

fortified, and as Ticonderago was no longer tenable the American garrison was, on the morning of the 6th of July, marched across the Bridge to the eastern shore for the purpose of proceeding to Skenesborough (Whitehall) by way of Castleton, while the stores, artillery and ammunition were embarked on board 200 batteaux, escorted by five armed galleys, to proceed by South Bay to the same point.

So silently was this retreat effected that no intimation of it was conveyed to the British investing force till the commandant of Mount Independence thought fit to set his dwelling on fire before evacuating it. The glare so frightened the rear guard that they fell into confusion, which a little energy on the part of the British would have turned to utter destruction.

The naval department, under Commodore Lutwich, at once proceeded to open the navigation, and by nine o'clock on the morning of the 6th of July had cleared away the labors of the Americans for the previous twelve months, and had opened South Bay to the gunboats which at once started in pursuit, overtook the American flotilla at Skenesboro, engaged and captured some of the largest galleys, burned others, captured and set on fire the batteaux and stores.

The main division of the British army, under Gen. Burgoyne, had embarked on the remainder of the flotilla and proceeded to Skenesboro, while Gen. Fraser, with the advance corps, followed the retreating Americans by land, came up with them at Hubbardton on the morning of the 7th of July, and after a smart action completely defeated them. On the 8th of July another action was fought at Fort Ann on Wood Creek, fourteen miles from Whitehall, in which the Americans were again defeated and obliged to evacuate that post, retreating in confusion to Fort Edward; the whole when mustered there amounting to 4,400 men, beaten, demoralized, and without stores or equipment.

Burgoyne determined to march from Whitehall or Skenesboro to Fort Edward, a distance of some thirty miles along the old route followed by Dieskaw and the French troops in 1756, to bring up his stores and baggage by way of Lake George and to establish his field depots at Fort George at the head of this lake. He has been blamed for this as it is alleged he lost much valuable time by taking that route, whereas if he had chosen that by Ticonderago he would have been earlier before Fort Edward.

He marched from Fort Anne on the 13th of July and encamped before Fort Edward on the 27th. It is very doubtful if he had returned from Skenesboro to Ticonderago and embarked his troops on Lake George whether he could have arrived any earlier, and he had the advantage of moving on a line covering his communications, driving such portions of St. Clair's army as would have occupied it away, encouraging his friends, deciding the wavering, and up to

his arrival at Fort Edward producing the best possible effect for the service on which he was engaged.

While the British army was encamped at this place an event occurred, tragical and lamentable in its nature, but which has been villianously used to blacken the character and damage the interests of the country that army served—it is known as the murder of Jane McCrea. The story commonly believed is that an officer of the British army was attached to Miss McCrea, who resided with her brother at Fort Edward; that he had written a letter to her appointing a meeting at a certain road between the camp and Fort. That this letter was entrusted to the care of a chieftain of the Iroquois Indians with the promise of a large reward if he would escort Miss McCrea to the trysting tree. That the helpless girl entrusted herself to the guidance of the Indian; that he was joined by another of the same tribe who had acquired a quantity of rum, that while waiting for the officer the Indians got drunk and the new comer insisted on sharing the reward, which was denied by the other. Whereupon he instantly killed her with a blow of his tomahawk, and as the scalp of right belonged to him he brought it to Gen. Burgoyne for the purpose of being paid, but the long ringlets betrayed the fact of the murder, and inquiry confirmed its truth. Hence the villiany and cruelty of Burgoyne and the royal troops was too fearful to detail. A pity it is that such a well told story has no foundation in fact except that Miss McCrea was killed by an American rifle shot fired by one of the *pure and humane patriots* comprising Gen. St. Clair's army, and the Indians scalped her after she was dead. The story was told by Loring in his "Field Book of the Revolution," himself an American, and one not likely to favor the British *oppressors*, is substantially as follows:

Jane McCrea resided in the village of Fort Edward, and was betrothed to a young man of the name of David Jones, whose family owned property to a large amount in the vicinity. At the commencement of the rebellion David and his brother Jonathan raised a company of 80 men and joined Castleton in Canada serving in the division under Gen. Fraser. Jonathan held the rank of Capt. and David that of Lieutenant, and were with the troops in the British camp about to occupy Fort Edward. The Iroquois Indians pushed their reconnoissance into the village for the purpose of capturing prisoners, for which when brought safe to the British camp they received a stipulated sum per head, if wounded less, and *scalps were not paid for*. On the morning of the 27th July Jane McCrea was on a visit at the house of a Mrs. McNeil, a relation of the British Gen. Fraser, but who had long resided at Fort Edward. The Indians seized both ladies and hurried them towards the British camp. Being pursued by a detachment of American soldiers, Mrs. McNeil, being large and corpu-

lous, could not be mounted on horseback and was carried by the Indians, Miss McCrea unfortunately was mounted, and was shot dead by the fire of the American picket. The Indians scalped her, as it was a matter of religious and honorable feeling with them to do so. Mrs. McNeil was carried safely to camp almost naked, and had to be accommodated with General Fraser's camp cloak, being far too large to be covered by the robes of an ordinary sized woman. The fate of the American picket was that the officers and nearly all the men were killed in the skirmish that ensued, and, of course, scalped. An exaggerated account of this was carried to General Gates, then in command of the American northern army, and he wrote an angry letter about it to General Burgoyne, who had the strictest inquiry made when it appeared that Lieutenant Jones had nothing whatever to do with it.

Such is a fair specimen of the romance American writers have thrown about the incidents of war, intended to blacken the character of the British officers and soldiers as well as afford a coloring for the robbery and injustice practiced on the gallant loyalists who preferred their allegiance to their interests.

The immediate result of this skirmish was the hurried evacuation of Fort Edward and the retreat of Gen. Schuyler and his army to Stillwater, on the Hudson River.

It was at Fort Edward that those delays so fatal to the success of the expedition occurred, and for which no reasonable excuse can be urged. The fatal effects of that procrastination which was so marked a feature of the British officers of that period and which was affected as strategy, is the only reasonable explanation of Burgoyne's conduct.

THE BARRACKS.

It has long been mooted that the Government proposed establishing some sort of a school or camp of instruction for the Volunteer Militia. There is some talk, we believe, in official circles, of making use of the barracks of this town for this purpose. By successively calling out for a few weeks service each, small detachments of the force it is proposed to keep some of these outposts permanently garrisoned, and at the same time afford the men further opportunities of becoming acquainted with the routine of a soldier's life. It is intimated that Fort Wellington, at Prescott, will thus be garrisoned and that a similar experiment will be tried in St. Johns; but whether this scheme will amount to anything it is impossible to say at the present writing. In the meanwhile the barracks here are in the same condition as they were after the fire, and unless they are repaired this fall, will be of comparatively little value next spring.

Since writing the above we learn that Prescott is already garrisoned by Volunteers.—*The St. Johns News, Oct. 29.*

The Russian army now numbers 1,467,000 men.