

journals of the house. When Governor Dunmore ordered the members to their homes, they met in another place, and passed a recommendation for a general congress of the colonies. On the 20th of May the venerated charter of Massachusetts was annulled by act of Parliament. The people were declared rebels; and the governor was ordered to send abroad for trial all persons who should resist the royal officers. The colonial assembly made answer by adopting a resolution that the powers of language were not sufficient to express the impolicy, injustice, inhumanity and cruelty of the acts of Parliament.

In September THE SECOND COLONIAL CONGRESS assembled at Philadelphia. Eleven colonies were represented. It was unanimously agreed to sustain Massachusetts in her conflict with a wicked ministry. One address was sent to the king; another to the English nation; and another to the people of Canada. Before adjournment a resolution was adopted recommending the suspension of all commercial intercourse with Great Britain until the wrongs of the colonies should be redressed. Parliament immediately retaliated by ordering General Gage, who had been recently appointed governor of Massachusetts, to reduce the colonists by force. A fleet and an army of ten thousand soldiers were sent to America to aid in the work of subjugation.

In accordance with the governor's orders, Boston Neck was seized and fortified. The military stores in the arsenals at Cambridge and Charlestown were conveyed to Boston; and the general assembly was ordered to disband. Instead of doing so, the members resolved themselves into a provincial congress, and voted to equip an army of twelve thousand men for the defence of the colony. There was no longer any hope of a peaceable adjustment. The mighty arm of Great Britain was stretched out to smite and crush the sons of the Pilgrims. The colonists were few and feeble; but they were men of iron wills who had made up their minds to die for liberty. It was now the early spring of 1775, and the day of battle was at hand.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

## THE BEGINNING.

AS soon as the intentions of General Gage were manifest, the people of Boston, concealing their ammunition in cart-loads of rubbish, conveyed it to Concord, sixteen miles away. Gage detected the movement, and on the night of the 18th of April despatched a regiment of eight hundred men to destroy the stores. Another purpose of the expedition was to capture John Hancock and Samuel Adams, who were supposed to be hidden at Lexington or Concord. The fact was that they were not hidden anywhere, but were abroad encouraging the people. The plan of the British general was made with great secrecy; but the patriots were on the alert, and discovered the movement.

About midnight the regiment, under command of Colonel Smith and Major Pitcairn, set out for Concord. The people of Boston, Charlestown and Cambridge were roused by the ringing of bells and the firing of cannons. Two hours before, the vigilant Joseph Warren had despatched William Dawes and Paul Revere to ride with all speed to Lexington and to spread the alarm through the country. Against two o'clock in the morning the minute-men were under arms; and a company of a hundred and thirty had assembled on the common at Lexington. The patriots loaded their guns and stood ready; but no enemy appeared, and it was agreed to separate until the drum-beat should announce the hour of danger. At five o'clock the British van, under command of Pitcairn, came in sight. The provincials to the number of seventy reassembled; Captain Parker was their leader. Pitcairn rode up and exclaimed: "Disperse, ye villains! Throw down your arms, ye rebels, and disperse!" The minute-men stood still; Pitcairn discharged his pistol at them, and with a loud voice cried, "Fire!" The first volley of the Revolution whistled through the air, and sixteen of the patriots, nearly a fourth of the whole number, fell dead or wounded. The rest fired a few random shots, and then dispersed.

The British pressed on to Concord; but the inhabitants had removed the greater part of the stores to a place of safety, and there was but little destruction. Two cannons were spiked, some artillery carriages

burned, and a small quantity of ammunition thrown into a mill-pond. While the British were ransacking the town the minute-men began to assemble from all quarters. Attempting to enter the village, the patriots encountered a company of soldiers who were guarding the North Bridge, over Concord River. Here the Americans, for the first time, fired under orders of their officers, and here two British soldiers were killed. The bridge was taken by the provincials, and the enemy began a retreat—first into the town, and then through the town on the road to Lexington. This was the signal for the minute-men to attack the foe from every side. For six miles the battle was kept up along the road. Hidden behind rocks, trees, fences and barns, the patriots poured a constant fire upon the thinned ranks of the retreating enemy. Nothing but good discipline and reinforcements which, under command of Lord Percy, met the fugitives just below Lexington, saved the British from total rout and destruction. The fight continued to the precincts of Charlestown, the militia becoming more and more audacious in their charges. At one time it seemed that the whole British force would be obliged to surrender. Such a result was prevented only by the fear that the fleet would burn the city. The American loss in this the first battle of the war was forty-nine killed, thirty-four wounded and five missing; that of the enemy was two hundred and seventy-three—a greater loss than the English army sustained on the Plains of Abraham.

The battle of Lexington fired the country. Within a few days an army of twenty thousand men had gathered about Boston. A line of entrenchments encompassing the city was drawn from Roxbury to Chelsea. To drive Gage and the British into the sea was the common talk in that tumultuous camp. And the number constantly increased. John Stark came down at the head of the New Hampshire militia. Israel Putnam, with a leather waistcoat on, was helping some men to build a stone wall on his farm when the news from Lexington came flying. Hurrying to the nearest town, he found the militia already mustered. Bidding the men follow as soon as possible, he mounted a horse and rode to Cambridge, a distance of a hundred miles, in eighteen hours. Rhode Island sent her quota under the brave Nathaniel Greene. Benedict Arnold came with the provincials of New Haven. Ethan Allen, of Vermont, made war in the other direction.

This daring and eccentric man was chosen colonel by a company of two hundred and seventy patriots who had assembled at Bennington. Before the battle of Lexington, the legislature of Connecticut had privately voted a thousand dollars to encourage an expedition against Ticonderoga. To capture this important fortress, with its vast magazine of

stores was the object of Allen and the audacious mountaineers of whom he was the leader. Benedict Arnold left Cambridge, and joined the expedition as a private. On the evening of the 9th of May, the force, whose movements had not been discovered, reached the eastern shore of Lake Champlain, opposite Ticonderoga.

Only a few boats could be procured; and when day broke on the following morning, but eighty-three men had succeeded in crossing. With this mere handful—for the rest could not be waited for—Allen, with Arnold by his side, made a dash, and gained the gateway of the fort. The sentinel was driven in, closely followed by the mountaineers, who set up such a shout as few garrisons had ever heard. Allen's men hastily faced the barracks and stood ready to fire; he himself rushed to the quarters of Delaplace, the commandant, and shouted for the incumbent to get up. The startled official thrust out his head. "Surrender this fort instantly," said Allen. "By what authority?" inquired the astounded officer. "In the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress!"\* said Allen, flourishing his sword. Delaplace had no alternative. The garrison, numbering forty-eight, were made prisoners and sent to Connecticut. A fortress which had cost Great Britain eight million pounds sterling was captured in ten minutes by a company of undisciplined provincials. By this daring exploit a hundred and twenty cannon and vast quantities of military stores fell into the hands of the Americans. Two days afterward Crown Point was also taken without the loss of life.

On the 25th of May, Generals Howe, Clinton and Burgoyne arrived at Boston. They brought with them powerful reinforcements from England and Ireland; the British army was augmented to more than ten thousand men. Gage, becoming arrogant, issued a proclamation, branding those in arms as rebels and traitors, offering pardon to all who would submit, but excepting Samuel Adams and John Hancock; these two were to suffer the penalty of treason—provided Gage could inflict it. It was now rumored—and the rumor was well founded—that the British were about to sally out of Boston with the purpose of burning the neighboring towns and devastating the country. The Americans determined to anticipate this movement by seizing and fortifying Bunker Hill, a height which commanded the peninsula of Charlestown.

On the night of the 16th of June the brave Colonel Prescott, grandfather of Prescott the historian, was sent with a thousand men to occupy and entrench the hill. Marching by way of Charlestown Neck,

\* This saying will appear especially amusing when it is remembered that the "Continental Congress" referred to did not convene until about six hours after Ticonderoga was captured.

the provincials came about eleven o'clock to the eminence which they were instructed to fortify. Prescott and his engineer Gridley, not liking the position of Bunker Hill, proceeded down the peninsula seven hundred yards to another height, afterward called Breed's Hill. The latter was within easy cannon range of Boston. On this summit a redoubt eight rods square was planned by the engineer; and there, from midnight to day-dawn, the men worked in silence. The British ships in the harbor were so near that the Americans could hear the sentinels on deck repeating the night call, "All is well." The works were not yet completed when morning revealed the new-made redoubt to the astonished British of Boston.

"We must carry those works immediately," said General Gage to his officers. For he saw that Prescott's cannon now commanded the city.



SCENE OF THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL, 1775.

As soon as it was light, the ships in the harbor began to cannonade the American position. The British batteries on Copp's Hill also opened a heavy fire. But little damage was done in this way; and the Americans returned only an occasional shot; for their supply of ammunition was very limited. Just after noon a British column of about three thousand veterans, commanded by Generals Howe and Pigot, landed at Morton's Point. The plan was to carry Breed's Hill by assault. The Americans numbered in all about fifteen hundred. They were worn out with toil and hunger; but there was no quailing in the presence of the enemy. During the cannonade Prescott climbed out of the defences and walked leisurely around the parapet in full view of the British officers. Generals Putnam and Warren volunteered as privates, and entered the trenches. At three o'clock in the afternoon Howe ordered his column forward. At the same time every gun in the fleet and batteries was turned upon the American position. Charlestown was wantonly set on fire and four hundred buildings burned. Thousands of eager spectators climbed to the house-tops in Boston and waited to behold the shock of battle. On came the British in a stately and imposing column.

The Americans reserved their fire until the advancing line was within a hundred and fifty feet. "Fire!" cried Prescott; and instantly from breastwork and redoubt every gun was discharged. The front rank

of the British melted away; there was a recoil, and fifteen minutes afterward a precipitate retreat. Beyond musket range Howe rallied his men and led them to the second charge. Again the American fire was withheld until the enemy was but a few rods distant. Then with steady aim volley after volley was poured upon the charging column until it was broken and a second time driven into flight.

The British officers were now desperate. The vessels of the fleet changed position until the guns were brought to bear upon the inside of the American works. For the third time the assaulting column was put in motion. The British soldiers came on with fixed bayonets up the hillside strewn with the dead and dying. The Americans had but three or four rounds of ammunition remaining. These were expended on the advancing enemy. Then there was a lull. The British clambered over the ramparts. The provincials clubbed their guns and hurled stones at the assailants. It was in vain; the heroic defenders of liberty were driven out of their trenches at the point of the bayonet. Prescott lived through the battle, but the brave Warren gave his life for freedom. The loss of the British in this terrible engagement was a thousand and fifty-four in killed and wounded. The Americans lost a hundred and fifteen killed, three hundred and five wounded, and thirty-two prisoners. Prescott and Putnam conducted the retreat by way of Charlestown Neck to Prospect Hill, where a new line of entrenchments was formed which still commanded the entrance to Boston.

The battle of Bunker Hill rather inspired than discouraged the colonists. It was seen that the British soldiers were not invincible. To capture a few more hills would cost General Gage his whole army. The enthusiasm of war spread throughout the country. The news was borne rapidly to the South, and a spirit of determined opposition was everywhere aroused. The people began to speak of THE UNITED COLONIES OF AMERICA. At Charlotte, North Carolina, the citizens ran together in a hasty convention, and startled the country by making a *declaration of independence*. The British ministers had little dreamed of raising such a storm.

On the day of the capture of Ticonderoga the colonial Congress, which had adjourned in the previous autumn, reassembled at Philadelphia. Washington was there, and John Adams and Samuel Adams, Franklin and Patrick Henry; Jefferson came soon afterward. A last appeal was addressed to the king of England; and the infatuated monarch was plainly told that the colonists had chosen war in preference to voluntary slavery. Early in the session John Adams made a powerful address, in the course of which he sketched the condition and wants of the country and of the

army. The necessity of appointing a commander-in-chief and the qualities requisite in that high officer were dwelt upon; and then the speaker concluded by putting in nomination George Washington of Virginia. As soon as his name was mentioned, Washington arose and withdrew from the hall. For a moment he was overpowered with a sense of the responsibility which was about to be put upon him, and to his friend Patrick Henry he said with tears in his eyes: "I fear that this day will mark the downfall of my reputation." On the 15th of June the nomination was unanimously confirmed by Congress; and the man who had saved the wreck of Braddock's army was called to build a nation.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, descended from the distinguished family of the Wessyngtons in England, was born in Westmoreland county, Virginia, on the 11th of February (Old Style), 1732. At the age of eleven he was left, by the death of his father, to the sole care of a talented and affectionate mother. His education was limited to the common branches of learning, extending only to geometry and trigonometry. Surveying was his favorite study. In his boyhood he was passionately fond of athletic sports and military exercises. As he grew to manhood he was marked above all his companions for the dignity of his manners, the soundness of his judgment and the excellence of his character. At the age of sixteen he was sent by his uncle to survey a tract of land on the South Potomac, and for three years his life was in the wilderness. On reaching his majority he was already more spoken of than any other young man in the colony. The important duties which he performed in the service of the Ohio Company, the beginning of his military career and his noted campaign with Braddock have already been narrated. After the French and Indian War he was a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses; was then chosen a member of the Continental Congress; and was now called by that body to control the destinies of the unorganized mass of men composing the American army. With great dignity he accepted the appointment, refused all compensation beyond his actual expenses, set out with an escort by way of New York, and reached Cambridge fifteen days after the battle of Bunker Hill.

Washington's duties and responsibilities were overwhelming. Congress had voted to raise and equip twenty thousand men, but the means of doing so were not furnished. The colonies had not yet broken their allegiance to the British Crown. For six months Congress stood waiting for the king's answer to its address. The country was sound and patriotic; but its methods of action were irregular and uncertain. Washington had a force of fourteen thousand five hundred men, but they were undisciplined and insubordinate. The revenues and supplies of war were

almost wholly wanting. At the time of the battle of Bunker Hill the whole army had but twenty-seven half barrels of powder. The work of organization was at once begun. Four major-generals, one adjutant and eight brigadiers were appointed. The army was arranged in three divisions. The right wing, under General Ward, held Roxbury; the left, commanded by General Charles Lee, rested at Prospect Hill, near Charlestown Neck; the centre, under the immediate direction of the commander-in-chief, lay at Cambridge. Boston was regularly invested, and the siege was pressed with constantly increasing vigor.

During the summer and autumn of 1775, the king's authority was overthrown in all the colonies. The royal governors either espoused the cause of the people, were compelled to resign or were driven off in insurrections. Lord Dunmore, governor of Virginia, seized the public powder. Patrick Henry led the people, and demanded restitution. The governor was overawed, and paid the value of the powder. Fearing further aggression, he went on board a man-of-war, proclaimed freedom to the slaves, raised a force of loyalists, met the provincials at the village of Great Bridge near Norfolk, and was defeated. Obligated to retire from the country, he gratified his vindictive disposition by burning Norfolk.

The American colonies looked to Canada for sympathy and aid. It was believed that the Canadians would make common cause against Great Britain. In order to encourage such a movement and to secure possession of the Canadian government, an expedition was planned against the towns on the St. Lawrence. Generals Schuyler and Montgomery were placed in command of a division which was to proceed by way of Lake Champlain and the river Sorel to St. John and Montreal. The former fort was reached on the 10th of September, but the Americans, finding the place too strong to be carried by assault, fell back twelve miles to Isle-aux-Noix in the Sorel. This place General Schuyler fortified, and then returned to Ticonderoga for reinforcements. Sickness detained him there, and the whole command devolved on Montgomery. This gallant officer returned to St. John and captured the fortress. Fort Chambly, ten miles farther north, was also taken. Montreal was next invested, and on the 13th of November obliged to capitulate.

Leaving garrisons in the conquered towns, Montgomery proceeded with his regiment, now reduced to three hundred men, against Quebec. This stronghold was already threatened from another quarter. Late in the autumn; Colonel Benedict Arnold set out with a thousand men from Cambridge, passed up the Kennebec and urged his way through the wilderness to the Chaudiere, intending to descend that stream to Point Levi. The march was one of untold hardship and suffering. As winter came

on the men were brought to the verge of starvation. The daring leader pressed on in the hope of gathering supplies from some unguarded French village. Before his return the famishing soldiers had killed and devoured every dog that could be found. Then the brave fellows gnawed the roots of trees and ate their moose-skin moccasins until Arnold's return, when the whole force proceeded to Quebec. Morgan, Greene and Meigs, all three noted leaders of the Revolution, and Aaron Burr, one day to become Vice-President of the United States, were in this company of suffering heroes.

Arnold and his men, climbing to the Plains of Abraham, as Wolfe had done sixteen years previously, offered battle. But the English garrison of Quebec remained in their fortifications awaiting an assault which the Americans were not strong enough to make. Conscious of his weakness, Arnold withdrew his men to Point aux Trembles, twenty miles up the river, and there awaited the approach of Montgomery. When the latter arrived, he assumed command of the whole force, which did not exceed nine hundred effective men. Quebec was defended by greatly superior numbers, well fortified and warmly quartered. For three weeks, with his handful of men, Montgomery besieged the town, and then, relying only on the courageous valor of his men, determined to stake everything on an assault.

It was the last day of December, 1775. Before daybreak the little army was divided into four columns. The first division, under Montgomery, was to pass down the St. Lawrence and attack the Lower Town in the neighborhood of the citadel. The second column, led by Arnold, was to sweep around the city to the north, attack by way of the St. Charles, and join Montgomery in order to storm the Prescott Gate. The other two divisions were to remain in the rear of the Upper Town, making feigned attacks to draw the attention of the garrison. Montgomery's column reached the point from which the charge was to begin. A battery lay just before, and it was thought that the gunners had not discovered the assailants. "Men of New York," said the brave Montgomery, "you will not fear to follow where your general leads! Forward!" There were masses of ice and clouds of blinding snow, and broken ground and the cold gray light of morning. As the Americans were rushing forward, all of a sudden the battery burst forth with a storm of grape-shot. At the first discharge Montgomery and both of his aids fell dead. The column was shattered. The men were heartbroken at the death of their beloved general. They staggered a moment, then fell back, and returned to Wolfe's Cove, above the city.

Arnold, ignorant of what had happened, fought his way into the

Lower Town on the north. While leading the charge he was severely wounded and borne to the rear. Captain Morgan, who succeeded him, led his brave band farther and farther along the narrow and dangerous streets until he was overwhelmed and compelled to surrender. Arnold retired with his broken remnant to a point three miles above the city. Reinforcements soon began to arrive; but the smallpox broke out in the camp, and active operations could not be resumed. As soon as the ice disappeared from the St. Lawrence, Quebec was strengthened by the arrival of fresh troops from England. Governor Carleton now began offensive movements; the Americans fell back from post to post, until, by the middle of the following June, Canada was entirely evacuated.

The worst calamity of the whole campaign was the death of General Richard Montgomery. He was one of the noblest of the many noble men who gave their lives in the cause of American liberty. Born of an illustrious Irish family, he became a soldier in his boyhood. He had shared the toils and the triumph of Wolfe. To the enthusiasm of a warm and affectionate nature he joined the highest order of military talents and the virtues of an exalted character. Even in England his death was mentioned with sorrow. New York, his adopted State, claimed his body, brought his remains to her own metropolis and buried them with tears. To after times the Congress of the nation transmitted his fame by erecting a noble monument.

---

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### THE WORK OF '76.

AT last came the king's answer to the appeal of Congress. It was such an answer as George III. and his ministers always made to the petitioners for human rights. The colonies were insulted and spurned; their petition was treated with contempt. The king of England did not know any such a body as the Continental Congress. The first thing necessary was to disband the army and to submit without conditions. Then the monarch would settle all questions with each colony separately. By this offensive and tyrannical answer the day of independence was brought nearer.

Meanwhile, General Howe had succeeded Gage in command of the