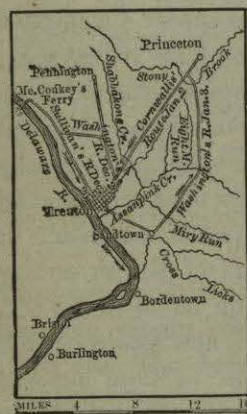


selected as the time; for it was known that the Hessians would spend the day in drinking and carousals.

About the 20th of the month, the weather became very cold, and by the evening of the 25th the Delaware was filled with floating ice. Ewing and Cadwallader were both baffled in their efforts to cross the river. Washington's division succeeded in getting over, but the passage was delayed till three o'clock in the morning. All hope of reaching Trenton before daybreak was at an end; but Washington, believing that the Hessians would sleep late after their revels, divided his army into two columns and pressed forward. One division, led by Sullivan, passed



BATTLE OF TRENTON AND PRINCETON, 1776-7.

down the river to attack the town on the west; the other, commanded by Washington and Greene, made a circuit to the Princeton road. The movement was entirely successful. At eight o'clock in the morning the American columns came rushing into the village from both directions. The astonished Hessians sprang from their quarters and attempted to form in line. At the first onset Colonel Rahl was mortally wounded. Forty or fifty others fell before the volleys of the patriots. For a few minutes there was confusion, and then a cry for quarter. Nearly a thousand of the dreaded Hessians threw down their arms and begged for mercy. At the first alarm about six hundred light horse and infantry had escaped toward Bordentown. All the rest were made prisoners of war. Before nightfall Washington, with his victorious men and the whole body of captives, was safe on the other side of the Delaware.

The battle of Trenton roused the nation from despondency. Confidence in the commander and hope in the ultimate success of the American cause were everywhere revived. The militia from the neighboring provinces flocked to the general's standard; and fourteen hundred soldiers, whose term of enlistment now expired, cheerfully re-entered the service. It was at this time that Robert Morris of Philadelphia, the great financier of the Revolution, came forward with his princely fortune to the support of his distressed country. As to Cornwallis, he found it necessary to postpone his visit to England and hasten back to New Jersey.

Three days after his victory, Washington again crossed the Delaware and took post at Trenton. Here all the American detachments in the vicinity were ordered to assemble. To General Heath, in command of the New England militia stationed at Peekskill, on the Hudson, Wash-

ington sent orders to move into New Jersey. The British fell back from their outposts on the Delaware and concentrated in great force at Princeton. Cornwallis took command in person, and resolved to attack and overwhelm Washington at Trenton. So closed the year. Ten days previously, Howe only waited for the freezing of the Delaware before taking up his quarters in Philadelphia. Now it was a question whether he would be able to hold a single town in New Jersey.

CHAPTER XL.

OPERATIONS OF '77.

ON the 1st of January, 1777, Washington's army at Trenton numbered about five thousand men. On the next day Cornwallis approached from Princeton with greatly superior forces. The British were exasperated and the Americans resolute. *During the afternoon there was severe and constant skirmishing in the fields and along the roads to the east and north of Trenton. As the columns of the enemy pressed on, Washington abandoned the village and took up a stronger position on the south side of Assanpink Creek. The British, attempting to force a passage, were driven back; it was already sunset, and Cornwallis deferred the attack till the morrow.

2. Washington's position was critical in the extreme. To attempt to recross the Delaware was hazardous. To retreat in any direction was to lose all that he had gained by his recent victory. To be beaten in battle was utter ruin. In the great emergency he called a council of war and announced his determination to leave the camp by night, make a circuit to the east, pass the British left flank and strike the detachment at Princeton before his antagonist could discover or impede the movement. Orders were immediately issued for the removal of the baggage to Burlington. In order to deceive the enemy, the camp-fires along the Assanpink were brightly kindled and a guard left to keep them burning through the night. Then the army was put in motion by the circuitous route to Princeton. Everything was done in silence, and the British sentries walked their beats until the morning light showed them a deserted camp. Just then the roar of the American cannon, thirteen miles away, gave Cornwallis notice of how he had been outgeneraled.

At sunrise Washington was entering Princeton. At the same mo-

ment the British regiments stationed there were marching out by the Trenton road to reinforce Cornwallis. The Americans met them in the edge of the village, and the battle at once began. The patriots, under General Mercer, posted themselves behind a hedge, and were doing good work with their muskets until the British charged bayonets. Then the militia gave way in confusion, and Mercer, one of the bravest of the brave, received a mortal wound. But the Pennsylvania reserves and regulars were at hand, led by the commander-in-chief. The valor of Washington never shone with brighter lustre. He spurred among his flying men, who rallied at his call. He rode between the hostile lines and reined his horse within thirty yards of the enemy's column. There he stood. From both sides there came a crash of musketry. Washington's aid drew his hat over his eyes that he might not see the chieftain die. The wind tossed up the smoke, and there, unhurt, was the sublime leader of the American armies. The British were already broken and flying, with a loss of four hundred and thirty men in killed, wounded and missing. The loss of the Americans was small; but the gallant Mercer was greatly lamented.

Washington had intended to press on to Brunswick and destroy the enemy's magazines. His men, however, were too much exhausted for the march. The legions of Cornwallis were already in hearing, and there was no time for delay. Washington accordingly withdrew to the north, and on the 5th of January took a strong position at Morristown. Cornwallis hastened to New Brunswick to protect his stores. In a short time the whole of New Jersey north of Newark and Elizabethtown was recovered by the patriots. In all parts of the State the militia rose in arms; straggling parties of the British were cut off, and the outposts of the enemy were kept in constant alarm. The Hessians, whose barbarous invasion and brutal conduct had almost ruined the country, were the special objects of patriot vengeance. Vexed by the perpetual assaults of partisan warfare, Cornwallis gradually contracted his lines, abandoning one post after another, until his whole force was cooped up in New Brunswick and Amboy. The boastful British army that was to have taken Philadelphia now thought only of a safe return to New York.

In the early spring, General Howe despatched a fleet up the Hudson to destroy the American stores at Peekskill. Macdougall, the commandant, finding himself too feeble to make a successful defence, blew up the magazines and retreated. On the 13th of April Cornwallis marched a division out of New Brunswick and surprised General Lincoln, who was stationed at Boundbrook on the Raritan; but the latter made good his retreat with a trifling loss. On the 25th of the same month, General Tryon with a detachment of two thousand men landed on the north shore

of Long Island Sound, and proceeded against Danbury, Connecticut. After destroying a large quantity of stores and burning the town the British began a retreat to the coast. Immediately they were attacked on flank and rear by the exasperated patriots, who, led by the aged Wooster and the daring Arnold, made charge after charge on the retreating foe. Before regaining their shipping the British lost more than two hundred men; of the patriots about sixty were killed and wounded. The veteran Wooster, now sixty-eight years of age, fell in this engagement.

A similar expedition, undertaken by the Americans, was more successful. Colonel Meigs, of Connecticut, learning that the British were collecting stores at Sag Harbor, near the eastern extremity of Long Island, gathered two hundred militiamen, and determined to surprise the post. On the night of the 22d of May he embarked his men in whale-boats, crossed the Sound, and reached Sag Harbor just before daydawn on the following morning. The British, numbering a hundred, were overpowered; only four of them escaped; five or six were killed, and the remaining ninety were made prisoners. A gun-ship, ten loaded transports and a vast amount of stores were destroyed by the victorious patriots, who, without the loss of a man, returned to Guilford with their captives. For this gallant deed Colonel Meigs received an elegant sword from Congress.

Washington remained in his camp at Morristown until the latter part of May. Cornwallis was still at New Brunswick, and it was necessary that the American commander should watch the movements of his antagonist. The patriot forces of the North were now concentrated on the Hudson; and a large camp, under command of Arnold, was laid out on the Delaware. Both divisions were within supporting distance of Washington, who now broke up his winter-quarters and took an advantageous position at Boundbrook, only ten miles from the British camp. Howe now crossed over from New York, reinforced Cornwallis and threatened an attack upon the American lines; but Washington stood his ground, and Howe pressed forward as far as Somerset Court-House, in the direction of the Delaware. The movement was only a feint intended to draw Washington from his position; but he was too wary to be deceived, and the British fell back through New Brunswick to Amboy. The American lines were now advanced as far as Quibbletown. While in this position, Howe, on the night of the 25th of June, turned suddenly about and made a furious attack on the American van; but Washington withdrew his forces without serious loss and regained his position at Boundbrook. Again the British retired to Amboy, and on the 30th of the month crossed over to Staten Island. After more than six months of manœuvring and fighting the invading army was fairly driven out of New Jersey.

On the 10th of July a brilliant exploit was performed in Rhode Island. Colonel William Barton, of Providence, learning that Major-General Prescott of the British army was quartered at a farm-house near Newport, apart from his division, determined to capture him. On the night of the 10th of July the daring colonel, with forty volunteers, embarked at Providence, dropped down the bay, and reached the island near Prescott's lodgings. The movement was not discovered. The British sentinel was deceived with a plausible statement, and then threatened with death if he did not remain quiet. The patriots rushed forward, burst open Prescott's door, seized him in bed, and hurried him, half clad, to the boats. The alarm was raised; a squad of cavalry came charging to the water's edge; but the provincials were already paddling out of sight with their prisoner. This lucky exploit gave the Americans an officer of equal rank to exchange for General Lee. Colonel Barton was rewarded with promotion and an elegant sword.

Meanwhile, Congress had returned to Philadelphia. The American government was at this time essentially weak in its structure and inefficient in action. Nevertheless, there was much valuable legislation which tended to strengthen the army and the nation. But the most auspicious sign that gladdened the patriots was the unequivocal sympathy of the French. From the beginning of the contest the people of France had espoused the American cause. Now, after the lapse of two years, their sympathy became more outspoken and enthusiastic. True, the French government would do nothing openly which was calculated to provoke a war with Great Britain. Outwardly the forms and sentiments of peace were preserved between the two nations; but secretly the French rejoiced at British misfortune and applauded the action of the colonies. Soon the Americans came to understand that if money was required France would lend it; if supplies were needed, France would furnish them; if arms were to be purchased, France had arms to sell. During the year 1777 the French partisans of America managed to supply the colonies with more than twenty thousand muskets and a thousand barrels of powder.

At last the republicans of France, displeased with the double-dealing of their government, began to embark for America. Foremost of all came the gallant young MARQUIS OF LA FAYETTE.* Though the king withheld permission, though the British minister protested, though family and home and kindred beckoned the youthful nobleman to return, he left all to fight the battle of freedom in another land. Fitting a vessel at his own expense, he eluded the officers, and with the brave De Kalb and a small company of followers reached Georgetown, South Carolina, in

* La Fayette's name was *Gilbert Motier*.

April of 1777. He at once entered the patriot army as a volunteer, and in the following July was commissioned as a major-general. Not yet twenty years of age, he clung to Washington as son to father, and through life their friendship was unclouded.

One of the most important events of the whole war was the campaign of Lieutenant-General Burgoyne. This distinguished British officer arrived at Quebec in March of 1777. Superseding Sir Guy Carleton in command of the English forces in Canada, he spent the months of April and May in organizing a powerful army for the invasion of New York. By the beginning of June he had thoroughly equipped a force of ten thousand men, of whom about seven thousand were British and Hessian veterans; the rest were Canadians and Indians. The plan of the campaign embraced a descent upon Albany by way of Lake Champlain, Lake George and the Upper Hudson. From Albany it was Burgoyne's purpose to descend the river to New York and unite his forces with the main division of the British army. By this means New England was to be cut off from the Middle and Southern colonies and the whole country placed at the mercy of Howe. That any successful resistance could be offered to the progress of the invading army was little imagined.

On the 1st of June Burgoyne reached St. John's, at the foot of Lake Champlain, and on the 16th proceeded to Crown Point. This place, which was undefended, was occupied by a British garrison; and the main army swept on to Ticonderoga, which was at that time held by three thousand men under General St. Clair. The British soon gained possession of Mount Defiance, and planted a battery seven hundred feet above the American works. Mount Hope was also seized and retreat by way of Lake George cut off. St. Clair, seeing that resistance would be hopeless, abandoned the fort on the night of the 5th of July, and escaped with the garrison by way of Mount Independence and Wood Creek. The British pressed after the fugitives, and overtook them at Hubbardton, a village in Vermont, seventeen miles from Ticonderoga. A sharp engagement ensued, in which the Americans fought so obstinately as to check the pursuit; and then continued their retreat to Fort Edward. On the following day the British reached Whitehall and captured a large quantity of baggage, stores and provisions.

At this time the American army of the North was commanded by General Schuyler, a man whose patriotism was greater than his abilities. His headquarters were at Fort Edward, where he remained until after the arrival of St. Clair. The garrison now numbered between four and five thousand men; but this force was deemed inadequate to hold the place against Burgoyne's army. Schuyler therefore evacuated the post and

retreated down the Hudson as far as the islands at the mouth of the Mohawk. Burgoyne came on by way of Fort Ann, which the Americans had demolished, and thence through the woods over obstructed roads to Fort Edward, where he arrived on the 30th of July. Fearing that his supplies would be exhausted before he could reach Albany, the British general now made a halt, and despatched Colonel Baum with five hundred men to seize the provincial stores at Bennington, Vermont. Colonel John Stark rallied the New Hampshire militia, and on the 15th of August met the British a short distance from the village. On the following morning there was a furious battle, in which Baum's force was fairly annihilated. A battalion of Hessians, led by Breymann, arrived on the field, only to be utterly routed by the Americans, who were reinforced by the gallant colonel Warner. The British lost a hundred and forty in killed and wounded, and nearly seven hundred prisoners. The whole country was thrilled by the victory, and the patriots began to rally from all quarters.

A few days after the battle of Bennington, Burgoyne received intelligence of a still greater reverse. At the beginning of the invasion a large force of Canadians, Tories and Indians, commanded by General St. Leger, had been sent by way of Oswego against Fort Schuyler, at the head of navigation on the Mohawk. This important post was held by a small garrison under Colonel Gansevoort. On the 3d of August St. Leger invested the fort, and it seemed that a successful defence was impossible; but the brave General Herkimer rallied the militia of the surrounding country and advanced to the relief of the garrison. When nearing the fort, the patriots fell into an Indian ambush, and a terrible hand-to-hand conflict ensued in the woods. Herkimer was defeated with a loss of a hundred and sixty men in killed, wounded and prisoners. The loss of the savages was almost as great. Hardly had the conflict ended when the garrison made a sally, carried everything before them, and then fell back with trophies and prisoners. Already the impetuous and fearless Arnold had volunteered to lead a detachment from the Hudson for the relief of the fort. At his approach the savages plundered the British camp and fled. St. Leger, dismayed at the treachery of the barbarians, raised the siege and retreated. Fort Schuyler was saved and strengthened. Such was the news that was borne to Burgoyne at Fort Edward.

The British general had now lost a month in procuring supplies from Canada. Should he retreat? Ruin and disgrace were in that direction. Should he go forward? More than nine thousand patriot soldiers were in that direction. For General Lincoln had arrived with the militia of New England; Washington had sent several detachments

from the regular army; Morgan had come with his famous riflemen. Meanwhile, General Gates had superseded Schuyler in command of the northern army. On the 8th of September the American headquarters were advanced to Stillwater. At Bemis's Heights, a short distance north of this place, a strong camp was laid out and fortified under direction of the noted Polish engineer Thaddeus Kosciusko. On the 14th of the month, Burgoyne crossed the Hudson and took post at Saratoga. Until the 18th he advanced his camp a mile each day, when the two armies were face to face and but two miles apart. On the afternoon of the 19th the advance parties of the British attacked the American wings, and a general battle ensued, continuing until nightfall. The conflict, though severe, was indecisive; the Americans retired within their lines, and the British slept under arms on the field. To the patriots, whose numbers were constantly increasing, the result of the battle was equivalent to a victory.

The condition of Burgoyne grew more and more critical. On all sides the lines of Gates were closing around him. His supplies failed; his soldiers were put on partial rations; his Canadian and Indian allies deserted his standard. But the British general was courageous and resolute; he strengthened his defences and flattered his men with the hope that General Clinton, who now commanded the British army in New York, would make a diversion in their favor. The latter did ascend the river as far as Forts Clinton and Montgomery. Both these forts, after an obstinate defence, were carried by assault. Colonel Vaughan was sent on with a thousand men as far as the town of Kingston, which was burned—besides the destruction of stores and private property, nothing further was accomplished, and the condition of Burgoyne became desperate. On the 7th of October he hazarded another battle, in which he lost his bravest officers and nearly seven hundred privates. The conflict was terrible, lasting from two o'clock in the afternoon till twilight. At last Morgan's riflemen singled out the brave General Fraser, who commanded the British right, and killed him. His disheartened men turned and fled from the field. On the American side, Arnold, who had resigned his commission, rode at full speed to his old command, and, *without authority*, became the inspiring genius of the battle. He charged like a madman, drove the enemy before him, eluded Gates's aid who was sent to



SCENE OF BURGOYNE'S INVASION, 1777.

call him back, burst into the British camp and was severely wounded. The Americans were completely victorious.

On the night after the battle Burgoyne led his shattered army to a stronger position. The Americans immediately occupied the abandoned camp, and then pressed after the fugitives; for the British were already retreating. On the 9th of October Burgoyne reached Saratoga and attempted to escape to Fort Edward. But Gates and Lincoln now commanded the river, and the proud Briton was hopelessly hemmed in. He held out to the last extremity, and finally, when there were only three days between his soldiers and starvation, was driven to surrender. On the 17th of October terms of capitulation were agreed on, and the whole army, numbering five thousand seven hundred and ninety-one, became prisoners of war. Among the captives were six members of the British Parliament. A splendid train of brass artillery consisting of forty-two pieces, together with nearly five thousand muskets, and an immense quantity of ammunition and stores, was the further fruit of the victory. The valor of the patriots had fairly eclipsed the warlike renown of Great Britain.

As soon as Burgoyne's invasion was at an end, a large portion of the victorious army of the North was despatched to the aid of Washington. For, in the mean time, a great campaign had been in progress in the South; and the patriots were sorely pressed. At the beginning of July, Howe had abandoned New Jersey. On the 23d of the same month he sailed with eighteen thousand men to attack Philadelphia by way of the Delaware. Washington, suspecting the object of the expedition, broke up his camp and marched rapidly southward. Off the capes of Virginia Howe learned that the Americans had obstructed the Delaware, so as to prevent the passage of his fleet. He therefore determined to enter the Chesapeake, anchor at the head of the bay and make the attack by land. As soon as Washington obtained information of the enemy's plans, he advanced his headquarters from Philadelphia to Wilmington, and there the American army, numbering between eleven and twelve thousand men, was concentrated. The forces of Howe were vastly superior in numbers and equipments, but Washington hoped by selecting his ground and acting on the defensive to beat back the invaders and save the capital.

On the 25th of August, the British landed at Elk River, in Maryland, and nine days afterward began their march toward Philadelphia. After a council of war and some changes in the arrangement of his forces, Washington selected the left bank of the Brandywine as his line of defence. The left wing of the American army was stationed at Chad's Ford

to dispute the passage, while the right wing, under General Sullivan, was extended for three miles up the river. On the 11th of September the British reached the opposite bank and began battle. What seemed to be their principal attack was made by the Hessians under Knyphausen at the ford; and here Wayne's division held the enemy in check. But the onset of Knyphausen was only a feint to keep the Americans engaged until a stronger column of the British, led by Cornwallis and Howe, could march up the south bank of the Brandywine and cross at a point above the American right. In this way Sullivan, who was not on the alert, allowed himself to be outflanked. Washington was misled by false information; the right wing, though the men under La Fayette and Stirling fought with great courage, was crushed in by Cornwallis; and the day was hopelessly lost.

During the night the defeated patriots retreated to Westchester. Greene brought up the rear in good order; through his efforts and those of the commander-in-chief the army was saved from destruction. The loss of the Americans in killed, wounded and missing amounted to fully a thousand men; that of the British to five hundred and eighty-four. The gallant La Fayette was severely wounded; Count Pulaski, a brave Pole who had espoused the patriot cause, so distinguished himself in this engagement that Congress honored him with the rank of brigadier and gave him command of the cavalry. On the day after the battle, Washington continued his retreat to Philadelphia, and then took post at Germantown, a few miles from the city. Undismayed by his reverse, he resolved to risk another engagement. Accordingly, on the 15th of the month, he recrossed the Schuylkill and marched toward the British camp. Twenty miles below Philadelphia he met Howe at Warren's Tavern. For a while the two armies manœuvred, the enemy gaining the better position; then a spirited skirmish ensued, and a great battle was imminent. But just as the conflict was beginning a violent tempest of wind and rain swept over the field. The combatants were deluged, their cartridges soaked, and fighting made impossible. On the next day Howe marched down the Schuylkill; Washington recrossed the river and confronted his antagonist. Howe turned suddenly about and hurried up stream along the right bank in the direction of Reading. Washington, fearing for his stores, pressed forward up the left bank to Pottstown. But the movement of the British westward was only feigned; again Howe wheeled, marched rapidly to the ford above Norristown, crossed the river and hastened to Philadelphia. On the 26th of September the city was entered without opposition, and the main division of the British army encamped at Germantown.

At the approach of Howe, Congress adjourned to Lancaster. On the 27th of September the members met at that place, and again adjourned to York, where they assembled on the 30th and continued to hold their sessions until the British evacuated Philadelphia in the following summer. Washington now made his camp on Skippack Creek, about twenty miles from the city. As soon as Howe found himself safe in the "rebel capital," as he was pleased to call it, he despatched a large division of his army to capture forts Mifflin and Mercer on the Delaware. Germantown was thus considerably weakened, and Washington resolved to attempt a surprise. The same plan of attack which had been so successful at Trenton was again adopted. On the night of the 3d of October the American army, arranged in several divisions, marched silently toward Germantown. The roads were rough, and the different columns reached the British outposts at irregular intervals. The morning was foggy, and the movements of both armies were unsteady and confused. There was much severe fighting, and at one time it seemed that the British would be overwhelmed; but they gained possession of a large stone house and held it. A foolish attempt to dislodge them gave the enemy time to rally. Some strong columns of Americans were kept out of the battle by the inefficiency of their commanders; the tide turned against the patriots, and the day was lost. Of the Americans a hundred and fifty-two were killed, five hundred and twenty-one wounded, and about four hundred missing. Howe reported the British loss at five hundred and thirty-five. The retreat of the Americans was covered by Greene and Pulaski.

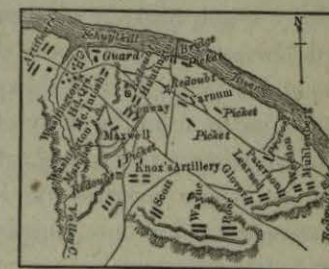
On the 22d of October Fort Mercer, on the New Jersey side of the Delaware, seven miles below Philadelphia, was assaulted by twelve hundred Hessians under Count Donop. The garrison, though numbering but four hundred, made a brave and successful resistance. The assault was like that at Bunker Hill. Count Donop received a mortal wound, and nearly four hundred of his men fell before the American entrenchments. At the same time the British fleet, assisted by a land-force from Philadelphia, attacked Fort Mifflin on Mud Island, in the Delaware. Here also the assailants met with an obstinate resistance. The assault became a siege, which lasted till the 15th of November. The patriots held out against superior numbers until every gun was dismantled and every palisade demolished. Then at midnight the ruined fortress was set on fire, and the garrison escaped to Fort Mercer. To make a second attack on this place Howe despatched two thousand men under Cornwallis. Washington sent General Greene to succor the fortress; but Cornwallis was strongly reinforced, and the American general would not

hazard a battle. On the 20th of November Fort Mercer was abandoned to the British; and thus General Howe obtained undisputed control of the Delaware.

After the battle of Germantown Washington took up his headquarters at Whitemarsh, twelve miles from Philadelphia. Winter was approaching, and the patriots began to suffer for food and clothing. Howe, knowing the distressed condition of the Americans, determined to surprise their camp. On the evening of the 2d of December he held a council of war, and it was decided to march against Washington on the following night. But Lydia Darrah, at whose house the council was held, overheard the plan of the enemies of her country. On the following morning she obtained a passport from Lord Howe, left the city on pretence of going to mill, rode rapidly to the American lines, and sent information of the impending attack to Washington. When, on the morning of the 4th, the British approached Whitemarsh they found the cannon mounted and the patriots standing in order of battle. The British general manoeuvred for four days, and then marched back to Philadelphia. During the remainder of the winter the city was occupied by nearly twenty thousand English and Hessian soldiers. There they revelled and rioted. Everything that the magazines of Great Britain could furnish was lavished upon the army of invaders who lay warmly housed in the city of Penn. In the patriot camp there was a different scene.

On the 11th of December Washington left his position at Whitemarsh and went into winter-quarters at Valley Forge on the right bank of the Schuylkill. The march thither occupied four days. Thousands of the soldiers were without shoes, and the frozen ground was marked with bloody footprints. The sagacity of Washington had pointed to a strong position for his encampment. To the security of the river and hills the additional security of redoubts and entrenchments was added. Log cabins were built for the soldiers, and everything was done that could be done to secure the comfort of the suffering patriots.

But it was a long and dreary winter; moaning and anguish were heard in the camp, and the echo fell heavy on the soul of the commander. These were the darkest days of Washington's life. Congress in a measure abandoned him, the people withheld their sympathies. The brilliant success of the army of the North was unjustly compared with the reverses



ENCAMPMENT AT VALLEY FORGE,
1777-8.

of the army of the South. Many men high in military and civil station left the great leader unsupported in the hour of his grief; even Samuel Adams, impatient under calamity, withdrew his confidence. There was a miserable conspiracy headed by Gates, Conway and Mifflin. Washington was to be superseded, and Gates or Lee was to be made commander-in-chief. But the alienation was only for a moment; the allegiance of the army remained unshaken, and the nation's confidence in the troubled chieftain became stronger than ever. Still, at the close of 1777, the patriot cause was obscured with clouds and misfortune.

CHAPTER XLI.

FRANCE TO THE RESCUE.

FOUR months before the declaration of independence, Silas Deane of Connecticut was appointed commissioner to France. His business at the French court was to act as the political and commercial agent of the United Colonies. His first service was to make a secret arrangement with Beaumarchais, a rich French merchant, by which the latter was to supply the Americans with the materials necessary for carrying on the war. The king of France and his prime minister, Vergennes, winked at this proceeding; but the agents of Great Britain were jealous and suspicious, and it was not until the autumn of 1777 that a ship laden with two hundred thousand dollars' worth of arms, ammunition and specie could be sent to America. In that ship came Baron Steuben, a veteran soldier and disciplinarian from the army of Frederic the Great. Arriving at Portsmouth, the baron tarried a short time in New England, and then repaired to York, where Congress was in session. From that body he received a commission, and at once joined Washington at Valley Forge. His accession to the American army was an event of great importance. He received the appointment of inspector-general; and from the day in which he entered upon the discharge of his duties there was a marked improvement in the condition and discipline of the soldiers. The American regulars were never again beaten when confronted by the British in equal numbers.

In November of 1776 Arthur Lee and Benjamin Franklin were appointed by Congress to negotiate an open treaty of friendship and com-

merce with the French king. In the following month they reached Paris and began their conferences with Vergennes. For a long time King Louis and his minister were wary of the proposed alliance. They cordially hated Great Britain, they rejoiced that the British empire was about to be dismembered, they gave secret encouragement to the colonies to hold out in their rebellion, they loaned money and shipped arms to America; but an open alliance was equivalent to a war with England, and that the French court dreaded.

Now it was that the genius of Dr. Franklin shone with a peculiar lustre. At the gay court of Louis XVI. he stood as the representative of his country. No nation ever had an ambassador of greater wisdom and sagacity. His reputation for learning had preceded him; the dignity of his demeanor and the simplicity of his manners added to his fame. Whether as philosopher or diplomatist, no man in that great city of fashion was the equal of the venerable American patriot. His wit and genial humor made him admired; his talents and courtesy commanded respect; his patience and perseverance gave him final success. During the whole of 1777 he remained at Paris and Versailles, availing himself of every opportunity to promote the interests of his country. At last came the news of Burgoyne's surrender. A powerful British army had been subdued by the colonists without aid from abroad. The success of the American arms and the prospect of commercial advantage decided the wavering policy of the king, and in the beginning of winter he made an announcement of his determination to accept an alliance with the colonies. On the 6th of February, 1778, a treaty was concluded; France acknowledged the independence of the United States and entered into relations of reciprocal friendship with the new nation. It was further stipulated that in case England should declare war against France, the Americans and the French should make common cause, and that neither should subscribe to a treaty of peace without the concurrence of the other. In America the news of the new alliance was received with great rejoicing; in England, with vindictive anger.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, the author of the first treaty between the United States and a foreign nation, was born in Boston on the 17th of January, 1706. His father was a manufacturer of soap and candles. To this humble vocation the young Benjamin was devoted by his parents; but the walls of a candle-shop were too narrow for his aspiring genius. At the age of twelve he was apprenticed to his brother to learn the art of printing; but the brother beat him, and he ran off to New York. There he found no employment. In 1723 he repaired to Philadelphia, entered a printing-office, and rose to distinction. He visited England; returned;