a word from Europe these three months, not a farthing of money, no information, no army, nothing but good spirits and a presentiment that all will go well, a determination at least that nothing shall be wanting on my part; and I sincerely hope this will be the last campaign of the war; it must be mine. Good God! What could prevent the troops sailing in March or even April; but I have done.

July 4th— . . . I have not closed my letter till this moment in hopes of something to add to it. Sir G. C. [Admiral Geo. Collier] is sailed in to the Sound on desultory expedition. I need not say for what purpose. G. W.'s position in the mountains will explain it; and should he stir I hope the reinforcement from Europe will put it in my power to avail myself of any false move he may make.

[Stevens' Fac-similes of MSS.]

No. 7

SIR HENRY CLINTON TO LORD GERMAINE ON LOSS OF
STONY POINT.¹HEAD QUARTERS, DOBBS FERRY,
25th July, 1779.*My Lord:*

In my Dispatch No. 57 I had the honor to inform your Lordship of my having taken possession of Verplanks and Stony Point upon the North River. Having fortified and garrisoned those Posts, I found myself prevented from prosecuting the advantages which those acquisitions offered to me by the want of that Reinforcement which I had flattered myself would early have given me the power of acting seriously. Some measures, however, tending towards my general plan lay still within the Compass of my Force; and these I pursued, tho' not without inconvenience.

The Expedition of Major General Tryon in the Sound was a measure subservient to my main Design. To secure him in his operations and at the same time to be at hand to take Advantage of his Success, I withdrew from Verplanks all the Troops which were not destined for the garrison, and took Post with them at Byram and Mamaroneck on the 9th.

On the night of the 15th Instant the Enemy suddenly assaulted and carried the Lines at Stony Point. The greater part of the Garrison, consisting of the 17th Regiment of Foot, the Grenadier Company of the 71st Regiment, a Company of the loyal Americans, and a small Detachment of the Royal Artillery, under the Command of

¹ This letter was printed in the London *Gazette* October 5, 1779, but material passages were omitted. It is here reproduced for the first time in full from the original. Major-General Vaughn, who returned home at this time, was bearer of the despatch.

Lieut. Colonel Johnson of the 17th Regiment, were either killed or taken. I have not yet been able to procure accounts sufficiently satisfactory to form a decisive judgment upon this Accident. I have the Honor to inclose Lieut. Colonel Johnson's Account, as likewise that published by the Rebels.

The Enemy immediately began a heavy Cannonade with our Guns from Stony Point upon Lieut. Colonel Webster, who commanded at Verplanks, with the 33d Regiment, loyal Americans, and Detachments from the Royal Artillery and from the 71st Regiment. At the same time Lieut. Colonel Webster was informed that a considerable Force was in his rear; who, if they did not mean to attack him from that quarter, at least would make his Retreat, should he be driven to that extremity, very difficult.

Upon the first Intelligence I received of this matter I ordered the Army to advance to Dobb's Ferry, pushing forward the Cavalry and some light Troops, to the Banks of the Croton River, to awe the Enemy in any attempt by land against Verplanks.

Brigadier General Stirling was in the mean time embarked with the 42d, 63d and 64th Regiments for the Relief of Verplanks, or the Recovery of Stony Point. The northerly winds, rather uncommon at this season, opposed Brigadier General Stirling's progress till the 19th, when upon his arriving within sight of Stony Point, the Enemy abandoned it with Precipitation, and some Circumstances of Disgrace.

Lieut. Colonel Webster, who had with great firmness supported the heavy fire of the Enemy had not during the whole time deigned to return a single shot, being sensible that it would have been of no material effect. The Enemy, possibly supposing from this Circumstance that he might have no heavy Cannon, brought down a Galley to carry off

from Stony Point Part of the Artillery, which would have found difficulty in retiring thro' the Roads of the Country. As soon as the Cannon were aboard the Galley Lieut. Colonel Webster turned upon her an 18 Pounder, the only Piece of Navy Ordnance he had, which raked her with such effect that to prevent her sinking, the Crew ran her ashore and set fire to her. Such of the Cannon as remained upon Stony Point were burnt or thrown into the River by the Enemy who immediately made a most precipitate Retreat.

Having been apprehensive that the delay occasioned by the contrary Wind might have given the Enemy time to collect a Force at the Points too powerful for Brigadier General Stirling, and being anxious that no step should be omitted for the security of Verplanks and Recovery of Stony Point, I had embarked with the light Infantry and joined General Stirling in Haverstraw Bay. My whole Army being within my reach, I had some hopes of being able to betray Mr. Washington into an Engagement for the Possession of Stony Point. Possibly he suspected my view, and declined adventuring any Measure which might bring on an action in a country unfavorable to him.

Brigadier General Stirling is now at Stony Point with five Battalions repairing the Works, which are a good deal damaged.

I thank your Lordship for the Information of the probability there is that Monsieur de la Mothe Piquet may appear upon this Coast. I shall take the best measures for the defence of this Post, but I am obliged to fortify with caution, lest I should give foundation for an alarm which the disaffected are very zealous to propagate. I must likewise mention that I am by no means provided at present with sufficient heavy Cannon proper for the purpose.

I cannot close my Letter without lamenting that the

Season is so far advanced, and that I still remain with a force so inadequate to the services expected from me. I must acknowledge myself happy to find that I must look towards General Grant's Corps for Reinforcements. But your Lordship will see by the Letter which I have the Honor to inclose that I am to expect but four Regiments at present, and I fear that even they will not arrive till the hour is past in which their services would have been of the most material consequence. I likewise have some Apprehension that their health may have suffered by the Delay.

I have the Honor to be with the greatest Respect your Lordship's most obedient and most honorable Servant,

(Signed)

H. CLINTON.

[From the original MSS., Public Record Office, London.]

No. 8

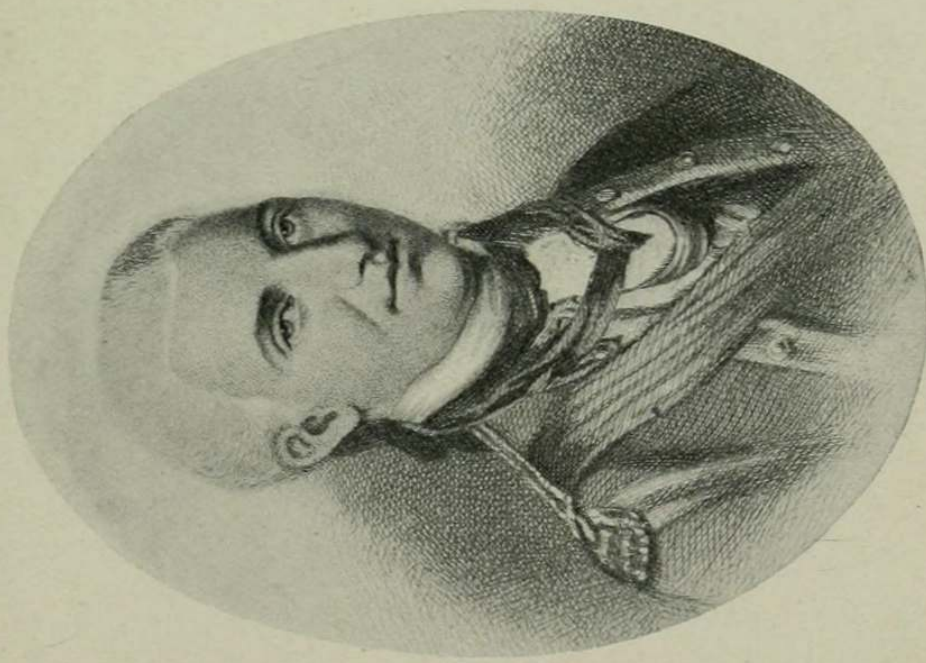
JOURNAL OF LIEUT.-COL. STEPHEN KEMBLE, DEPUTY-ADJUTANT-GENERAL BRITISH ARMY

FRIDAY, July 16th.

At 8 in the morning M[ajor] of B[rigade] Benson came from Verplanck's Point with the following Account, that in the preceeding night, between twelve and one o'clock, the Post at Stony Point was stormed by the Rebels; that upon the firing being heard, he went over and was proceeding to the main Redoubt when he was challenged by Rebel soldiers, from one of whom he heard by accident the watch-



COL. RICHARD BUTLER
Pennsylvania



COL. CHRISTIAN FEBIGER
Virginia

word was Washington, and retired availing himself of it; that before he left it the Rebels had turned some of the guns and fired upon Verplanck's Point; who of our people were killed or who taken, no Account can be given.

[Kemble Papers, N. Y. Historical Society, Vol. I., p. 181.]

No. 9

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL JOHNSON'S REPORT ON THE LOSS
OF STONY POINT

HARDYSTOWN [PENN.], July 24, 1779.

Sir:

The bearer, Lieutenant Armstrong, of the 17th Infantry, will give you a full and perfect account of the unfortunate event of the morning of the 16th instant, whereon the post of Stony Point fell into the hands of the enemy. I am inclined to think that upon a just representation you will be fully convinced that it was not any neglect on my part, nor of the troops under my Command, but the very superior force of the enemy that caused the capture of the place.

Inclosed I send a return of the killed, wounded, missing and prisoners, as nearly as could be collected by commanding officers of corps.

The very distressed situation of our people, for want of necessaries of every kind, occasioned my application for a flag, in order to have them provided. General Washing-

ton's permission to send a subaltern officer of each corps I received but this instant.

The Commissary of prisoners being under the necessity of returning immediately, obliges me to draw a conclusion, referring your Excellency to Lieutenant Armstrong for any further particulars.

I have the honor to be Your Excellency's Most Obedient
Servant,

H. JOHNSON,
Lieut. Col. 17th Foot.

His Excellency Sir Henry Clinton, &c., &c., &c.

INCLOSURE IN COLONEL JOHNSON'S LETTER.

Return of the killed, wounded, missing and taken prisoners by the enemy, of His Majesty's troops under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel HENRY JOHNSON, at the engagement upon Stony Point, July 16, 1779.

ROYAL REGIMENT OF ARTILLERY. Four rank and file, *wounded*; one Lieutenant, *missing*; one Captain, one Lieutenant, one Conductor, one drummer, forty-two rank and file, *prisoners*.

GRENADIERS OF THE SEVENTY-FIRST REGIMENT. One Sergeant, one drummer, five rank and file, *killed*; one Captain, two Lieutenants, one Sergeant, twenty rank and file, *wounded*; one Captain, one Sergeant, twenty-three rank and file, *missing*; five Lieutenants, three Sergeants, one drummer, ninety-five rank and file, *prisoners*.

SEVENTEENTH REGIMENT OF FOOT. One Captain, two Sergeants, ten rank and file, *killed*; one Lieutenant, one Ensign, forty-three rank and file, *missing*; one Colonel, two Captains, six Lieutenants, three Ensigns, one Adjutant, one Surgeon, seventeen Sergeants, twelve drummers,

and two hundred and twenty-two rank and file, *prisoners*.

LOYAL AMERICAN REGIMENT. One Ensign, *wounded*; eleven rank and file, *missing*; one Captain, two Ensigns, two Sergeants, two drummers, and forty-nine rank and file, *prisoners*.

VOLUNTEERS OF IRELAND. One Sergeant, *prisoner*.

TOTAL. One Captain, three Sergeants, one drummer, fifteen rank and file, *killed*; one Captain, three Lieutenants, two Ensigns, one Sergeant, sixty-seven rank and file, *wounded*; one Captain, one Lieutenant, one Sergeant, one drummer, fifty-four rank and file, *missing*;¹ one Colonel, four Captains, twelve Lieutenants, five Ensigns, one Adjutant, one Surgeon, one Conductor, twenty-three Sergeants, sixteen drummers, four hundred and eight rank and file, *prisoners*.

Names of the officers, killed, wounded, missing and prisoners.

ROYAL REGIMENT OF ARTILLERY. Lieutenant Roberts² *missing*; Captain Tiffin, Lieutenant Harden, Conductor Enslow, *prisoners*.

SEVENTY - FIRST GRENADIERS. Captain Campbell, *wounded and missing*; Lieutenants Ross and Cumming, *wounded*; Lieutenants Dunkinson, Nairn, Ross, Cumming and Grant, *prisoners*.

SEVENTEENTH REGIMENT OF FOOT. Captain Tew, *killed*; Lieutenant Simpson and Ensign Sinclair, *wounded*; Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson, Captains Darby and Clayton, Lieutenants Armstrong, Carey, Williams, Simpson and Hayman, Ensigns Hamilton, Sinclair and Robinson, Adjutant Hamilton, Surgeon Horn, *prisoners*.

¹ These missing, from the American report, were nearly all killed.

² Roberts, as General Pattison reported, escaped by swimming to the *Vulture*.

LOYAL AMERICAN REGIMENT. Ensign Hugeford, *wounded*; Captain Robinson, Ensigns Hugeford and Swords, *prisoners*.

Lieutenant Marshall [17th Regt.] *prisoner*.

N. B.—Surgeon Achmuty, *prisoner*, not included in the above.

H. JOHNSON,
Lieut.-Col., 17th Regt.

[From London *Gazette*, October 5, 1779, as given in Dawson's "Stony Point."

No. 10

GENERAL PATTISON TO LORD TOWNSEND, LONDON

NEW YORK, July 26, 1779.

My Lord:

. . . . I am exceedingly sorry now to inform your Lordship of the very extraordinary and sudden Revolution which has since happen'd at Stony Point—a post considered to be safe against any Coup-de-Main, and capable of resisting any open attack that could be made against it; but the Enemy notwithstanding made a very bold and daring Attempt on the 15th Instant, about 12 o'clock at night, and carry'd it by Storm in less than twenty minutes.

The particulars of this singular and unfortunate Event, which has filled every one with astonishment, are as yet very little known. The wounded Officers who are brought

down to New York differ so much in their relation of that night's Transactions that it is difficult to form a real judgment of them. The military character of Lieut. Col. Johnson of the 17th Regt., who commanded there, has been so well established as not to admit easily of a belief that he suffered his Garrison to be surprized; yet it is too certain that two if not three of the Columns of the enemy penetrated different Abbatis at the same time, were almost instantly in possession of the avanc'd works, and in a very few minutes masters of the body of the Place. What the number of the Assailants were, is not positively known. They give out themselves that it did not exceed six hundred; if that be true, their Enterprize must have been a very rash one as the Defenders were nearly as many.

The Attack was Commanded by a Brig'r Gen'l Wayne, and it must in justice be allow'd to his credit, as well as to all acting under his Orders, that no instance of Inhumanity was shown to any of the unhappy Captives. No one was unnecessarily put to the sword or wantonly wounded. Our loss in Killed is not yet ascertained, but it is thought to be trifling, and the number of Wounded amounts only to one Captain, four Subalterns and about eight and thirty Men, of whom is one Corporal of the Artillery. The Rebels assert that they had only four men killed. Our loss in Prisoners, a very serious one—almost the whole of the 17th Regt., two Companys of the 71d (Grenadiers), about sixty of the Loyal American Corps, and I am particularly grieved to say, one Captain, one Subaltern, 4 Non-Comm'd Officers, 39 privates and one drummer of the Artillery The two Subalterns were Lieuts. Horndon and Roberts; the latter made his escape by getting to the Shore and swimming near a mile to the Vulture Sloop of War. Upon the arrival here of that Officer I required of him to inform me in writing of all he knew of that night's operations, and

of the reason of his quitting the Place. I beg leave to send your Lordship a copy of his letter.

No sooner had our troops Surrendered than the Enemy turned our Cannon upon the Man of War and other Ships that lay within distance, as also against the opposite post of Verplank's Point, then occupied by the 33d Regt., Ferguson's Corps, and part of the Loyal American battalion. At the same time Gen'l Macdougall with three Brigades threatened an Attack upon it from the east side, and did repeatedly attempt to force the picquets, but Lieut. Col. Webster maintained his ground with great spirit till the Corps arrived under Brig'r Gen'l Stirling, which upon the first notice of the Misfortune at Stony Point, was detached from camp to support him. Sir Henry Clinton at the same time moved the remainder of the army forwards from Phillipsbourg to Dobb's Ferry. The Enemy hereupon not only relinquished their design upon this post, but abandoned likewise their new acquisition of Stony Point, demolishing the Works and carrying off all the Brass Cannon & Stores in a large armed galley, mounting one 32 Pr. & eight 4 Prs., which they sent down the River for that purpose. But luckily on her return up again and ill befriended by the wind, Lieut. Douglas, who commanded the artillery at Verplanks played upon her so successfully with an 18 Pr. that after having hulled her several times, they ran on Shore to prevent her sinking, then set her on fire, and she burned to the water's edge. . . . Endeavors were afterwards used to recover the Cannon, but as they have not succeeded, it is presumed that the Rebels with their usual industry found some means under favor of the night to carry them up the River.

Upon the Enemy evacuating Stony Point, we once more took possession of it with the 42d, 63d, & 64th Regts. Capt. Ferguson is made Governor & it is now fortifying with a

close work, which it had not before. The Army is since fallen back again from Dobb's Ferry to its former camp at Phillipsbourg. . . .

I have the honor to be with Great Respect, &c.,

JAS. PATTISON.

[N. Y. Historical Society Collections, 1875, p. 95.]

No. 11

EXTRACT FROM THE JOURNAL OF COMMODORE GEORGE
COLLIER

After the destruction of Norwalk [Conn.], the men-of-war and transports went over and anchored in Huntingdon Bay, upon Long Island, to wait for a supply of ammunition from New York. Sir George Collier took that opportunity of meeting the Commander-in-Chief of the army at Frog's Neck, who was come there from New York to confer with the Commodore on the intended operations against New London. They had the satisfaction of receiving intelligence that the chastisement the rebels had lately received in Connecticut was attended with very favorable consequences for the King's cause; that their murmurs both against Washington and Congress rose very high; and that they execrated them as the cause of their misfortunes, from their imbecility in not being able to protect and prevent them.

Many of the principal people in the Province had already

formed the outlines of an association and seemed determined to throw off all subjection and allegiance to the Congress. This account, which was well authenticated, induced the General and Commodore to hope for consequences still more important, by the capture of New London; and everything was soon finally adjusted between them for beginning the attack in the most vigorous manner. They parted; the General to give orders for the embarkation of more troops immediately to reinforce those under General Tryon, and Sir George to join the fleet again in Huntingdon Bay.

A very disagreeable event, however, put a stop to the favourite expedition against New London; and this was the surprisal (in the night) of the strong post of Stony Point, in the North River, which was carried by the rebels with very little loss and the garrison all made prisoners or killed. The enterprise was really a gallant one, and as bravely executed. The rebel troops, under a General Wayne, formed two attacks with fixed bayonets and unloaded arms during the darkness and silence of the night; it was said that they had taken the precaution to kill every dog two days before that was within some miles round the post, to prevent their approach being discovered by their barking. They began to march from their camp, eleven miles off, soon after dusk, proceeding with celerity and silence; and soon after midnight fell in with the British piquets, whom they surprised and bayoneted a number of them; the rest hastily retreated, keeping up a straggling fire, though to very little purpose, for the rebels followed close at their heels. Their forlorn hope consisted of forty men, and were followed by a party with hooks on long poles, to pull aside the abattis and thereby give an entrance to the Column behind. The works of Stony Point were not half completed; and as one part of its strength at that

time consisted in the abattis, the rebels found no great difficulty in getting into the body of a work which was quite open, though on an eminence.

A young man of the name of Johnson, who was Lieut.-Colonel of the 17th regiment, was left with the charge of this important post; he was reckoned a brave and good officer for his years, but the force was certainly inadequate to its defence. On the first alarm from the piquets he ran down with the main guard to defend the abattis and support them. The rebel column was stopped for a few minutes, and a brisk firing took place on both sides; but to Colonel Johnson's grief and surprise, he heard a cry of "Victory" on the heights above him, and "the fort's our own" (which was the rebel watch-word). He very soon learned by some of his officers that the enemy were in full possession of the body of the place; it was certainly so; the column which was destined for making the other attack took a short detour around, and climbed up the perpendicular height, which being over the river, nobody expected an enemy on that side; and the surprise of the King's troops at seeing them in possession of the works was extreme. The laws of war give a right to the assailants of putting all to death who are found in arms; justice is certainly due to all men, and commendation should be given where it is deserved. The rebels had made the attack with a bravery they never before exhibited, and they showed at this moment a generosity and clemency which during the course of the rebellion had no parallel. There was light sufficient after getting up the heights to show them many of the British troops with arms in their hands; instead of putting them to death, they called to them "to throw their arms down if they expected any quarter." It was too late then to resist; they submitted, and the strong post of Stony Point fell again into possession of the rebels.

The loss of the King's troops, considering the place was taken by storm, was very small, Captain Tew being the only officer killed and thirty-two men; forty-three were wounded, and the rest were made prisoners. The enemy found here many brass mortars, many pieces of large cannon, together with the ammunition necessary for them—an unlucky piece of business and fatal to the reputation of a gallant young man, who was certainly left with a force very inadequate to the purpose for which he was placed at Stony Point.

Immediately upon this Coup the rebels began a brisk attack upon the opposite post at Verplank's; it was invested by a large body of troops, and the mortars and heavy cannon from Stony Point kept up an incessant fire upon the works.

On the receipt of this disagreeable news, the Commodore sent orders to discontinue the blockade of the harbour at New London, and immediately proceeded back to New York with all the men-of-war and transports, getting through that most dangerous pass called Hell Gates, luckily without losing any of the ships. The transports each received more troops on board at New York, and then, escorted by the King's ships, took their way up the North River.

The fleet was no sooner descried from Stony Point than the rebels set fire to everything there that would burn, and went off with their usual alertness; they had conveyed away some of the cannon and mortars, but the greatest part of them were loaded on a galley, with which they proposed going up the river to their strong post at West Point; but as the galley was beginning to move she was luckily sunk either by a shot from Verplank's, or from the shipping, the Vulture sloop and two galleys having been left there by the Commodore for the defence of the posts, who all can-

nonaded the rebel vessel as soon as their guns could be brought to bear.

Lieut.-Colonel Webster had defended Fort La Fayette [at Verplank's] with great gallantry and little loss; the rebel army drew off and retired on the first intimation being received of the approach of the King's troops up the River.

[Journal of Sir George Collier, Knt., Vice-Admiral of the Blue.
Naval Chronicle, Vol. 32, p. 372.]

No. 12

ACCOUNT OF THE CAPTURE OF STONY POINT BY THE HISTORIAN STEDMAN, THEN COMMISSARY IN BRITISH ARMY

But whilst the British Commanders were thus devising measures for improving the disposition which had manifested itself in Connecticut, General Washington had already achieved an enterprise which disconcerted all their present designs against the Province, and called their attention to a different quarter. This was the surprise of the fort at Stony Point, which was taken by assault in the night of the fifteenth of July. As the Americans had been but lately dispossessed of this post, it is presumable that they were well acquainted with all the accessible approaches that led to it, as well as with those parts of the works which were most assailable. But even with these advantages it was an enterprise of difficulty and danger; and the Ameri-

can general, Wayne, who conducted it, deserved great praise for his gallantry and good conduct, as did the troops which he commanded, for their bravery. These being divided into two columns, entered the works in opposite quarters and met in the center of them about one in the morning of the sixteenth of July. The surprise was not so complete but that resistance was made, and the loss in killed and wounded was nearly equal on both sides. Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson of the Seventeenth regiment, the grenadier company of the Seventy-first, a company of the regiment of Loyal Americans, and a detachment of artillery amounting in the whole to about six hundred men. Of these, one hundred and fifty-two were killed or wounded, and the rest, with the commander, were made prisoners. The force under General Wayne has not been ascertained; but from the number of corps of which it consisted, it may be supposed to have amounted to fifteen hundred, all of them chosen men.

The conduct of the Americans upon this occasion was highly meritorious, for they would have been fully justified in putting the garrison to the sword, not one man of which was put to death but in fair combat. Colonel Johnson's conduct was most deservedly and justly censured.

[“History of the American War,” by C. Stedman. Vol. II., p. 144.]

No. 13

SIR HENRY CLINTON TO LORD GERMAINE

NEW YORK, August 20, 1779.

My Lord:

I must beg leave to express how happy I am made by the

return of Lord Cornwallis to this country. His Lordship's indefatigable zeal, his knowledge of this country, his professional ability and the high estimation in which he is held by the army must naturally give me the warmest confidence of efficacious support from him in every undertaking which opportunity may prompt and our circumstances allow.

But his presence, My Lord, affords to me another source of satisfaction. When there is upon the spot an officer in every way so well qualified to have the Interests of his Country entrusted to him, I should hope I might without difficulty be relieved from a station which nobody acquainted with its conditions will suppose to have sate lightly upon me. To say Truth, My Lord, my spirits are worn out by struggling against the Consequences of many adverse incidents which, without appearing publicly to account for my situation, have effectually oppressed me. To enumerate them would be a painful and unnecessary, perhaps an improper, task. At the same time let me add, My Lord, that my Zeal is unimpaired, and were I conscious that my particular efforts were necessary for His Majesty's service, no circumstances of private feeling would raise within me a single wish of retiring from the Command. That, however, is not the case, for I do seriously give it as my opinion that if the endeavors of any Man are likely, under our present prospects, to be attended with success, Lord Cornwallis's for many reasons stand among the first. . . .

The only Reinforcement, then, upon which I am to reckon is two new raised Regiments and the Recruits of this army. To counterbalance the advantage I might gain by this I am obliged to send two thousand men to Canada, and if the exigency of affairs demands that I shall be subjected to General Haldimand's requisition, it likewise obliges me to send him troops of proper discipline. Your

Lordship will judge whether in effect the balance will remain much in my favor, and whether I have not reason to expect that no Reinforcements can arrive which will in any measure enable me to act with the necessary vigor.

Thus circumstanced and convinced that the Force under my command at present, or that will be during this campaign, is not equal to the services expected from it, I must earnestly request your Lordship to lay before His Majesty my humble supplications that he will permit me to resign the Command of this army to Lord Cornwallis. His Majesty's assent to this petition will crown the many favors of which my heart will ever retain the most grateful remembrance.

I am, &c.,

H. CLINTON.

[Spark's copies of "Carleton Papers," Harvard University Library.]

No. 14

SIR HENRY CLINTON TO LORD GERMAIN

N. Y., August 21, 1779.

My Lord:

. . . . Your Lordship will no doubt have been aware that the delay of our expected Reinforcements, the waste of the season and the operations of the Enemy in that important Interval must naturally have so influenced circumstances as to render utterly unsuitable to the present hour that plan to which the past movements of this campaign have been merely preparatory.

I now find myself obliged by many cogent reasons to abandon every view of making an effort in this Quarter. The precautions which Mr. Washington has had leisure to take make me hopeless of bringing him to a general action and the season dissuades me strongly from losing time in the attempt.

Having seized on the Stations of Verplanks and Stony Point on the Hudson's River with a view to offensive operations in this country their principal importance must cease when that design is discarded; and as without great Reinforcements, which we cannot expect, nothing of Consequence can be carried on again in this quarter, I shall probably abandon those Posts, not having troops sufficient without hazard and difficulty to maintain them thro' the winter.

I am, &c.,

H. CLINTON.

[Spark's copies of "Carleton Papers," Harvard University Library.]

No. 15

SIR HENRY CLINTON TO GENERAL HALDIMAND,
CANADA, REVIEWING THE CAMPAIGN

New York, Sept. 9th, '79.

Sir:

. . . . The Reinforcements which I have been so long expecting from Europe arrived here on the 25th of last month with Admiral Arbuthnot, and consists only of two raised Regiments and the British Recruits for the

Army. Feeble as this Reinforcement is, had it arrived early in June, I am of opinion, and not alone in it, that very serious purposes might have with great prospect of success been attempted. A few words will explain the operations I intended, grounded on the hopes of its early arrival.

In the first place I opened the Campaign three weeks before Washington expected, or was prepared for it. I seized his short communication with the Eastern Provinces by King's Ferry. I did suppose he must either march directly to recover it, risking a general action under unfavorable terms, or put himself immediately behind the mountains to save Fort Mifflin, &c., at West Point. He had reason to be jealous of that Post, tho' without a fleet and very superior army it is not attackable, and, for other motives, I should never form an idea of attacking it. He threw himself behind the mountains, where he was much distressed, as he was still obliged to live from his magazines at Trenton and Easton [Penn]. The country furnished little grass as yet for cavalry or carriage horses, and the effects of a severe winter upon the roads were unrepaired. As I had an army afloat ready to debark on either side I could by a rapid march have got hold of his strong position at Middlebrook [New Jersey], in which situation I should have been upon his communications with Trenton and nearer to his stores at Easton than he could be for some days.

Whether the importance of his communication with the lower Delaware (which on account of the water carriage is certainly the best) or his apprehensions for the Magazines at Easton, from whence not only his own army in part, but Sullivan's against the Indians were supplied, would have tempted him to hazard a general action, is not positively to be determined. I am not alone, however, in thinking

that it probably would, as the alternative gave him only a choice of difficulties, the east side of the River being already devoured and the harvest at some distance. To have attempted this move with 6,000 men or less would have been absurd, for you must observe it was necessary that I should have enough to keep the post, detach for the purpose of breaking into their communication and secure my own by Springfield [New Jersey].

In expectation of the promised Reinforcement I fortified Stony Point and Verplank's, leaving near 1,000 men for their defence. I collected what troops could be spared from Rhode Island and sent expeditions into Connecticut, hoping that the strong invitation of that province would have forced Washington to march to their assistance. Nothing, however, could withdraw him from New Windsor [on the Hudson]. Had he given into my views and decidedly marched into Connecticut I should have been able to have taken possession of his camp of Middlebrook even with the small force I had, and kept it for a certain time, but as the Fleet have been detained so long it is lucky for me that he did not give me the opening; for, tho' I might have secured my first object, he would soon have collected a force sufficient to make me quit my position, at least by breaking in upon my communications and my retreat; at the same time that it would have been a victory for him would cut off all hopes in a future day to regain that important post.

Having received information that four Regiments were on their way to me from the West Indies, I prepared everything to make my move upon their arrival. The unfortunate affair at Stony Point, tho' the enemy quitted it again upon our approach, not daring to risk a battle for it, retarded me much, and I was obliged to leave a strong Garrison there to repair the work which two days' foul wind

had given the enemy time to demolish. About this period the Minister puts me on my guard respecting La Motte Piquet's destination. I was therefore obliged to collect the army near Kingsbridge.

I am disappointed in my expectations of a Reinforcement from the West Indies, and, weak and miserable as I am, I am obliged to comply with your requisition, and therefore, Sir, I send you three Régiments, one of which is British, and considering the large detachments that have been already made from this army, is a great proportion.

I am, &c.,

H. CLINTON.

[Spark's copies of "Carleton Papers," Harvard University Library.]

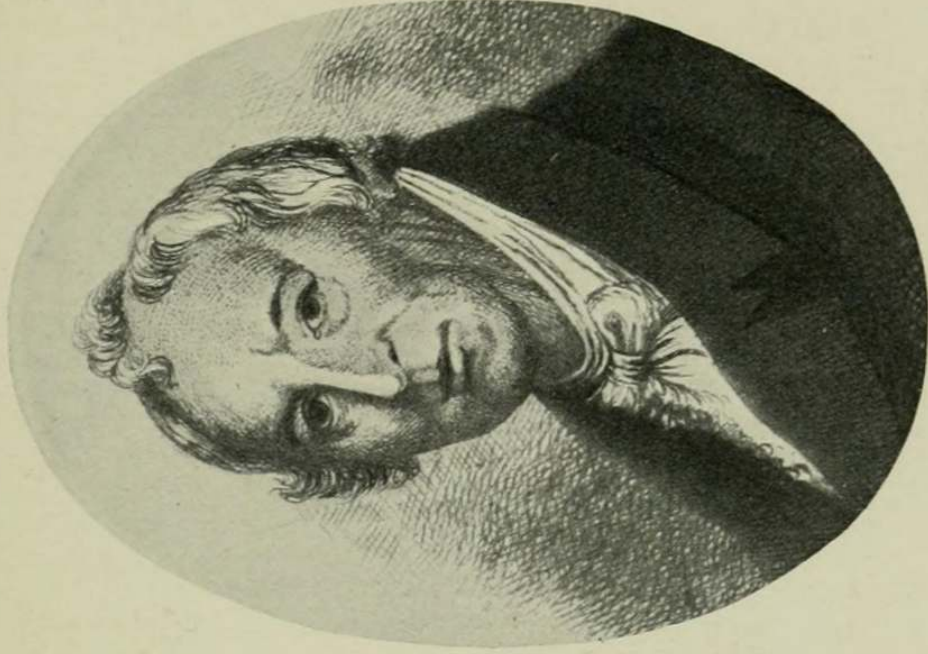
No. 16

COURT OF INQUIRY FOR COLONEL JOHNSON

HEADQUARTERS, New York, 11th December, 1780.

Parole, *Preston & Presbury.* . . . C. Sn. *Monaco.*

. . . . Lieut. Colonel Johnson of the 17th Regt. having requested a Court of Inquiry to examine into his conduct relative to the defence of Stony Point, His Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief, is pleased to order a Court of Inquiry to meet accordingly at Roubelat's Tavern in New York on Wednesday, the 13th Inst., at Ten o'Clock, to consist of Major General Phillips, President, Brigadier



MAJOR WILLIAM HULL
Massachusetts



COL. RETURN J. MEIGS
Connecticut

General Leland, Brig'r Gen'l Birch, Lieut. Colonel Gunning and Lieut. Colonel Abercromby, members.

[From General Robertson's MSS. Orderly Book, 1780-81, in possession of Pennsylvania Historical Society.]

No. 17

IMPORTANCE OF THE HUDSON HIGHLANDS. BY THE
LOYALIST JUDGE, WILLIAM SMITH

[New York.]

. . . . The intelligent American [i. e., the Loyalist] is persuaded that no success short of the recovery of one of the Middle Colonies to the King's obedience will put a period to the Rebellion. Other events may be more or less conducive to it, but this he perceives connected with a distraction of the councils of the Rebels, the discontinuance of their intercourse, the annihilation of their Commerce, the subversion of their usurpations, the dissipation of their army, the insurrection of the Loyalists and the total dissolution of the Confederacy.

When Washington was importuned by Connecticut to save her from the flames Mr. Tryon was lighting up on her coasts in July, 1779, he replied: "Tho' I have twelve thousand men with me, I can't cover all the Colonies. The Hudson is the key of the Continent, and while I hold it for the general advantage, each colony must be left to her own exertions for repelling a particular invasion." Full

well he knew, and the Congress who taught him the lesson have supported his resolution, that while his Bread came from one side of the River and his Meat from the other, the loss of it was the destruction of his army and the ruin of his Party. He saw that the reduction of the Highland Forts laid New England open on every side to the British, to the Canadians, to the Indians, and to the Loyalists of the unrecovered Counties of New York; and that there would then be a door of access to this formidable junction for crowds of their oppressed brethren from New England on the east, and as far as they chose to travel from the West.

The uses of a command of the Hudson are so obvious as to make the neglect of it not only our astonishment, but the subject of inauspicious speculation.

[Stevens' Facsimiles of MSS.]

No. 18

BRITISH FORCE AT NEW YORK, FEBRUARY, 1779

Estimate of the Enemy's strength and position in New York and its dependencies, collected and collated from the Examination of the most sensible Deserters, British, Hessian and New Levies and sensible friends of America—taken by M. General McDougall at his quarters at sundry times till 16th day of February, 1779.

CORPS.	STR'NGTH	CANTONMENTS.
HORSE.		
British 17th Light Dragoons	300	Long Island.
New { Lord Cathcart's Legion	50	do. do.
Levies } Emerich's	30	New York Island.
INFANTRY.		
		380
British Brigade of Guards	1500	City of New York.
Grenadiers, 14 comp s	700	Jamaica. L. Island.
Light Infantry, 14 do.	700	South Hampton, do.
7th	265	Harlem on N. Y. Is- land.
17th	410	Near Ft. Washington, N. Y. Island.
23d	350	City of New York.
26th	310	Staten Island.
33d	300	Bedford, L. Island.
37th	300	
Highlanders, 42d, two battalions	750	Bedford, L. Island.
44th	300	Laurel Hill, opp. Ft. Washington.
45th	350	
57	450	At & near Ft. Wash- ington.
63	320	Bloomington, N. Y.
64	300	Long Island.
		7305
Hessian 1 Batt n Chasseurs	350	Flushing, L. Island.
Grenadiers 3 Batt n	840	City of N. York.
1 Life Guards	350	Near King's Bridge, N. Y.
Hereditary 3d Prince's	350	Brookline, L. Island.
Prince 4 Charles	350	do. do.
6 Donops	300	Near Ft. Washington.
7 Losbergs	350	7 Mile Stone, N. Y.
8 Kniphausens	350	Along N. River, do.
9 Trumbacks	350	Barracks, near Ft. Wash'n.
10 Mirbacks	350	Harlem.
		3940
New Levies, Cathcart's Legion	100	Long Island.
Lord Rawdon's, or Irish Volunteers	350	Bowery, N. Y. Island.
Robinson's	150	Harlem, do.
Simcoe's Rangers	250	Long Island.
Ludlow's Batt n, Delancey's Brigade	150	Loyld's Neck, do.
Barton's do. Skinner's do.	250	Cuckold's Town, Staten I'd.
Buskirk's do. do. do.	200	Staten Island.
Emerick's Chasseurs	90	This Side King's Bridge.
		1540
Total,		13,165

General McDougall endorses the foregoing with a long note stating that he secured the information by closely questioning the deserters in regard to their regimental and company strength and comparing it with published accounts. "No question," he says, "remains in my mind of the Truth of this Estimate." He adds that the Seventeenth Foot [afterwards captured at Stony Point] "altho' cut to pieces at Princeton, has had large draughts from the reduced Regiments. A Corporal of it, who detailed the duty deserted and was very minutely examined at my Quarters. He appeared to be a sober, intelligent fellow. The 57th is by the concurrent examination of sixty deserters the strongest in America."

[Governor Clinton's MS. Papers, Albany, No. 2118.]

No. 19

WASHINGTON TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS ON
MOVEMENTS OF THE ENEMY.

HEAD QUARTERS, MIDDLEBROOK, (N. J.) May 25, 1779.

By intelligence through different channels from New York, it would seem as if the enemy there have some important enterprise in Contemplation. They have been drawing all their force to a point, and have collected a number of boats at Kingsbridge which are so prepared as to indicate an attempt that requires secrecy and silence. The appearances are strong, and make it necessary that

we should be on our guard; though they may only be calculated for demonstration, perhaps to divert and detain the force we are sending on the western service.

[Spark's Washington, Vol. 6, p. 262.]

No. 20

GENERAL McDOUGALL TO GOVERNOR CLINTON

HEAD QUARTERS, PEEKSKILL,

May 25th, 1779.

Dear Sir:

By late intelligence received by the Commander-in-Chief and myself from New York, I have reason to conclude that the enemy have in contemplation some secret expedition; and there is great reason to suppose his design is against these Posts. The Commander-in-Chief is so persuaded of it that he has ordered me to call in all the Out Posts. If an attack should be made on West Point I am afraid, in spite of all my exertions since I have been at this Post, that a sufficient quantity of provisions has not been got in. I must therefore intreat your assistance to the Deputy Quarter Master General with respect to his collecting in the Country the teams necessary for the transporting Provisions to that Post, and the carrying off the superfluous stores should the Enemy come up in great force. I make no doubt you will excuse this

application, as upon such an Event the utmost Exertions are necessary.

I am with much Esteem,

Dr. Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

ALEX: McDOUGALL.

His Excellency Governor Clinton.

[Clinton MSS. Papers, Albany, No. 2171.]

No. 21

GOVERNOR CLINTON TO GENERAL McDOUGALL

Sir:

In consequence of your letter of yesterday just now received, I have issued a general Impress Warrant to enable the Qur. Mr. Genl. to convey to the different posts sufficient supplies of Provisions; and you may rely upon every other exertion in my power to forward the Business. This is the third general Impress Warrant I have granted for this service and it is to be lamented that upon every fresh alarm the same want of Provisions still remains.

I enclose you an extract of a letter from Colo. Pawling with some Intelligence from the westward which, as it seems to correspond with other reports, and also with the accounts contained in your letter, may be true. I have therefore ordered the Regiments of Colo. Cantine and Colo. Snyder of Ulster, and Genl. Ten Broeck's Brigade of Al-

bany County, in case of an alarm, to march to and cover the Frontier—the rest of the militia to strengthen the Posts under your command.

I am &c.,

GEORGE CLINTON.

May 26: 1779.

[Clinton MSS. Papers, Albany, No. 2173.]

No. 22.

GENERAL McDOUGALL'S EXAMINATION OF
A DESERTER

Patrick Rogers says he is a native of Ireland and was a corporal in Lord Cathcart's legion and deserted this morning in company with two others of the same corps. He says that the 17th British regiment of horse, Yagers, Simcoes, the 7th, 23rd and 63rd British regiments lay on this side the bridge encamped from Cortlandt's to Valentine's. That last evening he carried orders from General Kniphausen to Sir William Erskine for the troops mentioned to march at 6 o'clock this morning. That he overheard Colonel Emerick read the orders which mentioned that all the troops on this side the bridge were to march out 18 miles into the country with their tents and baggage and there encamp.

That the British and Hessian Grenadiers, British Light Infantry and 17th Foot were to march to William's Bridge

with tents, &c., and there encamp. That the Hessian Guards and 44th British Regt. and Robinson corps with Capt. Sandford's independent troop of horse were to do the duty on New York island. That a serjeant of his own corps told him he saw the brigades consisting of 6 regiments embark at New York on the 27th instant, and that they sailed the day following up to Fort Washington, and that he heard several guns fired from the ships and that it was reported they were going to attack some fort up the river.

[Governor Clinton's Letters, Albany.]

No. 23

GENERAL McDOUGALL TO GOVERNOR CLINTON ANNOUNCING APPROACH OF THE ENEMY

CONTINENTAL VILLAGE, 31st May, 5 P. M.

Sir:

The enemy have advanced up the river in about thirty-five large vessels, and a great number of flatt bottomed boats, as far as Tellars Point, where they have landed about 1,500 men, and a few at Haverstraw. They are in great force, and they have not yet passed King's ferry. Tomorrow I suppose they will pass—their force must be very considerable.

VILLAGE, June 1st, 1779, 7 A. M.

My Dear Sir:

I received your favour of 10 o'clock last night, early this morning. The enemy debarked all his force mostly

on the east side from Croton's to Tellar's Point, and towards the ferry. Two prisoners taken last night agree in the accounts, that the enemy's detachment is returned from Virginia and composed part of the army now on the river. It did not land in New York. The militia to assemble at Fishkill, I suppose will wait orders then, and give what assistance they can in guarding the shore. At foot you have a list of the enemy's vessels. No intelligence this morning.

I am, &c.,

McDOUGALL.

13 ships,

3 brigs,

4 Topsail schooners,

6 do sloops,

3 gallies,

15 or 20 smaller vessels,

A great number of Flat Bottom'd and Gun Boats.

[Clinton's Papers, Albany.]

No. 24

COLONEL WOODHULL TO COLONEL MALCOLM,
NEAR WEST POINT

HAVERSTRAW, June 7th, 1779.

Dear Sir:

I mean to give you a short detail of the situation of the enemy on and about the river as appears to me on a close

and particular review with a good glass, which I could see almost as well as if I was on the very spot—They are at work like a parcel of devils in fortifying both Stony Point and Verplank's point. They have got no less than five redoubts, to all appearance, finished and their cannon mounted on Stony Point—on Verplank's point to all appearance they have made two distinct lines all around our little fort and on the back of the fort a large distance are drawing a line across the point from their present situation—in my weak opinion it will be extremely difficult to dislodge them—if it is done it must be by storm with sword in hand, as there is no heights at a proper distance in my opinion that will command them; admitting this to be the case it is easy foretelling without the spirit of prophecy the bad consequences of their not being dislodged—their ships of war are all returned down the river except one sloop of sixteen guns, and it is supposed that the main body of their troops is returned likewise. I believe from report here that two divisions of General Washington's army was within eight miles of King's ferry last night—this moment it is reported that a party of the enemy landed at the Long Clove and have taken some stock off from the neighbourhood of the pond—this much in haste.

From your most Humb. Servt.,

To Coll. Malcom,

JESSE WOODHULL.

near West Point.

[Governor Clinton's MSS., Albany, No. 2388.]

No. 25

WASHINGTON'S INSTRUCTIONS TO WAYNE

NEW WINDSOR, July 10th., 1779.

Dear Sir:

Immediately upon receipt of Your Letter of this date, I ordered the Quartermaster-General to furnish the Es-pontoons you wrote for, and presume you will get them in a day or two.

My ideas of the Enterprise in contemplation are these: that it should be attempted by the Light Infantry only, which should march under cover of night and with the utmost secrecy to the Enemy's lines, securing every person they find, to prevent discovery. Between one and two hundred chosen men and officers I conceive fully sufficient for the surprise; and apprehend the approach should be along the Water on the South side, crossing the Beach and entering the abatis. This party is to be preceded by a Vanguard of prudent and determined men, well commanded, who are to remove obstructions, secure the sentries, and drive in the guards. They are to advance the whole of them with fixed Bayonets and muskets unloaded. The officers commanding them are to know precisely what Batteries, or particular parts of the line, they are respectively to possess, that confusion and consequences of indecision may be avoided. These parties should be followed by the main body at a small distance, for the purpose of support and making good the advantages which may be gained, or to bring them off in case of repulse and disappointment. Other parties may advance to the works (but not so as to be discovered until the conflict is begun) by the way of the causeway and the River on the north, if practicable, as well as for the purpose of distracting the Enemy in their defence, as to cut off their retreat. These

parties may be small, unless the access and approaches should be considered very easy and safe.

The Three approaches here mentioned should be well reconnoitred beforehand, and by persons of observation. Single men in the night will be more likely to ascertain facts, than the best glasses in the day. A white feather, or cockade, or some other visible badge of distinction for the night, should be worn by our Troops, and a Watchword agreed on to distinguish friends from Foes. If success should attend the Enterprise, measures should be instantly taken to prevent, if practicable, the retreat of the garrison by water, or to annoy them as much as possible if they attempt it; and the guns should be immediately turned against the shipping and Verplanck's point, and covered, if possible, from the Enemy's fire.

Secrecy is so much more essential to these kind of enterprises, than numbers, that I should not think it advisable to employ any other than the light troops. If a surprise takes place, they are fully competent to the business; if it does not, numbers will avail little. As it is in the power of a single Deserter to betray the design, defeat the project, and involve the party in difficulties and danger, too much caution cannot be used to conceal the intended enterprise till the latest hour from all but the principal officers of your corps, and from the men till the the moment of execution. A knowledge of your intention, ten minutes previously obtained, will blast all your hopes; for which reason a small detachment, composed of men whose fidelity you can rely on, under the care of a Judicious Officer, should guard every avenue through the marsh to the Enemy's works, by which our Deserters or the spies can pass, and prevent all intercourse. The usual time for exploits of this kind is a little before day, for which reason a vigilant officer is then more on the watch. I therefore

recommend a midnight hour. I had in view to attempt Verplanck's point at the same instant, that your operations should commence at Stony Point; but the uncertainty of co-operating in point of time, and the hazard which would be thereby run of defeating the attempt on Stony Point, which is infinitely more important (the other being dependent) has induced me to suspend the operation.

These are my general ideas of the plan for a surprize; but you are at liberty to depart from them in every instance, where you may think they may be improved, or changed for the better. A Dark night, or even a rainy one (if you can find the way) will contribute to your success. The officers, in these night marches, should be extremely attentive to keep their men together, as well for the purpose of guarding against desertion to the enemy, as to prevent skulking. As it is a part of the plan, if the surprize should succeed, to make use of the enemy's Cannon against their shipping and their post on the other side, it would be well to have a small detachment of artillery with you to serve them. I have sent an order to the park for this purpose, and, to cover the design, have ordered down a couple of light field-pieces. When you march, you can leave the pieces behind. So soon as you have fixed your plan and the time of execution, I shall be obliged to you to give me notice. I shall immediately order you a reinforcement of Light Infantry and Espositoons.

[From Dawson's "Assault on Stony Point."]

No. 26.

WAYNE'S ORDER OF BATTLE

The troops will march at — O'clock and move by the Right making a short halt at the Creek or run next on this side Clements's. Every Officer and non-commissioned Officer must remain with and be answerable for every man, in their platoons; no soldier will be permitted to quit his ranks on any pretext whatever until a general Halt is made and then to be attended by one of the Officers of the Platoon.

When the Head of the Troops arrive in the rear of the Hill Z Fuger [Febiger] will form his Regiment into a Solid Column of a half Platoon in front as fast as they come up. Colo. Meggs will form next in Febiger's rear and Major Hull in the rear of Megg's which will form the right column.

Colo. Butler will form a Column on the left of Febiger and Major Murphrey in his Rear.

[When this is performed each man will Receive a Gill of Rum and have the following Orders made publick to the whole, viz.]¹

Every Officer and Soldier are then to fix a piece of white paper in the most conspicuous part of his Hat or Cap as an Insignea to be distinguished from the Enemy.

At the word March Colo. Flury will take charge of One Hundred and fifty detormened and picked men, properly Officered, with their Arms unloaded, placing their whole Dependence on the Bay[onet] who will move about twenty paces in front of the Right Column by the Rout 1 and enter the Sally port b. He is to detach an officer and

¹ The sentence in brackets is crossed out in the original MSS. No rum appears to have been distributed, but the order, or its substance, was read to the corps.

twenty men a little in front whose business will be to secure the sentries and Remove the Abattis and obstruction for the Column to pass through. The Column will follow close in the Rear with sholder'd muskets led by Colo. Febiger and Genl. Wayne in person. When the works are forced—and not before, the Victorious troops as they enter will give the Watch word [“The fort's our own”] with a repeated and loud voice to drive the Enemy from their Works and Guns which will favor the pass of the whole troops. Shou'd the Enemy refuse to Surrender and attempt to make their escape by water or otherwise, effectual means must be used to effect the former and to prevent the Latter.

Colo. Butler will move by the rout 2, preceded by One Hundred chosen men with fixed Bayonets, properly officer'd, and Unloaded [muskets] under the command of ———, at the distance of about 20 yards in front of the Column, which will follow under Colo. Butler with sholdered Muskets and enter the Sally port E or d occasionally; these Hundred will also detach a proper Officer and twenty men a little in front to Remove the obstructions. As soon as they gain the Works they are also to give and continue the Watch Word which will prevent confusion and mistakes.

Major Murphey will follow Colo. Butler to the first figure 3 when he will divide a little to the Right and left and wait the Attack on the Right which will be his Signal to begin and keep up a perpetual and gauling fire and endeavour to enter between and possess the Work aa.

If any Soldier presumes to take his Musket from his sholder or Attempt to fire or begin the Battle until ordered by his proper Officer, he shall be instantly put to Death by the Officer next him, for the misconduct of one man is not to put the whole Troops in danger or disorder and be

suffered to pass with life. After the troops begin to advance to the Works the strictest Silence must be observed and the closest attention paid to the commands of the Officers.

The General has the fullest Confidence in the bravery and fortitude of the Corps that he has the Happiness to command. The distinguished Honor conferred on every Officer and Soldier who has been drafted into this Corps by His Excellency, Genl. Washington, the Credit of the States they respectively belong to, and their own Reputation will be such powerful motives for each man to distinguish himself that the General cannot have the least doubt of a Glorious Victory; and he hereby most Solemnly engages to Reward the first man who enters the works with Five Hundred Dollars and Immediate promotion; to the Second 400, to the third 300, to the fourth 200, and to the fifth 100 Dollars, and will represent the conduct of every Officer and Soldier who distinguishes himself on this occasion in the most favorable point of view to His Excellency, whose greatest pleasure is in rewarding merit.

But shou'd there be any soldier so lost to every feeling of Honor, as to attempt to Retreat one single foot or Skulk in the face of danger, the Officer next to him is immediately to put him to Death,—that he may no longer disgrace the Name of a Soldier or the Corps or State he belongs to.

As General Wayne is determined to share the danger of the Night—so he wishes to participate of the glory of the day in common with his fellow Soldiers.

[From Dawson's "Assault on Stony Point."]

No. 27

GENERAL WAYNE TO CAPTAIN CHRYSTIE

FORT MONTGOMERY, July 15, 1779.

Sir:

You will march by the Doodletown route, and approach as near the enemy's lines as convenient before night, so as not to be discovered. You will fix upon the proper place to post your sentries from the river towards the old mill near the causeway, so as to prevent any person from going into or coming out from the enemy but what you secure. You are to take and keep all the male inhabitants in the vicinity of the enemy's lines until further orders, particularly the person you had in charge the other day. You'll hear from me this evening.

I am, Sir, your Hum. Servt.,

ANT. WAYNE.

Capt. Chrystie.

No. 28

GENERAL WAYNE TO WASHINGTON ON THE
SUCCESS OF THE ASSAULT

STONY-POINT, July 17, 1779.

Sir:

I have the honour to give you a full and particular relation of the reduction of this point, by the light-infantry under my command.

On the 15th instant at 12 o'clock we took up our line of march from Sandy-beach, distant 14 miles from this place; the roads being excessively bad and narrow, and having to pass over high mountains, through deep morasses, and difficult defiles, we were obliged to move in single files the greatest part of the way. At eight o'clock in the evening, the van arrived at Mr. Springsteel's, within one and a half miles of the enemy, and formed into columns as fast as they came up, agreeable to the order of battle annexed; viz., Colonels Febiger's and Meig's regiments, with Major Hull's detachment, formed the right column; Col. Butler's regiment and Major Murfrees's two companies, the left. The troops remained in this position until several of the principal officers with myself had returned from reconnoitring the works. Half after eleven o'clock, being the hour fixed on, the whole moved forward, the van of the right consisted of one hundred and fifty volunteers, properly officered, who advanced with unloaded muskets and fixed bayonets, under the command of Lieut. Col. Fleury; these were preceded by twenty picked men, and a vigilant and brave officer, to remove the abattis and other obstructions. The van of the left consisted of one hundred volunteers, under the command of Major Steward, with unloaded muskets and fixed bayonets, also preceded by a brave and determined officer, with twenty men, for the same purpose as the other.

At twelve o'clock the assault was to begin on the right and left flanks of the enemy's works, whilst Major Murfrees amused them in front; but a deep morass covering their whole front, and at this time overflowed by the tide, together with other obstructions, rendered the approaches more difficult than were at first apprehended, so that it was about twenty minutes after twelve before the assault began, previous to which I placed myself at the head of

Febiger's regiment or right column, and gave the troops the most pointed orders not to fire on any account, but place their whole dependence on the bayonet, which order was literally and faithfully obeyed. Neither the deep morass, the formidable and double rows of abattis, or the strong works in front or flank, could damp the ardor of the troops, who in the face of a most tremendous and incessant fire of musketry, and from cannon loaded with grape-shot, forced their way at the point of the bayonet, through every obstacle, both columns meeting in the center of the enemy's works nearly at the same instant. Too much praise cannot be given to Lieut. Col. Fleury (who struck the enemy's standard with his own hand), and to Major Steward, who commanded the advanced parties, for their brave and prudent conduct.

Colonels Butler, Meigs, and Febiger conducted themselves with that coolness, bravery and perseverance, that will ever insure success. Lieut. Col. Hay was wounded in the thigh, bravely fighting at the head of his battalion. I should take up too much of your Excellency's time, was I to particularize every individual who deserves it, for his bravery on this occasion. I cannot, however, omit Major Lee, to whom I am indebted for frequent and very useful intelligence, which contributed much to the success of the enterprise, and it is with the greatest pleasure I acknowledge to you, I was supported in the attack by all the officers and soldiers under my command, to the utmost of my wishes. The officers and privates of the artillery exerted themselves in turning the cannon against Verplanck's point, and forced them to cut the cables of their shipping, and run down the river.

I should be wanting in gratitude was I to omit mentioning Capt. Fishbourn and Mr. Archer, my two aids de camp, who on every occasion showed the greatest in-

trepidity, and supported me into the works after I received my wound in passing the last abattis.

Inclosed are the returns of the killed and wounded of the light infantry, as also of the enemy, together with the number of prisoners taken, likewise of the ordnance and stores found in the garrison.

I forgot to mention to your Excellency, that previous to my marching, I had drawn General Muhlenberg into my rear, who, with three hundred men of his brigade, took post on the opposite side of the marsh so as to be in readiness either to support me, or to cover a retreat in case of accident, and I have no doubt of his faithfully and effectually executing either, had there been any occasion for him.

The humanity of our brave soldiery, who scorned to take the lives of a vanquished foe calling for mercy, reflects the highest honor on them, and accounts for the few of the enemy killed on the occasion.

I am not satisfied with the manner in which I have mentioned the conduct of Lieutenants Gibbons and Knox, the two gentlemen who led the advanced parties of twenty men each—their distinguished bravery deserves the highest commendation—the first belongs to the sixth Pennsylvania regiment, and lost seventeen men killed and wounded in the attack; the last belongs to the ninth ditto, who was more fortunate in saving his men, though not less exposed.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Your Excellency's Most obedient humble servant,

ANTHONY WAYNE.

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

[Spark's Washington, Vol. VI., p. 537.]

No. 29

WASHINGTON TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS
ON THE ASSAULT

HEAD QUARTERS, NEW WINDSOR.

July 20th, 1779.

Sir:

On the 16th instant I had the honor to inform Congress of a successful attack upon the enemy's post at Stony Point, on the preceding night, by Brigadier-General Wayne and the corps of light infantry under his command. The ulterior operations, in which we have been engaged, have hitherto put it out of my power to transmit the particulars of this interesting event. They will now be found in the enclosed report, which I have received from General Wayne. To the encomiums he has deservedly bestowed on the officers and men under his command, it gives me pleasure to add, that his own conduct throughout the whole of this arduous enterprise merits the warmest approbation of Congress. He improved upon the plan recommended by me, and executed it in a manner that does signal honor to his judgment and to his bravery. In a critical moment of the assault, he received a flesh-wound in head with a musket-ball, but continued leading on his men with unshaken firmness.

I now beg leave for the private satisfaction of Congress, to explain the motives which induced me to direct the attempt. In my further letters I have pointed out the advantages, which the enemy derived from the possession of this post and the one on the opposite side, and the inconveniences resulting from it to us. To deprive them of the former, and remove the latter, were sufficient inducements to endeavor to dispossess them. The necessity of doing something to satisfy the expectations of the people, and recon-

cile them to the defensive plan, we are obliged to pursue, and to the apparent inactivity which our situation imposes upon us; the value of the acquisition in itself, with respect to the men, artillery and stores, which composed the garrison; the effect it would have upon the successive operations of the campaign, and the check it would give to the depredations of the enemy at the present season; all these motives concurred to determine me to the undertaking. The certain advantages of success, even if not so extensive as might be wished, would, at all events, be very important; the probable disadvantages of a failure were comparatively inconsiderable, and, on the plan that was adopted, could amount to little more than the loss of a small number of men.

After reconnoitring the post myself, and collecting all the information I could get of its strength and situation, I found that, without hazarding a greater loss than we were able to afford, and with less likelihood of success, the attempt to carry it could only be by way of surprise. I therefore resolved on this mode, and gave my instructions accordingly, as contained in No. 2, in hopes that Verplanck's point might fall in consequence of the reduction of the other. Dispositions were made for the purpose, which unluckily did not succeed. The evening appointed for the attack, I directed Major-General McDougall to put two brigades under marching orders to be moved down towards Verplanck's as soon as he should receive intelligence of the success of the attempt on this side, and requested General Wayne to let his despatches to me pass through General McDougall, that he might have the earliest advice of the event. But through some misconception, they came directly on to Head Quarters, which occasioned a loss of several hours. The next morning, Major-General Howe, was sent to take command of those troops, with orders to

advance to the vicinity of the enemy's works, and open batteries against them. It was hoped that this might either awe them into a surrender under the impression of what had happened on the other side, or prepare the way for an assault. But some accidental delays, in bringing on the heavy cannon and trenching tools necessary for an operation of this kind, unavoidably retarded its execution, till the approach of the enemy's main body made it too late. General Howe, to avoid being intercepted, found himself under a necessity of relinquishing his project, and retiring to a place of security. I did not unite the two attacks at the same time and in the same manner, because this would have rendered the enterprise more complex, more liable to suspicion, and less likely success, for want of an exact co-operation, which could hardly have been expected.

When I came to examine the post at Stony Point, I found it would require more men to maintain than we could afford, without incapacitating the army for other operations. In the opinion of the engineer, corresponding with my own and that of all the general officers present, not less than 1,300 men would be requisite for its complete defence; and, from the nature of the works, which were opened towards the River, a great deal of labor and expense must have been incurred, and much time employed, to make them defensible by us. The enemy depending on their shipping to protect the rear, had constructed their works solely against an attack by land. We should have had to apprehend equally an attack by water, and must have enclosed the post. While we were doing this, the whole army must have been in the vicinity, exposed to the risk of a general action on terms, which it would not be our interest to court, and out of reach to assist in carrying on the fortifications at West Point, or to support them in case of necessity. These considerations made it an unani-

mous sentiment to evacuate the post, remove the cannon and stores, and destroy the works, which was accomplished on the night of the 18th, one piece of heavy cannon only excepted. For want of proper tackling within reach to transport the cannon by land, we were obliged to send them to the fort by water. The movements of the enemy's vessels created some uneasiness on their account, and induced me to keep one of the pieces for their protection, which finally could not be brought off without risking more for its preservation than it was worth. We also lost a galley, which was ordered down to cover the boats. She got under way on her return the afternoon of the 18th. The enemy began a severe and continued cannonade upon her, from which, having received some injury which disabled her for proceeding, she was run ashore. Not being able to get her afloat till late in the flood tide, and one or two of the enemy's vessels under favor of the night passed above her, she was set on fire and blown up.

Disappointed in our attempt on the other side, we may lose some of the principal advantages hoped for from the undertaking. The enemy may re-establish the post at Stony Point, and still continue to interrupt that communication. Had both places been carried, though we should not have been able to occupy them ourselves, there is great reason to believe the enemy would hardly have mutilated their main body a second time, and gone through the same trouble to regain possession of posts where they had been so unfortunate. But though we may not reap all the benefits, which might have followed, those we do reap are very important. The diminution of their force, by the loss of so many men, will be felt in their present circumstances. The artillery and stores will be a valuable acquisition to us, especially in our scarcity of heavy cannon for the forts. The event will have a good effect upon the

minds of the people, give our troops greater confidence in themselves, and depress the spirits of the enemy proportionably. If they resolve to re-establish the post, they must keep their force collected for the purpose. This will serve to confine their ravages within a narrower compass, and to a part of the country already exhausted. They must lose part of the remainder of the campaign in rebuilding the works; and, when they have left a garrison for its defence, their main body, by being lessened, must act with so much the less energy, and so much the greater caution.

They have now brought their whole force up the river, and yesterday landed a body at Stony Point. It is supposed not impossible, that General Clinton may endeavor to retaliate by a stroke upon West Point; and his having stripped New York as bare as possible, and brought up a number of small boats, are circumstances that give a color to the surmise. Though all this may very well be resolved into different motives, prudence requires that our dispositions should have immediate reference to the security of this post; and I have, therefore, drawn our force together, so as that the whole may act in its defence on an emergency. To-morrow I remove my own quarters to the fort.

It is probable Congress will be pleased to bestow some marks of consideration upon those officers who distinguished themselves upon this occasion. Every officer and man of the corps deserves great credit; but there were particular ones, whose situation placed them foremost in danger, and made their conduct most conspicuous. Lieutenant-Colonel Fleury and Major Stewart commanded the two attacks. Lieutenants Gibbons and Knox commanded the advanced parties, or forlorn hopes; and all acquitted themselves as well as it was possible. These officers have a claim to be more particularly noticed. In any other service promotion would be the proper reward, but in ours it would

be injurious. I take the liberty to recommend in preference some honorary present, especially to the field officers. A brevet captaincy to the other two, as it will have no operation in regimental rank, may not be amiss.

Congress will perceive, that some pecuniary rewards were promised by General Wayne to his corps. This was done with my concurrence; and in addition to them, as a greater incitement to their exertions, they were also promised the benefit of whatever was taken in the fort. The artillery and stores are converted to the use of the public; but, in compliance with my engagements, it will be necessary to have them appraised, and the amount paid to the captors in money. I hope my conduct in this instance will not be disapproved. Mr. Archer, who will have the honor of delivering these despatches, is a volunteer Aid to General Wayne, and a gentleman of merit. His zeal, activity and spirit are conspicuous upon every occasion.

P. S.—Congress may possibly be at a loss what to do with Mr. Archer. A captain's brevet, or a commission in the army at large, will be equal to his wishes; and he deserves encouragement on every account. Lest there should be any misapprehension, as to what is mentioned about the manner of sending despatches through General McDougall, I beg leave to be more explicit. I directed General Wayne, when he marched of his ground, to send his despatches in the first instance to the officer of his baggage-guard, left at the encampment from which he marched, who was to inform his messenger where I was to be found. I left word with this officer to forward the Messenger to General McDougall, and I desired General McDougall to open the despatches. The Messenger, who was Captain Fishbourn, came directly on, either through misconception in General Wayne, in the officer of the guard, or in himself.

I forgot to mention that two flags and two standards

were taken, the former belonging to the garrison, and the latter to the seventeenth regiment. These shall be sent to Congress by the first convenient opportunity.

[From Spark's Washington, Vol. VI.]

No. 30

WASHINGTON TO THE REV. DR. WILLIAM GORDON

WEST POINT, 2 August, 1779.

Dear Sir:

. . . . The assault of Stony Point does much honor to the Troops employed in it, as no men could behave better. They were composed of the Light Infantry of every State (now in this part of the army), commanded by Genl. Wayne, a brave, gallant and sensible officer. Had it not been for some untoward accidents, the stroke would have been quite compleat. The plan was equally laid for Verplank's Point, and would most assuredly have succeeded, but for delays, partly occasioned by high winds, and partly by means which were more unavoidable. A combination, however, of causes produced such a delay as gave the enemy time to move in force, and render further operations dangerous and improper; the situation of the Post, and other circumstances which may easily be guessed, induced me to resolve a removal of the stores, and the destruction of the works at Stony Point, which was accordingly done the third day after it was taken.

The Enemy have again repossessed the ground, and are

busily employed in repairing the works with a force fully adequate to the defence of the spot, which in itself is a fortification—surrounded, as it is, by a deep morass exceedingly difficult of access.

[Ford's Washington, Vol. 8, p. 1.]

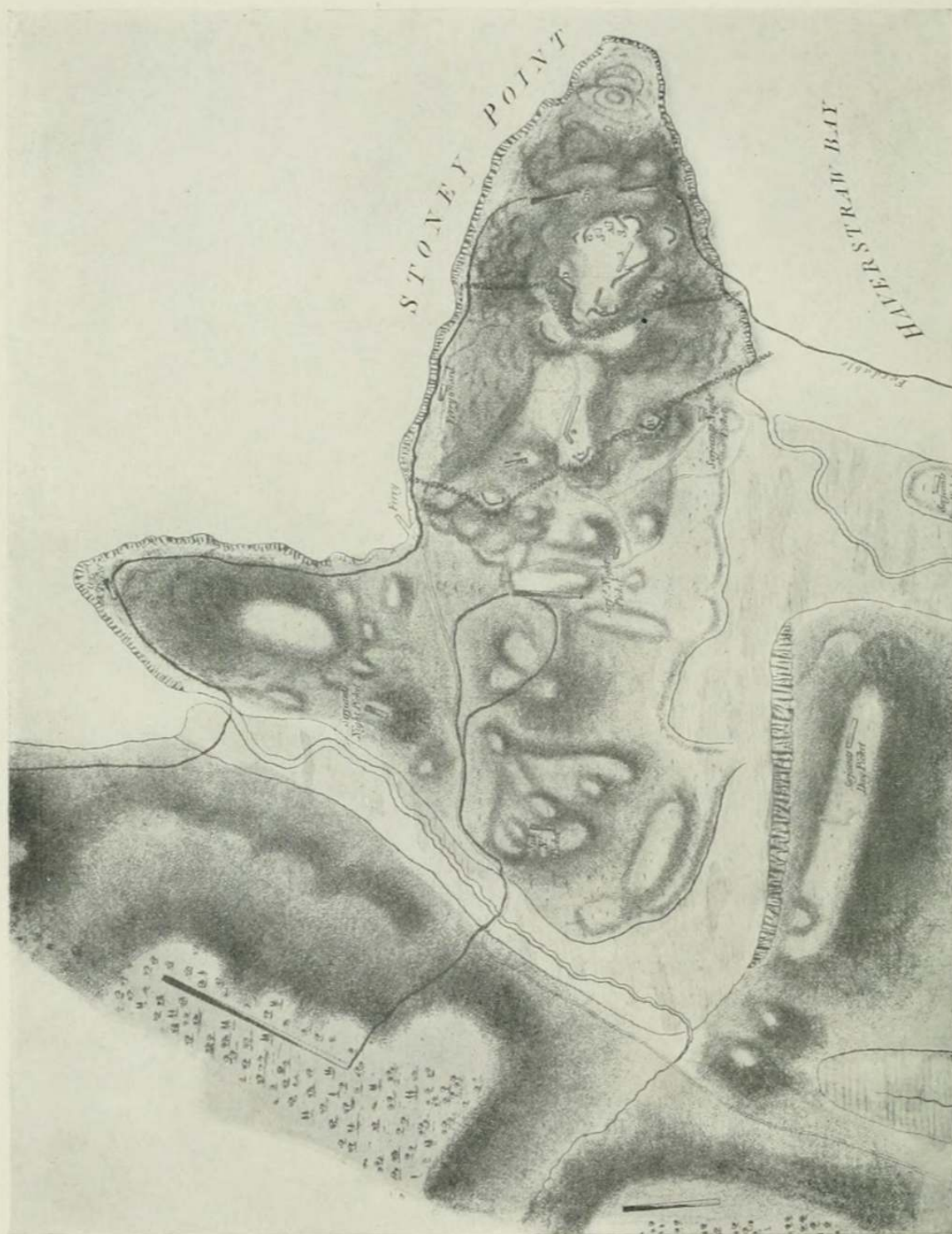
No. 31

WASHINGTON TO GENERAL GATES AT PROVIDENCE

HEAD QUARTERS, July 29, 1779.

Dear Sir:

You will have heard before this reaches you of a successful attack made upon Stony Point on the night of the 15th by Brigadier General Wayne and the corps of Light Infantry under his command. The number of prisoners taken, including the wounded, amounts to 1 Lt. Colonel, 4 captains, 19 subalterns, 3 staff officers and 516 non-commissioned officers and privates. The killed is estimated at about 50. There were fifteen pieces of fine artillery in the garrison of different size, with a proportion of stores. On our part we had fifteen killed and eighty-four wounded; among the latter were seven officers, none mortally. General Wayne himself received a flesh wound in the head. The subsequent reduction of Verplank's point made a part of the plan, but in this we were disappointed by some accidental and unavoidable delays which gave the enemy time to march to its relief. When we came to examine Stony Point, we found that it would require more men to main-



PLAN OF STONEY POINT

And its works, as Surveyed by British Engineers, 1779. Reduced from Original Print by Faden, King's Geographer, London, 1789

tain it than we could spare, and a great deal of time to put it in a state of defense against a water attack. The enemy had constructed their works wholly with a view to a land attack. Had we attempted to keep it, the army must have remained in the vicinity till the defences were completed, and this would have put it in the power of the enemy to bring us to a general action on their own terms; besides, uncovering West Point and exposing that important post to imminent hazard. We therefore removed the cannon and stores and destroyed the works.

[Spark's Collection, Harvard Library.]

No. 32

WASHINGTON TO BENJAMIN HARRISON, OF
VIRGINIA

WEST POINT, Oct. 25, 1779.

Dear Sir:

. . . . The latter end of May, as I have hinted already, General Clinton moved up to King's ferry in force, and possessed himself of Stony and Verplank's points. Alarmed at this (for I conceived these works and the command of the river, in consequence was really the object, and the other only an advance to it), I hastened to its succour. But the return of the enemy towards the last of June, after having fortified and garrisoned the points, convinced me that such was not their design, or that they had relinquished it, till their reinforcements should have arrived.

Since which these posts, Stony Point and Verplank's, have changed masters frequently, and after employing the enemy a whole campaign, costing them near a thousand men, in prisoners, by desertions and other ways, and infinite labour, is, at length, in statu quo; that is, simply a continental ferry again.

[Spark's MSS., Harvard.]

No. 33

GENERAL GREENE TO COLONEL COX

STONEY-POINT, KING'S FERRY, July 17, 1779.

Dear Sir:

I wrote you a hasty account yesterday morning of a surprise Gen. Wayne had effected upon the garrison at this place. He marched about two o'clock in the afternoon from fort Montgomery with part of the light infantry of the army, amounting to about 1,400 men. The garrison consisted of between 5 and 600 men, including officers. The attack was made about midnight; and conducted with great spirit and enterprize, the troops marching up in the face of an exceeding heavy fire with cannon and musketry, without discharging a gun. This is thought to be the perfection of discipline; and will for ever immortalize Gen. Wayne, as it would do honor to the first General in Europe. The place is as difficult of access as any you ever saw, strongly fortified with lines, and secured with a double row of abatis. The post actually looks more formidable on the

ground than it can be made by description; and, contrary to almost all other events of this nature, increases our surprize by viewing the place and the circumstances.

The darkness of the night favoured the attack, and made our loss much less than might have been expected. The whole business was done with fixed bayonets. Our loss in killed and wounded amounted to 90 men, including officers—eight only of which were killed. Gen. Wayne got a slight wound (upon the side of his head), and three or four other officers, among the number is Lieut. Col. Hay, of Pennsylvania; but they are all in a fair way of recovery.

The enemy's loss is not certainly known, neither have we any certain account of the number of prisoners, as they were sent away in the dark, and in a hurry; but it is said they amount to 440, about 30 or 40 were left behind unable to march, and upwards of 30 were buried.

The enemy made little resistance after our people got into the works; their cry was, "Mercy, mercy, dear, dear Americans!"

We found in the garrison 15 pieces of ordnance, of different kinds, principally brass. There is also a prodigious quantity of ordnance stores, and some few belonging to the Quartermaster's department.

The enemy are now right opposite to us on Ver Plank's Point. They are much more strongly fortified on that side than this, having seven enclosed redoubts. We are now cannonading them across the river, which is little more than half a mile over. We are throwing at the rate of an hundred shot and shells an hour. Gen. How is on the other side with a body of troops, and is to open batteries to-night.

[From Dawson's "Stony Point," p. 90.]

No. 34

THE ATTACK DESCRIBED BY A CONNECTICUT
OFFICERCAMP NEAR THE RUINS OF
FORT MONTGOMERY, July 24, 1779.

Since my last I have been engaged in one of the most serious and fortunate transactions of my life; I mean the attacking the works on Stony Point by storm.

On the 15th inst. at 12 o'clock, about 1,150 of chosen troops, the light infantry of our army, Commanded by Brig. General Wayne, marched from this place, arrived within two miles of Stony Point by sunset, and made disposition for attacking at midnight, viz.: a solid column of 700 men to go below the fort, march up the bank of the river, and attack it on the south side, 300 in column to attack it the north side, about 150 to make a feint of attacking in front. From these columns was detached parties to cover the heads of them, cut away pickets, and remove impassable obstructions. At 12 o'clock we came across the enemy's picket guard, about half a mile from the fort, who fired on us and retired to the fort without our taking any notice of them.

Exactly at half-past 12 (I looked at my watch), the enemy fired generally on us from all their works as the front of the large column (in which I was) had got to the first line of abattis, in about ten rods of the out works of the fort. The fire was very brisk from cannon and grape shot and lagrange, as well as from small arms with ball and buck shot, through which our troops advanced with the greatest regularity and firmness without firing a gun or once breaking their order, except to climb the abattis, and then formed instantly after passing them, till a part of us forced into their works over the parapet and a part

through their sally port. A little small arm firing and considerable bayonetting closed the scene exactly at 1 o'clock, where we remained under arms and the enemy under guard 'till daylight.

I was surprized when I viewed in the morning the difficulties our troops surmounted. The situation of ground was one of the strongest that nature ever form'd; three sides of it was surrounded by water, which was guarded by the shipping; the other side was a deep, miry, marsh, which was from water to water, making the point an island, which is rocky highland of difficult access. Through the marsh we waded (which was up to my waist), directly under one of the enemy's works, which kept an incessant fire on us, and the abattis lay on the bank of the marsh. This piece of ground was fortified by all British art and industry; two lines of their abattis extended quite across the point into the river each way, and in the places easiest of approach was three lines besides the common breastworks.

This situation and these works was defended by the 17th regiment of light infantry (a corps kept full by draughts of their best troops), the grenadiers of the 71st regt., two companies of Royal Americans, and artillery men to man fifteen pieces of ordnance, 8 of which were brass, with every apparatus necessary for defence. The prisoners taken amount to 544; about 40 of the enemy slain, all after we got into the works. A number of the enemy escaped by boats to their shipping, which lay in the passage of King's ferry. We turned their own cannon on them soon after we got their works, which soon drove them from their station down the river.

The enemy's camp we took all standing, stored with every convenience; a large quantity of fixed ammunition was found in the magazine. Our loss during the action amounts to but little more than 100 killed and wounded.

Gen. Wayne was wounded in the head, in front of the large column, but not dangerous. Four officers were wounded in the regiment I belonged to, which was commanded by Col. Meigs. Capt. Ezra Selden, of Lyme, was one, by a musket ball which lodged in his hip. The enemy wasted their fire mostly over our heads. I cannot help observing that so closely connected is humanity with real bravery, that notwithstanding the depredation the enemy had lately committed in our State, the cruelties our soldiers have suffered from them, and the works carried wholly by storm, yet I believe not one of the enemy was hurt after he had thrown down his arms and asked for quarter; they were, however, exceedingly submissive. We levelled the enemy's works, brought off the stores and plunder, and returned to this place the 20th [18th] at night. We lost the Lady Washington galley by the fire of the enemy's work on Verplank's point the day before we left Stony Point; we burned and left her.

[From the "Connecticut Gazette," New London, August 11, 1779.]

No. 35

LETTER FROM CAPTAIN SAMUEL SHAW,
OF KNOX'S ARTILLERY

. . . . Give me your hand, my dear friend, and let your honest heart receive my Congratulation. Take the following as an indisputable fact: it is no Carolina story. The Enemy previous to going down the river garrisoned

Stony Point on this side, and the work which they took from us on the other, by which they cut off the Communication of King's Ferry. His Excellency, our illustrious Commander-in-Chief, having pretty good intelligence of the situation and strength of the garrison at Stony Point, determined to attempt carrying it. The enterprise was resolved on last night, and executed this morning between one and two o'clock, by General Wayne, and the light infantry of the army, who gallantly effected one of the most complete surprises which has taken place during this war. The Fort, Cannon, Stores and garrison of about five hundred men, from the seventeenth and seventy-first regiments and new levies, are our own. Our killed and wounded do not amount to ten; among the latter, General Wayne slightly, who had his head scratched by a musket-ball. Notwithstanding it was night—a surprise—the usage of arms justifying, and the *lex talionis* demanding a carnage, yet that humanity, that amiable weakness, which has ever distinguished Americans, prevailed. No unnecessary slaughter was made; the forfeited lives of the garrison were spared. Immediately after this affair the enemy's guard-ships went down the river, leaving their troops on the other side to shift for themselves. Perhaps something may be attempted against them, though, after such an example, it is to be supposed they will be pretty well guarded against a surprise. This success will be an incitement to future attempts, and doubtless give a complexion to the ensuing operations of the Campaign. I hope it is only a prelude to something better.

The fortifications and defences of the river are in such a state, that, should the part of our army in this quarter make a movement, which is not improbable, we need be under very little, if any, apprehensions for its fate. The whole British army would not dare to storm it; and should

they regularly besiege it, our army might arrive in time for its relief. Ergo, I believe they will not try the experiment.

[From Shaw's published "Journals."]

No. 36

ADJUTANT-GENERAL SCAMMELL TO MESHECK
WEARE, GOVERNOR OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

H. QUARTERS MOORS HOUSE, NEAR WEST POINT
Augt. 4th, '79.

Sir:

. . . . I beg leave to congratulate you on the late success of our Arms in the Reduction of Stony Point, where as great Discipline, Coolness and Intrepidity were exhibited as by any Troops in the world. You will, long before this reaches you, hear the Particulars. I have only to add that Genl. Washington perceiving it was in vain to persue the enemy while they were destroying the Sea Coasts of Connecticut, as it would fatigue our army to no effect, their shipping always putting it in their Power to escape us. He therefore, after having reconnoitred the post very critically himself, gave Orders to Genl. Wayne to attack the place, and the plan of Attack, concluding it would effectually draw the enemy from ravaging the Sea Coasts in Case it succeeded. He was right in his Conjecture as the enemy immediately left burning, and Clinton with his whole Force proceeded up Hudson's River where to his no small morti-

fication he found his American Gibraltar (as they had vainly call'd it) destroy'd, and his Garrison of upwards of 600 men killed and taken.

Genl. Washington loath to weaken his army by multiplying Garrisons thought proper to destroy the works and retire to his old position near West Point; he is at present fortifying it in such a Manner that the main Army may be able to take the Field leaving a proper Garrison which, till the works are completed, would be unsafe. I hope in a Week or ten Days we shall be able to move from the Highlands. We are well inform'd that the enemy will shortly receive a very considerable Reinforcement, nearly 7,000 strong. Should that Number arrive, we expect a very hot Campaign, and the States will be under a Necessity of making great exertions. . . .

I am with the highest esteem

And Regard, Yr. Very Humble
Servt.,

ALEXANDER SCAMMELL.

[From MSS. Collections Mass. Historical Society.]

No. 37

COLONEL FEBIGER'S ACCOUNT OF THE ATTACK ¹

Sir:

In a Philadelphia Paper of the 27th of July last I see his Excellency General Washington's letter to Congress

¹ Colonel Febiger evidently wrote this for publication, but withheld it, probably as reflecting too pointedly on the alleged partiality of Wayne's report of the assault.

relative to the Reduction of Stony Point, dated New Windsor, July 21st, as likewise General Wayne's letter to his Excellency, dated Stony Point, July 17th, 1779, giving, as the General pleases to say, a full and particular relation of the reduction of the point by the light Infantry under his command.

As I am one of those who had shared the Dangers and labor of this attempt, and observing that in General Wayne's Relation of the matter, which must be chiefly collated from relations of the officers, some very glaring mistakes inserted, I must entreat you to give the following a place in your useful paper for the better information of the publick. I shall adhere to facts and you are at Liberty to show my real name, which I enclose you, to any person or persons who conceive themselves concerned in the matter.

I am Yours, &c.,

MILES.

ENCLOSURE.

As to General Wayne's first paragraph as above [probably a slip from newspaper] he proceeds to repeat the line of march which is just to where he returned from reconnoitering the works. Half after eleven o'clock the whole moved forward; the van of the right consisted of 150 volunteers commanded by Lt. Col. Fleury. These were preceded by 20 picked men under command of Lieut. Knox, not, as the General mentions, to remove the abatis and other obstructions, but to cover Capt. Shelton, who com-

manded the front of the remaining 130 men of whom ——— men had their musketts slung and carried axes for that purpose; but when Lt. Col. Fleury had taken post with Lieut. Knox in front of the 20 men, and Capt. Skelton finding it impossible to remove the abatis, and the gallant Major Posey, whose name has not even been mentioned, at the head of Febiger's Regiment pressing close upon him, threw away his axes and took to the Bayonet and followed Fleury and Knox into the works at not more than ——— yards distance.

In the 3rd paragraph I agree with the General as far as "forced their way." But the Order relative to not firing was disobeyed by Mr. Gibbons, who, instead of advancing with muskettes unloaded, halted outside of the enemy's main Works and kept up a fire. I would by no means insinuate that the Gentleman was backward in doing his Duty, but as the General seems to lay great stress on his gallantry, and a letter dated New Windsor in which it is mentioned that Lieut. Gibbons, a native of your city, first entered the enemy's works, I must candidly inform the publick that he did not, and though he was heard to say that he had 17 men killed and wounded out of 20, I must likewise contradict that and inform your readers that after he halted and began to fire and got in disorder, Major Stewart's party, and I believe the whole left column past him, and can with Confidence affirm that he did not enter the works till long after they were in our full possession and a cannonade had begun on the Enemy's vessels.

To prove that both columns did not meet in the center of the enemy's works nearly at the same instant, I must, in order to elucidate the matter, return to where the General placed himself at the head of the right column. After he had been there some time he ordered Colo. Febiger who was marching by his side, to go along the Flank of

his Regt. and see his order about the dependance on their bayonets only executed, and to bring up the rear of his Regiment and prevent Confusion. This was at the Rale [?] before the Column entered the morass on the right. The Column proceeded on with great rapidity until it had crossed the first abatis where Colo. Febiger observed their progress somewhere obstructed and proceeded up the left flank and ordered where Lieut. McDowall [was] with part of his regiment to break off and advance up and force their way through the Sally port near the Flag staff where Skelton had entered. The latter had scaled the parapet whilst Posey [¹ pushed over the left flank closely followed by Col. Meigs at the head of his regiment. Here Colo. Febiger also got in and secured Colo. Johnson, the Commandant, whilst Posey] marched across the works and formed where, on the Battery facing north, Stewart afterwards entered. [¹ Colo. Meigs inclined to the right and formed in the works facing down River and Major Hull, who followed him, formed on the works facing Verplanck's point.] Lieut. Knox and Captain Lawson and several other parties were sent off to secure the enemy who were endeavoring to escape to their shipping, when Colo. Febiger went over to Posey and there saw Capt. Jordan, of Stewart's battalion, just entering the works 2, which was at least 8 or 10 minutes after Colo. Johnson had surrendered to him, and of course the right column led by Posey had full possession of the Fort previous to even a single man of the left being in.

Colo. Febiger, who entered with his regiment, immediately seized the first officer he found and demanded Colo. Johnson, the Commandant, who surrendered to him and was secured. The Colo. detached several parties to secure the enemy who were endeavoring to make their escape,

¹Erased in the MSS.

and I have heard him say that when he went over to see how Posey was posted he observed Capt. Jordan of Stewart's battalion just entering the works 2.

The encomiums past on Lieut. Colo. Fleury and Major Stewart I believe to be justly due them. I doubt not but Colonels Meigs, Butler and Febiger are much obliged to the General for his good opinion of their Coolness, bravery and perseverance. Lieut. Colo. Hay's bravery is undoubted and Major Lee's character as a useful and intelligent officer is obvious to every one who knows him. I was an eye witness to the support given the General by most of the officers and soldiers under his command, and must confess their bravery, good order and readiness to obey and execute far exceeded my most sanguine expectations.

The officers and men of the Artillery are highly commendable; they marched to the charge without a single weapon offensive or defensive, and on their entering the work their officers seemed unhappy untill they were employed against the Enemy.

Captains Fishbourne and Archer undoubtedly did their duty and deserve all the Credit given them. General Muhlenburg, who was posted for our support with a brigade of my Countrymen, I doubt not would effectually have supported the charge or covered the retreat had necessity required it.

I agree with the General in commending the humanity and bravery of my fellow soldiers, as I never saw greatness of soul displayed in a fairer light to more advantage. The General in his last paragraph is not satisfied with the manner in which he has mentioned Lieuts. Gibbons and Knox. I'll say nothing more about Gibbons. Lieut. Knox's conduct speaks for itself, yet if there is merit in losing men I believe Knox's would overbalance.

I have done with particularizing paragraphs contained

in General Wayne's letter, but when I view the whole in substance the publick would be induced to conclude from it that General Wayne was at the head of the Column till the works were actually possessed. This was not the case. The General was wounded between the abattis. The Column proceeded under the direction of Colonel Febiger.

[From the Febiger MSS.]

No. 38.

COLONEL FEBIGER'S LETTERS TO HIS WIFE

STONY POINT, July 16, 1779.

My Dear Girl:

I have just borrowed pen, ink and paper to inform you that yesterday we march'd from Fort Montgomery, and at 12 o'clock last night we stormed this Confounded place, and, with the loss of about fourteen killed and forty or fifty wounded, we carried it. I can give you no particulars as yet. A musquet ball scraped my nose. No other damage to "Old Denmark." God bless you.

Farewell,

FEBIGER.

FORT MONTGOMERY, July 27th, 1779.

My Dear Girl:

I'll now give you the particulars of our enterprise. After having reconnoitered Stony Point well, we saw that by a Secret and bold stroke it might perhaps be carried; and our affairs being in a critical situation induced his Excellency to risk it, and on the 15th instant we marched very secretly, securing all passes and preventing country people

from going in—and at dark were within one mile of the Fort where we lay till 12 o'clock at night—when my regiment at the head of the right column, and Colonel Butler's at the head of the left, with proper "forlorn hope" and advanced guards marched and attacked the works, who received us pretty warmly.

But the bravery of our men soon overcame all dangers, and about 1 o'clock we were in full possession of the Fort, where I had the pleasure to taking Colonel Johnson, who Commanded, myself, and ordered him to his tent. At daybreak we found we had taken 1 Lieut. Colonel, 25 Captains and Lieutenants, and 544 non-commissioned officers and privates, exclusive of the killed and some that drowned in endeavoring to get to their shipping. We took 15 pieces of Artillery, with fixed ammunition for a three months' siege, 2 standards and 1 flag, 10 marquees and a large quantity of tents, Quartermaster's stores, baggage, &c., &c.

His Excellency joined us in the afternoon when an attack was to be made on the other side, but through some difficulties it was delayed. We remained there three days, which were employed in cannonading the enemy, and removing the stores, and on the evening of the 18th we evacuated and destroyed the works and set fire to the remains.

This obliged General Clinton to come up with his whole army to King's Ferry, where he now is. What may be his next move we cannot as yet ascertain. If he intends for our Fort I think he will be damnably drubbed, as this most glorious affair has given double vigor and spirit to our men.

Farewell,
CHRISTIAN FEBIGER.

[From MSS. Letter Book of Colonel Febiger in possession of the late Col. George L. Febiger, U. S. A., in 1879.]

No. 39

COLONEL FEBIGER TO THOMAS JEFFERSON

To his Excellency, Governor Jefferson, of
the State of Virginia.

CAMP NEAR FORT MONTGOMERY,
July 21, 1779.

Sir:

You must undoubtedly before this have heard of and seen the particulars of our glorious and successful enterprise at Stony Point, which renders my giving you a detail unnecessary. But as I had the honor to command all the troops from our State employed on that service I think it my duty, in justice to those brave men, to inform you that the front platoon of the forlorn hope consisted of $\frac{3}{4}$ Virginians, and the front of the vanguard, of Virginians only, and the front of the column on the right of Posey's battalion composed of 4 companies of Virginians and 2 Pennsylvanians. Lieut. Colonel Fleury, who led the advance composed of 150 volunteers, first entered the works. Seven of my men in the forlorn hope who entered first were either killed or wounded.

I have the happiness to say that every officer and soldier behaved with a fortitude and bravery peculiar to men who are determined to be free, and overcame every danger and difficulty without confusion or delay, far surpassing any enterprise in which I have had an active part.

I request neither reward or thanks, but am happy in having done my duty and shared the dangers and honor of the day; but could wish, if not inconsistent, that the citizens of Virginia might know from your authority that their troops deserve their thanks and support.

I am, &c.,

CHRISTIAN FEBIGER, Colonel.

[From the Febiger MSS.]

No. 40

COLONEL FEBIGER TO COLONEL HETH, OF
VIRGINIALIGHT INFANTRY CAMP, NEAR FORT
MONTGOMERY, Sept. 13, 1779.*Dr. Heth:*

. . . . I will assure you that my regiment which composed the front of the right column was in the works, and the Commandant, Colo. Johnson, had surrendered to me at least 10 minutes before [the left column entered]. The gallant Posey, a most valuable Posey, helped Major Stewart, who commanded the advance of the left, into the works. Lieut. Knox, who is a Pennsylvanian and deserves credit, commanded Virginians, and Lieut. Colo. Fleury likewise; they both belong to my regiment which is composed of 6 companies Virginians and two Pennsylvanians.

Yours, &c.,

FEBIGER.

[From the Febiger MSS.]

No. 41

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL HULL'S ACCOUNT OF
THE ATTACK

On the morning of the 14th of July, 1779, Major Hull was ordered to march to Sandy Beach and unite his corps to that of General Wayne. Two companies of North Caro-

lina infantry commanded by Major Murfee, were directed to join the troops at Sandy Beach. These were placed in the detachment of Major Hull, whose command now consisted of about four hundred men. At eleven o'clock of the morning of the 15th of July, the march was commenced over rugged and almost impassable mountains, and continued for fourteen miles, when the detachment arrived, a little before dark in the evening, within a mile and a half of Stony Point. Here it halted. General Wayne with his principal officers reconnoitred the works, and now for the first time was communicated to the troops the object of the enterprise. He stated that the attack was to be made on Stony Point at twelve o'clock that night. That the detachment was to be divided into two columns; to advance with unloaded muskets, and depend entirely on the bayonet; that it was his determination to persevere until in complete possession of the fort; and that if any man attempted to load his piece, leave his station, or retreat, he was instantly to be put to death by the officer or soldier next him.

General Wayne then gave in detail the disposition of the troops. The column on the right was to consist of Febiger's and Meigs' regiments and Major Hull's detachment, and to be led by General Wayne himself. The column on the left was to consist of Colonel Butler's regiment. Major Hull was directed to detach Major Murfee's two companies to form the centre of the two columns, and to advance near to a part of the fort that was not to be assailed, and to keep up a constant fire with a view to distract and draw off attention from the real point of attack; Lieutenant-Colonel Fleury and Major Posey to command a corps of one hundred and fifty volunteers to precede the column on the right, and Major Stewart with one hundred volunteers, to precede the column on the left.

A forlorn hope of twenty men was attached to each column—one led by Lieutenant Gibbon, the other by Lieutenant Knox. Their duty was to remove the abatis and other obstructions in the way of the troops. About half-past eleven the two columns commenced their march in platoons. The beach was more than two feet deep with water, and before the right column reached it we were fired upon by the out-guards which gave the alarm to the garrison. We were now directly under the fort, and closing in a solid column ascended the hill, which was almost perpendicular. When about half way up our course was impeded by two strong rows of abatis, which the forlorn hope had not been able entirely to remove. The column proceeded silently on, clearing away the abatis, passed to the breastwork, cut and tore away the pickets, cleared the *cheveaux de frise* at the sally-port, mounted the parapet and entered the fort at the point of the bayonet. All this was done under a heavy fire of artillery and musketry, and as strong a resistance as could be made by the British bayonet. Our column on the other side entered the fort at the same time. Each of our men had a white paper in his hat, which in the darkness distinguished him from the enemy, and the watchword was, "The fort is our own." Our troops reached the area of the garrison, not having fired a gun, the enemy still firing on us. The men made free use of the bayonet, and in every direction was heard, "The fort is our own." We were compelled to continue the dreadful slaughter owing to the fierce and obstinate resistance of the enemy. They did not surrender until nearly one hundred men were killed and wounded: after which their arms were secured and they were assembled under a strong guard in an angle of the fort until morning. Major Murfee acted his part with great address, keeping up an incessant fire between the two columns, thus diverting the at-

tention of the assailed from the point of attack. His two companies were the only American troops that fired a gun. In ascending the hill, just after he had passed the abatis, General Wayne was wounded in the head by a musket ball, and immediately fell. He remained on the spot until the British surrendered, when some other officers and myself bore him into the fort, bleeding, in triumph. Three long and loud cheers were now given, and reverberating in the stillness of night amidst rocks and mountains sent back an echo in glad response to the hearts of the victors. They were quickly answered by the enemy's ships of war in the river, and by the garrison at Verplanck's Point, under the belief that the Americans were repulsed.

Our troops lost no time in collecting the cannon of the garrison and turning them against the shipping in the river. The officer of the British artillery was requested to furnish the key of the powder magazine; he hesitated, and said that he only received his orders from Colonel Johnson. He was informed that Colonel Johnson was superseded in command, and that there must be no delay, or the consequences might be unpleasant. The key was produced, the pieces of ordnance loaded, and the news of what had happened sent to the shipping from the mouths of the cannon. They made no return to our fire, and the tide being strong, they slipped their cables and were carried down by the current. In the same manner the intelligence was announced at the fort at Verplanck's Point, but no reply was made.

Soon after the surrender, a lieutenant of my detachment informed me that he had killed one of the men in obedience to orders, and that he regretted it more than he could express. He said that as the column was ascending the hill, the man left his station and was loading his musket. His commander ordered him to return and desist

from loading. He refused, saying that he did not understand fighting without firing. The officer immediately ran him through the body. I replied: "You performed a painful duty, by which, perhaps, victory has been secured, and the life of many a brave man saved. Be satisfied." Colonel Johnson remained in his marquee until morning, with other of the officers. I was frequently with him during the night. It was intimated by some one that the garrison had been surprised. Colonel Johnson observed that we should not do ourselves or him the injustice to say that he had been surprised.

He begged the gentleman who made the remark to recollect the fact that the firing commenced before we passed the marsh; that all his men were at their stations with their arms and completely dressed before our columns began to ascend the hill. That an incessant fire had been kept up until we entered the works, and the garrison surrendered. Yet it has been represented by some historians of the Revolution that the British were taken by surprise. But the distance from the fort, from which our columns were fired upon, the incessant roar of musketry and artillery while we were ascending the precipice, the condition of the troops when the garrison surrendered, are facts which show that success was owing to the valor, perseverance and superior physical strength of the assailants. Fifteen Americans were killed and eighty-three wounded. Colonel Johnson in his return reports twenty killed of the British, including one officer, and sixty-eight privates wounded. The prisoners amounted to five hundred and forty-three.

The following day we were employed in burying the dead. I had two narrow escapes; one ball passed through the crown of my hat, another struck my boot. General Washington came to the fort next day, and the interesting scene of his arrival is perfectly fresh in my remembrance.

I recollect how cordially he took me by the hand, and the satisfaction and joy that glowed in his countenance.

I attended him with a number of other field officers, General Wayne being prevented by his wound. Washington minutely viewed every part of the fortifications. His attention was particularly drawn to those places where the two columns ascended the hill, mounted the parapets, and first entered the works. He expressed his astonishment that we were enabled to surmount the difficulties and attain our object with so inconsiderable a loss. And here he offered his thanks to Almighty God, that He had been our shield and protector amidst the dangers we had been called to encounter.

[From Hull's "Memoirs" of the War as reprinted in "Magazine of American History," Vol. XXVIII., p. 182.]

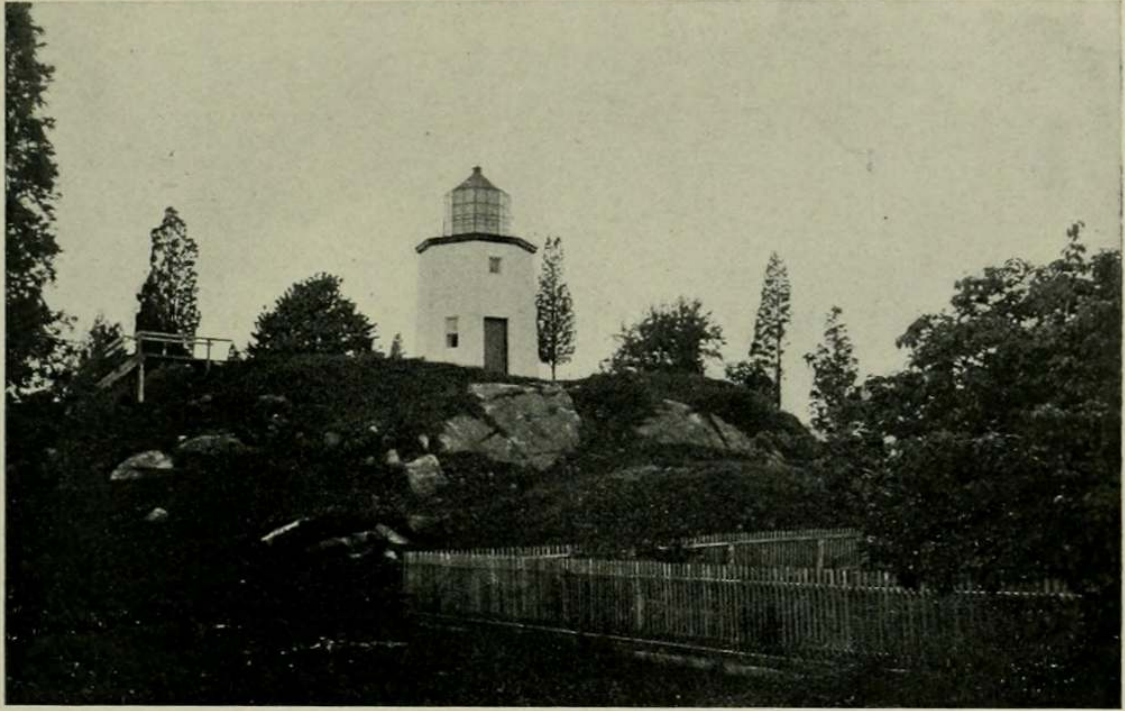
No. 42

GENERAL HEATH TO HON. J. POWELL, PRESIDENT
OF THE MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL

HIGHLANDS, July 22, 1779.

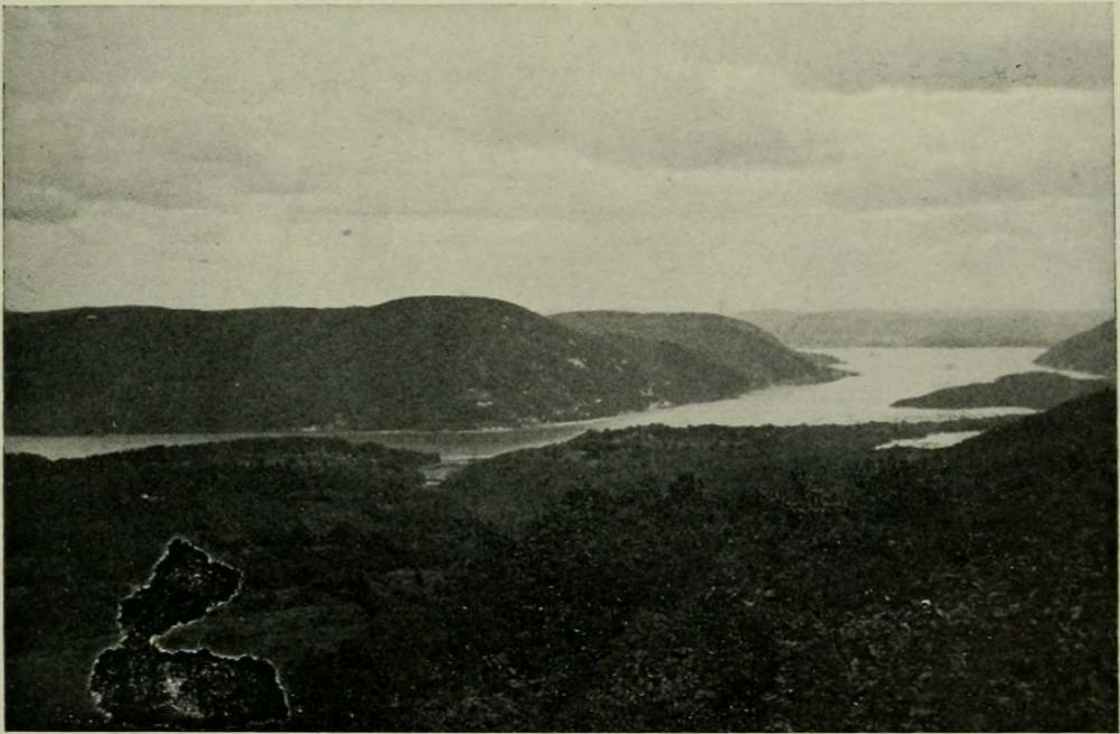
Sir:

An opportunity offering to write you, duty and inclination prompt me to embrace it. This I should have done sooner, had not pressing business prevented. I have at present the honor to command the left wing of the army, consisting of two Divisions of Infantry and three Regiments of Horse, including Col. Armands.



REDOUBT

East End of British Works on Stony Point, stormed by Wayne's Corps,
July 15-16th, 1779.



VIEW OF THE HUDSON HIGHLANDS

Looking toward Peekskill from Torn Mountain, three miles west of
Ft. Montgomery and Wayne's Camp

The army are in high health, and equal to any body of Troops of their number in the world. The enemy not long since committed the unparalleled depredations in Connecticut on the Sound, of which I apprehend you have had the particulars. While they were in the full career of this wanton and barbarous war, insulting the aged and the fair, the Illustrious, the magnanimous Washington, formed a plan, the most honorable and daring against their strong works at Stony Point. The Light Infantry of the army with fixed Bayonets and without a musket loaded carried the works on the morning of the 16th Instant, making the whole garrison Prisoners. The enemy had about 60 men killed and 40 or 50 wounded, and about 500 prisoners. Our loss is inconsiderable, considering the enterprise. Iron ordnance taken in the works, two 24, two 18 and one 12 pounders. Brass, two 12 pounders and one Ditto light, one 10 in. Mortar, one 8 in. Howitzer and 1 Grass Hopper, 2 Royalls, 2 Cohorns with small arms, Cohorns, ammunition, &c., &c. Indeed, this is one of the prettiest affairs of the war.

With the most sincere friendship I have the honor to be

Sir, Your Most Obed. Sert.,

W. HEATH.

The Hon. J. Powell, Esq.

[Heath MSS., Massachusetts Historical Society.]

No. 43

M. GÉRARD, FRENCH AMBASSADOR, TO
BARON STEUBEN

PHILADELPHIA, July 27, 1779.

Nothing is in my opinion more just, my dear baron, than the eulogy which you bestow upon the expedition against Stony Point. Plan, execution, courage, discipline, address and energy, in short, the most rare qualities were found united there, and I am convinced that this action will as much elevate the ideas of Europe about the military qualities of the Americans, as the success [has exhibited] the talent of our illustrious and amiable general. I have sent an express to Baltimore to look out for a vessel which might immediately carry the news of this triumph to France. Although I am not as fond as you are of all the individuals here, the success of this country touches me as much as that of our own arms. As to General Wayne, I believe that we both entertain the same sentiments. When you see him, please tell him that nobody regards with more pleasure than I the glory which he is going to acquire.

The honor which our brave and noble Fleury won on this occasion touches me equally, and I anticipate with pleasure the flattering recompense which he is destined to receive. I consider this brilliant success a new inducement for him to stay in America; he at least cannot leave us in the course of this campaign. I am going to write to my Court, that it may grant him such rewards as prove the interest which it takes in the success of America.

[Kapp's "Life of Steuben," p. 230.]

No. 44

LIEUTENANT JOHN GIBBON TO CAPTAIN
ALLEN McLANE

PHILA., Nov. 27, 1821.

My Dear Old Friend:

. . . . Your Journal I shall look for with much pleasure as I know it must contain much of reality, for most of our histories, like that of Mr. Botta, abound in fiction; certainly do so on particular events. On the affair of Stony Point you should be well informed, but there were some facts in my knowledge at the time and on the occasion which would go to derogate, not a little, from the high and liberal encomiums which were bestowed on some, very little deserving—but those events are passed and in oblivion.

Stewart, you know, commanded the advance of the left column under the command of Butler; he assigned the post of honor to Waters [?] which McCullough and myself claimed an equal right, and out of the whole body of subaltern officers belonging to that Column we were the only competitors. I demanded it as a right and it was conceded, and lotts were drawn after ye order of battle was formed and the lott fell upon me. I shall never forget Stewart's conduct to me on the occasion, having been disappointed in his favourite to take ye forlorn.

After passing ye creek and first abbattis I was rapidly advancing with my little party, knowing the way much better than he did, when Stewart came up and ordered me to wheel to the right and advance by sections till we came to an abbattis, cher. D frise and Battery on which were 8 or 9 guns. I had no right to say he was wrong, altho' by this order the order of attack, which I well knew,

was materially changed, and had we failed would have been ascribed to him only. He certainly disguised nothing that would tend to appall even stouter hearts than ours might prove. One thing I affirm after I advanced and got in possession: I saw no more of Stewart; I had been at least 20 minutes in possession, with 40 prisoners and many killed, for you know we went in with unloaded arms and were to depend on ye bayonett, which we did, ere any part of the Column came up. Jordan was the first, observing "you little devil, you have left us nothing to do."

The situation of the standard [a ship's ensign] was on an isolated rock within the line of works and not 50 feet from my position. Goodbread, a soldier of mine, one of the four that remained unhurt, did I believe strike the standard and Gamble [who was a Captain in Febiger's] has said to me that it was handed down and that Fleury took it. I remember my own impression was that I should punish the soldier for leaving his post, but was deterred from it as the fellow had behaved so gallantly through the night, and I did sett up a claim of reward for him. I could myself have struck the flag at any time for an half hour, but I had too much to occupy me. If young Norman De Nuville [a young relation of the Marquis who volunteered with me on that occasion] were alive, his testimony would prove a great deal.

As a young man I had enough to spoil me on that occasion; every post that could render me conspicuous was in my offer—to go on board the Vulture sloop with a flag and after to take ye colours to Phila., both of which I declined, perhaps from not knowing how to value such things at the time—more so, however, from excessive fatigue and my clothes being muddy up to my neck and torn almost to rags. I was asked if Archer might take my place. Such little things as these come across me and I have wrote

them to refresh your memory. If we meet in the winter we can dilate more on these things.

God bless you prays

Yours, &c.,

JOHN GIBBON.

[From McLane MSS. Papers, Vol. III., New York Historical Society.]

No. 45

FROM JOURNAL OF CAPTAIN ALLEN McLANE
OF PENNSYLVANIA.

Friday the 2 July.—By Genl. Washington's orders went in with a flag to conduct Mrs. Smith to see her sons. [In this connection the following memorandum appears elsewhere in the journal: "McLane discovered the unfinished situation of the works on Stony Point while accompanying Mrs. Smith with a flag and communicated his observations to head quarters, which Discovery determined Genl. Washington to carry it by storm on the night of the 17th July, 1779."]

Saturday, 3d of July.

Took post at the short Clove, nothing occurring this day. At 8 o'clock moved down towards Stony Point—lay close to the works—all quiet this night.

Tuesday, July 6th.—Lay on the line all this day—his Excellency Genl. Washington reconnoitred the Enemy's works.

Wed., July 14.—Moved down to the hills in front of Stony Point—took the widow Calhoon and another widow going to the enemy with chickens and greens—Drove off 20 head of horned cattle from the enemy's pasture, the property of John Deinke, Saml. Calhoon and Jacob Rose—gave them their cattle.

Lay in the woods this night near Captain Hutchinsons.

Thursday, July 15th.—This morning mustered my company at Hutchins' house—at ten o'clock rode with Majors Posey and Lee to reconnoitre the enemy's lines—Genl. Waine moved down from the forest to the ground near the lines—at 8 o'clock at night moved my company close to the enemy's sentrys in order to intercept intelligence—at 30 minutes past 12 o'clock the light infantry began the attack on the lines, Genl. Waine at their head—they rushed on with fixed bayonets and carried the lines in 25 minutes—killed one Capt., 21 privates, wounded 4 subs, 66 privs., took one Coll., 4 Caps., 15 subalterns, 468 men—at the same time a feint was made against Verplank's point.

Friday, July 16.—Began to cannonade Verplank's point—Capt. Rudolf marched off the prisoners to Kakeate—about 12 o'clock the prisoners rushed on the sentrys crying fire [?]
—the sentry shot one Sergt. dead and wounded 14 men, which prevented them from escaping.

July 17th, Saturday.—His Exclly. sent me to collect wagons to move the stores off the point—still cannonading the works on Verplank's—this day troops arrived from New York.

Sunday, July 18.—Removed the stores and cannon—Dismantled the lines.

[McLane's MSS. Journal, New York Historical Society.]

No. 46

ACCOUNT FROM THE NEW YORK JOURNAL, AND
THE GENERAL ADVERTISER, (HOLT'S)

POUGHKEEPSIE, August 2, 1779.

In our paper of the 19th ult. was inserted a short account, of the taking of Stony Point, at Kings Ferry, on the west side of the North River (a strong fort, which the enemy had been for many weeks laboriously constructing, and expensively furnishing with ample supplies of artillery, small arms, ammunition and stores; and which they ostentatiously showed to some of our people, and affected to call a second Gibraltar, impregnable to any attack of the American forces.) This fort was attacked about 2 o'clock in the morning of the 16th of July last, by a detachment consisting of about 1,200 men drafted from the troops of each of the United States, under the command of Brigadier-General Wayne. In addition to the account already published of this affair, we now add the following further particulars.

The detachment marched, in two divisions, and about one o'clock came up to the enemy's pickets, who by firing their pieces gave the alarm, and with all possible speed ran to the fort; from every quarter of which, in a short time, they made an incessant fire upon our people. They with fixed bayonets and uncharged pieces, advanced with quick but silent motion through a heavy fire of cannon and musketry, till getting over the abbatties, and scrambling up the precipices, the enemy called out, "Come on, ye damn'd rebels, come on." Some of our people softly answered, "Don't be in such a hurry, my lads, we'll be with you presently." And accordingly, a little more than 20 minutes from that time the enemy first began to fire, our troops

overcoming all obstructions and resistance, entered the fort; and spurred on by their resentment of the former cruel bayoneting, which many of them, and others of our people had experienced, and of the more recent and savage barbarity of plundering and burning unguarded towns, murdering old and unarmed men, abusing and forcing defenceless women, and reducing multitudes of innocent people from comfortable livings, to the most distressful want of the means of subsistence;—Deeply affected by these cruel injuries, our people entered the fort with a resolution of putting every man to the sword; but the cry of “Mercy! Mercy! dear Americans! Mercy! Quarter! brave Americans, Quarter! Quarter!” disarmed their resentment in an instant; insomuch that even Colonel Johnson, the Commandant, has freely and candidly acknowledged, that not a drop of blood was spilt unnecessarily. Oh, Britain; turn thy eye inward—Behold and tremble at thyself!

Colonel Fleury, who commanded the van guard and behaved with his usual gallantry, was the first man who mounted the bastion, and struck the English flag. All our officers and men behaved with remarkable bravery—They were even emulous to go upon the Forlorn Hope, which was decided by lot, when one gentleman thereby excluded from that command, spoke of himself as a child of misfortune from the cradle, while the other leaped for joy.

We have received no official returns of the killed and wounded on either side, nor of the prisoners, arms, ammunition and stores, taken in the fort; but according to the accounts we have received they were as follows, viz.:

Of our people, about 25 killed, and upwards of 50 wounded; among which General Wayne received a slight wound on the side of his face; Col. Hay, of Pennsylvania, a wound in the thigh; and of Col. Meigs’ regiment, Capt. Phelps wounded in the arm; Capt. Seldon, badly in the hip; Lieut.

Palmer, in the arm and thigh; Ensign Hall, in the hip, and his arm broke; 5 of the wounded privates are dead, the rest likely to recover.

Of the enemy. Killed, about 60, one of whom was Capt. Tew, of the 17 Grenadiers, who was too obstinate to submit, and another officer, who died of his wounds. Their wounded were also supposed to be about 60, among whom were two or three officers. Prisoners of the enemy 405, including the Commandant, Lieut. Col. Johnson, of the 17th regiment; and 23 other officers, all of whom were sent off for Pennsylvania.

Among the prisoners, we hear, were two sons of Beverly Robinson (of New York, now a Colonel in the service of the enemy, against his country) and a son of the late Rev. Dr. Auchmuty, late Rector of Trinity Church. We hear it was with great difficulty these 3 were saved by our officers from being sacrificed to the resentment of the soldiery; who being about to retaliate upon them with bayonets, the usage our people have repeatedly received from the British troops, they begged for mercy, and to excite pity said they were Americans. This plea, proving them to be traitors, as well as enemies, naturally increased the fury of our soldiers, who were upon the point of plunging bayonets into their breasts, when they were restrained by their officers.

Since the above account, it is said, the following returns of the killed, wounded and prisoners, at Stony Point, have been made, viz.:

Killed, supposed to be between 30 and 40. Prisoners, 466 privates, 23 officers, and 43 wounded, sent in to the enemy to be exchanged; in all 532, besides the killed.

Our troops brought off all the artillery, stores, &c., consisting, we are told, of 15 pieces of brass and iron cannon, mortars and howizers, among which were two 24 pounders, two brass 12's, sundry field pieces, one 12 inch mortar,

four howitzers, 10 inch to five and a half, a full complement of cartridges, ball, shells, &c., for the above; 700 stands of arms, tents, several hogsheads of rum, wine, cheese, a variety of other stores, and a small quantity of provisions.

By one of the enemy's orderly books, which fell into our hands, it appears that they were apprised of our design of attacking the fort, and had prepared for it by giving directions at 9 o'clock that night, for the garrison to man the walls, and lie on their arms. It appears also from Rivington's Royal Gazette of the 12th of July, that 13 deserters, or rather traitors (seduced by bribery and false pretences of the British emissaries, to become enemies to their country) had informed the enemy of our design to attack the fort, though it is not probable that they had any knowledge of the intended attack, but by conjecture. Rivington's paper, though it might with great propriety, be called a magazine of lies, yet sometimes contains articles of truth—that is when a matter of truth happens to coincide with, and favours their designs of fraud and villainy. In this instance, therefore, we may believe him, when to injure our cause he tells us that they knew of our design of attacking the fort—Tho' it is probable they had such confidence in their own strength that they did not make a necessary improvement of the information.

No. 47

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL SILL, OF THE CONNECTICUT
LINE, TO DR. WALDO

NELSON'S POINT, July 29, 1779.

Dear Sir:

. . . . The taking the Fort at Stony Point is a convincing proof of the bravery of the Americans and is acknowledged

by our enemies. There has nothing been done in the war that exceeds or even equalled it. The officers and soldiers that were in the attack have gained immortal honor. Capt. Selden received a wound in the back; the ball is extracted, and he will be well soon. Sergeant Davis received a ball which entered one of his eyes and went out at the other cheek, I hope will do well.

This, sir, from your sincere friend and humble servant,

D. F. SILL,

By three times three.

No. 48

DEPOSITION OF THE EXPRESS MESSENGER
FROM GENERAL HEATH

This certifies that I, James Chambers, am a Guide to General Heath's Division, and that I was sent off Express by General Heath with a letter to General Glover, Saturday, 10 o'clock in the forenoon—at which time General Heath ordered me to publish through the Country, and to General Glover in particular, that General Wayne had made an attack on the Enemy's Fort at Stony Point at 2 o'clock Friday morning, which he carried by assault—kill'd and wounded about 100 of the Enemy, and made prisoners

of 500 more, with the loss of only four Men kill'd and himself slightly wounded in the arm.

JAMES CHAMBERS.

Sworn to before me in East Haven, Conn., this 18th day of July, 1779.

JNO. GLOVER,

B. General.

[From Trumbull Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Vol. X., No. 35.]

No. 49

RETURN OF AMERICAN LOSSES AT STONY POINT

A return of the killed and wounded of the light infantry at the storming of Stony Point under the command of Brigadier-General WAYNE, July 15, 1779.

COLONEL FEBIGER'S REGIMENT. Killed, 1 Sergeant, 6 privates. Wounded, 7 Sergeants, 1 Corporal, 29 privates.

COLONEL BUTLER'S REGIMENT. Killed, 1 Sergeant, 2 privates. Wounded, 1 Lieutenant-Colonel, 2 Sergeants, 2 Corporals, 25 privates.

COLONEL MEIGS' REGIMENT. Killed, 3 privates. Wounded, 2 Captains, 2 Lieutenants, 1 Sergeant, 6 privates.

MAJOR HULL'S DETACHMENT. Killed, 2 privates. Wounded, 1 Lieutenant, 4 privates.

TOTAL. Killed, 2 Sergeants, 13 privates. Total wounded, 1 Lieutenant-Colonel, 2 Captains, 3 Lieutenants, 10 Sergeants, 3 Corporals, 64 privates.

GENERAL RETURN OF THE PRISONERS TAKEN
AT STONY POINT.

Officers sent to Easton on parole: 1 Lieutenant Colonel, 4 Captains, 12 Lieutenants, 4 Ensigns, 1 Conductor of Artillery, 1 Assistant Surgeon.

Officers and Privates wounded and sent in: 2 Lieutenants, 1 Ensign, 1 Surgeon, 39 Privates. Left at Kakiate: 9 Privates, 2 Attendants. Sent to Easton: 441 Privates, 25 Servants to Officers. Total 543.

[Dawson's "Stony Point."]

No. 50.

BARON STEUBEN ON THE MILITARY
SITUATION, 1779.

Kapp states in his "Life of Steuben," p. 232, that he found among the Baron's papers the following opinion written by him at Washington's request regarding the general military status after the capture of Stony Point:

West Point, July 27, 1779.—Our present situation is about the same as it was at the Commencement of this Campaign. The enemy is still numerically superior. Their troops are better provided than ours. They are better able to carry out their plans, and on account of their ships, they are masters of the coast and of the mouth of the North River.

The taking of Stony Point was a great advantage for our side. It has not only encouraged the army, but the people. It has shown the enemy that our generals know how to make a plan, and that our officers and soldiers know how to carry it out with boldness and precision. It has delayed the field operations of the enemy, but it has not altogether defeated their plans.

Let us examine what those plans probably are. The great preparation which the enemy have made to protect themselves on both sides of the river at Kings Ferry, the time, labor and expense they have employed in fortifying this point—can they have any other object than the burning and plundering of the coast of Connecticut? Would they have fortified Stony and Verplanck's Points to terminate their conquests there for this campaign? Neither supposition is at all probable. Their plans must be more comprehensive. Having fortified these two points, and leaving a sufficient garrison in them, they are at liberty to take the rest of their forces wherever they think proper, and in case of a reverse these two points are a support for their troops, and a harbor for their vessels.

They will then invade the country with a view to encourage us to follow them by detachments, or with our full force, while they will be ready at any moment to make an attack on West Point, with three or four thousand men and the vessels necessary for their transport. If, on the other hand, we do not allow ourselves to be drawn from our present position by their invasions, it is possible that they may send a corps of five or six thousand men, on either side of the river, to seem to threaten our flanks, and to try to maneuver in our rear, so as to attack West Point. This, however, seems to me very difficult, particularly on the side of the fort.

Whatever means they may employ, I am positive that

their operations are directed exclusively to getting possession of this post, and of the river as far as Albany. If this is not their plan they have not got one which is worth the expense of a campaign. On their success depends the fate of America. The consequence is, therefore, that there is nothing of greater importance to us than to avert this blow. Let them burn whatever they have not burned already, and this campaign will add to their shame but not to their success. Were West Point strongly fortified, supplied with sufficient artillery, ammunition and provisions, and a garrison of two thousand men, we ought not to be induced to take our forces more than a day's march from it. To have the means of relieving it, I go further and say, that our army should be destroyed or taken before we allow them to commence an attack on West Point. . . . Let us defend the North river and hold West Point, and the end of our campaign will be glorious.

P. S.—The above is my opinion upon the present condition of affairs. The arrival of our ally's fleet on the coast would materially change our plan of operations.

No. 51

PLANS FOR DEFENCE OF WEST POINT, JULY, 1779

At a Board of General Officers assembled at General [Israel] Putnam's quarters, July 22d, 1779, agreeable to the directions of his Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief, communicated in his letter of the 20th instant:

Present:—Major Generals Putnam and DeKalb; Brigadiers: Smallwood, Muhlenberg, Gist.

Major General Putnam laid before the Board the letter of the Commander-in-Chief requesting him to consult with the principal officers and form a disposition for opposing the enemy in concert, as well in the first instance at landing as during their progress towards the works in case they should make an attempt upon them.

Whereupon, the Board after duly considering the matter, gave it as their opinion—that the troops remain in their present positions, and that it will be expedient for Genl. Muhlenberg to post a picket consisting of a Captain and 20 men at Clement's, a sub. and 20 on the road leading from the furnace to the right of Clement's down to Haverstraw, and a sub. and 20 on the coal road; that one whole battalion from the same brigade should be posted at Rose's farm who are to keep a picket on the road leading to Doodlestown and Clement's, and if the enemy advance in force on either of these roads, Genl. Muhlenberg should dispute the passage as long as he may think prudent and then take possession of the two roads leading from the forest to West Point, giving them every annoyance till he can be sustained.

The battalion at Rose's farm, if they are obliged to retreat, will take the path leading through the valley from Rose's farm to West Point, disputing the passage all the way.

The Board are further of the opinion that there ought to be posted from the Light Infantry a picket consisting of 1C—2S—2S—2C—30P at Doodlestown, a picket of the same number at Fort Montgomery, to detach 1S—1C—30P to the stone house on the road leading to Rose's farm and another picket of 1S—1S—1C—20P at Stony Beach.

If the enemy should attack Genl. Muhlenberg by the

way of the Forest of Dean and attempt to force a passage from thence to West Point with their main body, Genl. Woodford's brigade will hang upon the left flank and rear, to be supported by the Maryland and Pennsylvania troops as circumstances may require. The Light Infantry remaining near their present position, to maintain the passage of the road along the river should a column of the enemy attempt to force their way in that quarter, but if not, the Light Infantry will then attack their right flank and rear in concert with the other troops; but in case the main body should land in two columns at Doodlestown and Stony Beach and endeavor to force their way along the river with a view to gain the heights in the rear of and adjacent to the fort at West Point, their passage must be disputed by the Light Infantry and Maryland division in front, supported by the brigades of Woodford and Muhlenberg, which will attack on the left flank and rear of the enemy in their approach.

In order to frustrate the enemy's intentions and the better to serve the objects in view by the different corps co-operating and keeping up a constant communication with each other, the Board submit the expediency of drawing out runners of actual light armed men from each corps to convey intelligence as occasion may require, to facilitate which the Board are also of opinion that they ought to be exempt from all other duty and to be sent out immediately to be made acquainted with the different routes and ways on which they will necessarily be employed.

[From MSS. of Gen. Rufus Putnam, Marietta, Ohio.]

No. 53.
A LIST OF THE BRITISH OFFICERS' NAMES TAKEN AT STONY POINT.

REGT'S.	NO.	RANK.	NAMES.	CASUALTIES.	
17th	1	Lt. Colo.	Henry Johnston	Killed and two Lieuts. same Regt.	
	1	Cap.	Few		
	2	do.	Robt. Clayton		
	3	do.	Jno. Darby		
	4	do.	Wm. Tiffin		
	5	do.	" Robinson	Royal Artillery.	
				Wm. Armstrong	Loyal Americans.
	Lieuts.	1		Isaac Carey	Royal Artillery.
		2	do.	Wm. Jno. Williams	
		3	do.	" Simpson	
		4	do.	" Jno. Mawhood	
		5	do.	Jno. Haymann	
		6	do.	Wm. H. Harndon	
		7	do.		
71st	8	do.	Richard Duncanson	Royal Artillery.	
	9	do.	Wm. Naine	Granadeers.	
	10	do.	Jno. Ross	Wounded and sent to York.	
	11	do.	Robt. Grant		
	12	do.	Patrick Cummins		
	13	do.	Arch'd McClare		
	14	do.	Wm. Marshall	do.	
				Frederick P. Robinson	do.
	17th	1	Ensign.	Henry Hamilton	Wounded and sent to York.
		2	do.	Henry St. Clive	
		3	do.	Rich'd Swords	
		4	do.	Wm. Huggison	
		5	do.	Rich'd Achmuty	
		6	do.	Solomon Horn	
1		Surgion.	Jack Easton	do. } do. } and sent to York. Sent with the wounded. Royal Artillery.	
1	Conduct'r				

[From Papers of Captain James Chrystie.]

No. 54

FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE, AND
GENERAL ADVERTISER,

July 28th, 1779

Hark! hear the Trumpet's pleasant Sound!
Behold yon brave young Men!
With British Ensigns half display'd
The trophies of our Wayne,
Welcome, young Heroes, from the field,
Where ye did Laurels gain;
Let ev'ry Heart exult with Joy,
And praise our gallant Wayne.
See Gibbons on the Barriers mount!
Each soldier darts a-maine—
And every Youth with Ardour burns,
To emulate our Wayne.

The British Butchers hang their Heads,
Their Shame for us sustain;
Whilst ev'ry Heart with Freedom Fraught,
Praises the humane Wayne.
No more let Faction, Fraud, Intrigue,
Our Cause and Councils stain;
Since Envy's Shafts no Hold can take
Of Washington and Wayne.
See Freedom's Banners high unfurl'd,
They spread from Shore to Shore;
And Malice from her Seat is hurl'd,
She falls—to rise no more.

No. 55

WAYNE'S LIGHT INFANTRY CORPS, 1779—
PARTIAL ORGANIZATION

BRIGADIER-GENERAL ANTHONY WAYNE,

COMMANDING.

AIDS-DE-CAMP.

Major Benjamin Fishbourne—Major Henry Archer.

BRIGADE MAJOR,

Major Henry McCormick.

SURGEON,

Doctor Samuel McKenzie.

FIRST REGIMENT.

Colonel Christian Febiger.

FIRST BATTALION.

SECOND BATTALION.

Lieut.-Col. Fleury.

Major Thomas Posey.

Two companies, Virginia.

Four companies, Virginia.

Two companies, Pennsylv-
vania.

SECOND REGIMENT.

COLONEL RICHARD BUTLER.

FIRST BATTALION.

SECOND BATTALION.

Lieut.-Col. Samuel Hay.

Major John Steward.

Four companies Pennsylv-
vania.

Four companies, Maryland.

THIRD REGIMENT.

COLONEL RETURN JONATHAN MEIGS.

FIRST BATTALION.

SECOND BATTALION.

Lieut.-Col. Isaac Sherman. Four companies, Connecticut.
 Four companies, Connecticut. Acting Major Henry Cham-
 pion.

Adjutant, Lieutenant Aaron Benjamin.

Surgeon's Mate, Theodore Wadsworth.

FOURTH REGIMENT.

COLONEL RUFUS PUTNAM.

FIRST BATTALION.

SECOND BATTALION.

Major William Hull. Major Hardy Murfree.
 Four companies, Massachu- Two companies, North Caro-
 setts. lina.

Two companies, Massachu-
 setts.

It is known that Captains Lawson, Gamble and Shelton, of Virginia, and Captains Jordan and Ashmead, of Pennsylvania, belonging to the First and Second Regiments, were in the assault. In one orderly book we find that Private John Griffey, of the Pennsylvania battalion, was promoted to a sergenty for "gallant behavior" at Stony Point. Otherwise the company organizations of the Corps cannot be found, except in the case of the Connecticut, or Third, Regiment. As given in the official work, "Connecticut in the Revolution," the subaltern officers of Meigs' command were as follows:

CAPTAINS.

Henry Champion.	Ezra Selden.
Seth Phelps.	Henry Ten Eyck.
Eleazer Clanghorn.	John St. John.
Theophilus Monson.	Ephraim Chamberlain.

LIEUTENANTS.

Charles Miller.	John Tiffany.
Edward S. Coleman.	Tiffany Taylor.
Joseph Shayler.	Edward Palmer.
Aaron Benjamin.	Phineas Grover.

ENSIGNS.

Theophilus Woodbridge.	Robert Allyn.
Ebenezer Wales.	Israel (or John) Strong.
John Trowbridge.	Samuel Deforest.
Salmon Hubbell.	Tallmadge Hall.
Ichabod Spencer.	

After the assault the Second Connecticut Battalion was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonels Sumner, Sill and Johnson, in succession.

Among the casualties in the same were Corporals Jacob Bailey and John Rundle, and Private Eli Mix, killed; Corporal David Edgar and Private Jones, wounded.

In the papers published in Dawson's "Stony Point" are many minor particulars respecting the corps and the event, such as the distribution of the prize money, protests of officers, and Wayne's replies, &c.

Three American deserters were found in the captured works and summarily hanged in the "flag" bastion.

No. 55.

TRYON AND THE NEW HAVEN RAID, 1779.

Judge Thomas Jones, a New York Loyalist, sharply criticises Sir Henry Clinton, and in the matter of the Connecticut raid exonerates Tryon. But the Judge's sources of information were largely hearsay and his prejudices exaggerated rumors that reached him.

The Connecticut movement appears to have grated on the Judge's feelings so harshly that relief could only come, as we may infer, by charging all the burning, plundering and desecration committed by the British at the towns of New Haven, Fairfield, and Norwalk, directly upon Clinton and his orders. The responsibility is fixed upon him in person, and the officers in charge of the expedition so far relieved of all blame. There is no uncertainty as to the author's meaning and intent on this point.

"From the well-known humanity, charity and generosity of General Tryon," he writes (Vol. I., p. 315), "no man in his perfect senses can ever imagine that the troops under his command were, with his consent, suffered to plunder peaceable inhabitants, towns to be burnt, holy buildings destroyed, and thousands of innocent inhabitants of both sexes, of all ages, and the greater part loyalists, to be divested of all the comforts of life and turned into the open fields, no habitations to protect them, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and covered by the canopy of heaven only. General Tryon's humanity was such that nothing but express orders could have induced him to act a part so inconsistent with his well-known and established principles. Clinton was at this time Commander-in Chief."

It happens, however, that the unfavorable impression of Clinton which the Judge seeks to perpetuate in this extract, is entirely dispelled by Tryon's own pen. Thus

to Lord Germaine he wrote July 28, 1779: "The honor of your Lord's duplicate dispatch on the 5th May, No. 21, afforded me the greatest satisfaction in the King's approbation of my conduct on the Alert to Horse Neck. It will be an additional comfort to me if my late expedition on the Coast of Connecticut meets the same royal testimony." As if to emphasize his own approval of the affair, he adds: "My opinion remains unchangeable respecting the utility of depredatory excursions. I think Rebellion must soon totter if those excursions are reiterated and made to extremity."

Tryon in due time had the happiness to receive a favorable reply from the home government, and in returning his acknowledgments to Germaine, wrote Feb. 26, 1780: "I am honored with your Lordship's Dispatches of the 4th Nov. and circular letter of the 4th Dec. and derive great comfort from His Majesty's gracious approbation of my conduct, and the officers under my command on the Connecticut Expedition last summer."

These few expressions on the part of the leader of the raid sufficiently answer Judge Jones as to the former's conduct and responsibility. The last official reference which Tryon seems to have made to the subject appears in the following note he sent to Governor Trumbull just before his departure for England:

"New York, 19th April, 1780.

"Sir, I take the opportunity by a Prisoner on Parole to send you a few of the Publications of this City, particularly the benevolent Proclamation of the Commander-in-Chief and my Successor Governor Robertson, which when laid before your Council and Published in your Papers, may pave the way for a happy Reconciliation.

"As General Robertson has succeeded me both in my civil and military command, I shall probably not visit your coast

any more, but return to England the first favorable occasion to repair a Constitution much impaired in the service of my King and Country.

“With my hearty wishes that the hour may be near at hand when the Prodigal children shall return to the Indulgent Parent,

“Your Most Obedt. Servant,

“WM. TRYON.”

[From “Observations on Judge Jones’ Loyalist History of the Revolution.” By Henry P. Johnston, New York, 1880.]

No. 56

THE ATTEMPT ON VERPLANCK’S POINT—COLONEL
RUFUS PUTNAM’S ACCOUNT

“Colonel Putnam has permission to take as many men as he chooses of his own regiment, or any other, for special service and to pass all guards.

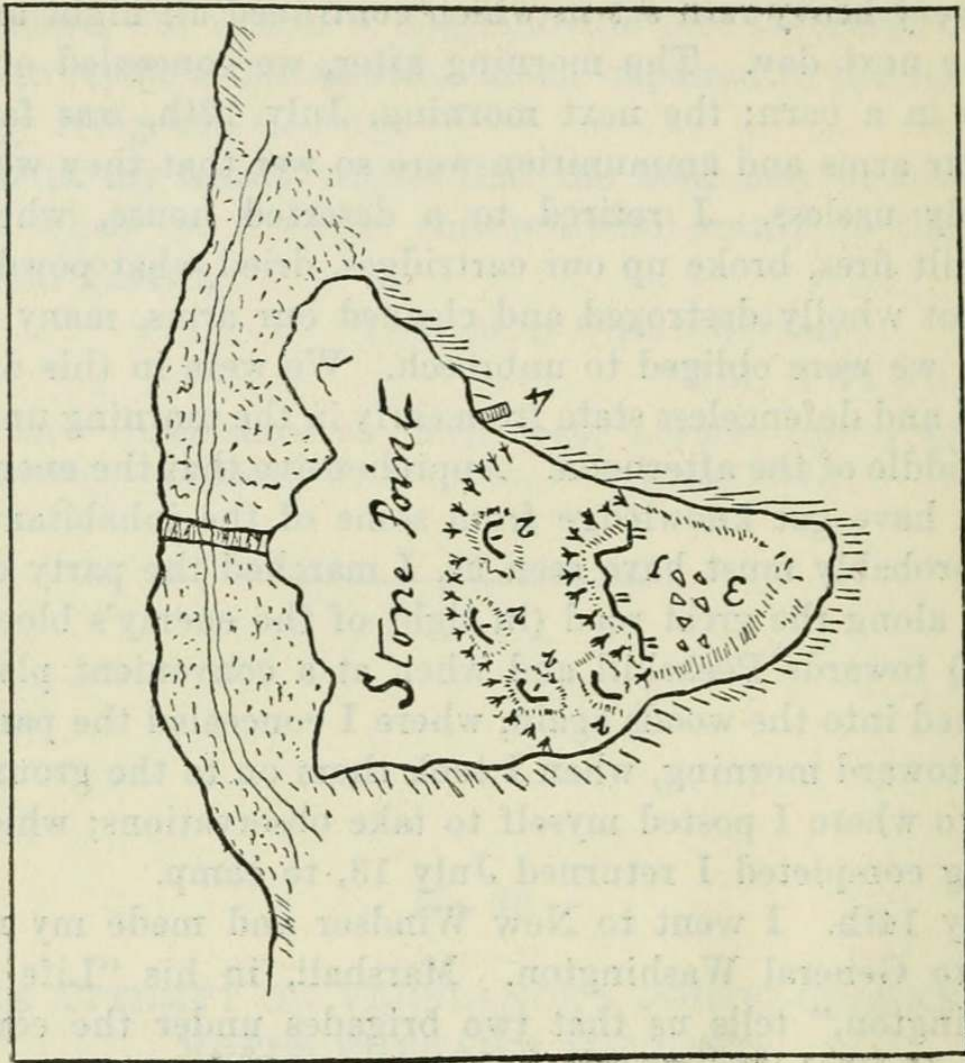
G. WASHINGTON,

“July 9th, 1779.”

The service here intended was to examine the enemy’s works on Verplanck’s point. I set out from Constitution Island opposite West Point, in the afternoon of the 10th with fifty men and reached Continental Village about sunset, and after dark I proceeded by a back road to a point where I concealed my party in the woods, intending the next morning to examine the works; but soon after we halt-

ed a very heavy rain set in which continued all night and all the next day. The morning after, we concealed ourselves in a barn; the next morning, July 12th, was fair, but our arms and ammunition were so wet that they were entirely useless. I retired to a deserted house, where we built fires, broke up our cartridges, dried what powder was not wholly destroyed and cleaned our arms, many of which we were obliged to unbreech. We were in this disarmed and defenceless state from early in the morning until the middle of the afternoon. Apprehensive that the enemy might have got knowledge from some of the inhabitants, who probably must have seen us, I marched the party directly along the great road (in sight of the enemy's block-house) towards Peekskill and when at a convenient place I turned into the woods again, where I concealed the party until toward morning, when I took them on to the ground near to where I posted myself to take observations; which having completed I returned July 13, to camp.

July 14th. I went to New Windsor and made my report to General Washington. Marshall, in his "Life of Washington," tells us that two brigades under the command of Genl. McDougall had been ordered to approach the enemy on the east side of the river. This order to McDougall, if ever given, I presume was given on the morning of the 15th, for the following reasons. When I waited on General Washington on the 14th, he informed me that he had relinquished the idea of a real attack on Verplanck's point at the same time it was to be made on Stony Point, but intended the attack on that point should be only a feint; and for that purpose he had ordered Nixon's brigade to march that day to Continental Village. He then instructed me to take as many men from that brigade as I thought proper, and make my arrangements to be on the ground ready to fire on the enemy at Verplanck's point

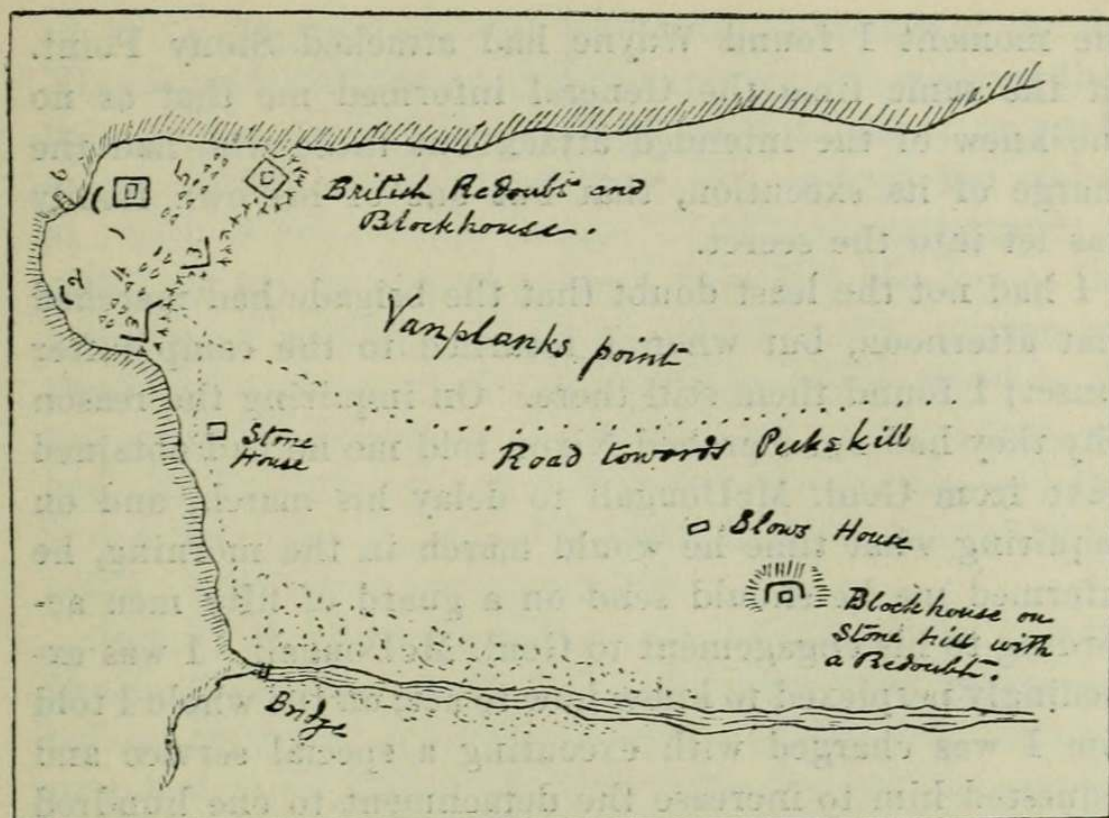


SKETCH OF STONY POINT, BY COLONEL RUFUS
PUTNAM, 1779.

REFERENCES.

- J.—The Capital work on the highest part of the point commanding the out-fleches, which is conformed to the broken eminence it is built on.
- 2,2,2.—Fleches built on so many little eminences.
- 3.—Each of these small characters represent a [tent] in the principle encampment—numbers uncertain being covered by the works and the declivity of the hill.
- ††.—Two rows of abbattis across the point, from water to water.
- 4.—Ferry Stairs.
- Bridge and Causeway on the left to main land.

[Original in Library, Cornell University.]



SKETCH OF VERPLANCK'S POINT, BY COLONEL RUFUS PUTNAM,
JULY, 1779.

REFERENCES.

- 1.—Fort De La Fayette, with Blockhouse and Barbet Battery.
- 2.—American Barbett.
- 3, 3.—Two new barbettes [built] by the Britons.
- †.—Abbattis.
- 4.—British Tents, about one regiment.
- 5.—Board Hutts in form of tents.
- 6.—Ferry stairs.

[From original draft in Library, Cornell University.]

the moment I found Wayne had attacked Stony Point. At the same time the General informed me that as no one knew of the intended attack but those who had the charge of its execution, that but one of his own family was let into the secret.

I had not the least doubt that the brigade had marched that afternoon, but when I returned to the camp (after sunset) I found them still there. On inquiring the reason why they had not marched Nixon told me he had obtained leave from Genl. McDougall to delay his march, and on enquiring what time he would march in the morning, he informed me he should send on a guard of fifty men according to his engagement to Genl. McDougall. I was exceedingly perplexed to know how to act; on the whole I told him I was charged with executing a special service and requested him to increase the detachment to one hundred men under the command of a field officer, and that they should march very early in the morning to Continental Village.

July 15th. General Washington came down early to West Point and Colonel Tilghman [aide to Washington] came to the Island to enquire why Nixon's brigade had not marched the day before. I gave him an account of what I had done and soon set out after the detachment, which had marched under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Smith. I remained at the Village until night and then made such arrangements as I thought proper to fulfill the intention of the General. As soon as I saw that Wayne had commenced his attack on Stony Point we fired on their out block house and guard at the creek and thus alarmed the garrison on Verplanck's point, which was the only object contemplated for that night.

July 16th. I remained this morning in full view of the enemy until eight or nine o'clock when I marched

up to Continental Village, where in the course of the day Nixon's and Patterson's brigades arrived, but without their field pieces, artillery men, or so much as an ax or spade, or any orders what they were to do. About ten o'clock at night General Howe arrived to take the command; he called on me for information; I told him the troops had brought no artillery with them, which in my opinion was necessary on account of a block house which stood in the way of our approach to the main work on the point, nor had they brought any axes or entrenching tools, and that it was impossible to cross the creek without rebuilding the bridge, which had been destroyed.

July 17th. Sometime about the middle of the day two twelve pounders arrived, and a few axes were collected, I believe from the inhabitants and a bridge was begun or proposed to be begun. I cannot say how far the preparations had advanced before we were alarmed by the advance of a British party by the way of the Croton, on which we retreated.

[From Colonel Putnam's MSS. papers in possession of Marietta College, Marietta, Ohio.]

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