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THE REVOLT OF THE British American Colonies, 1764-84.

CHAPTER XXV.

It had been determined by the British Ministry, at the suggestion of Sir Guy Carleton, to send an expedition from Canada to form a junction with Howe's troops on the Hudson, as it was expected that the prosecution of the next campaign would place that river entirely in his power, especially as it was navigable to Albany, thence by batteaux to Fort Edward with an open road to the northward to Fort George at the head of Lake George, a distance of fifteen miles; or to the southward to the head of that arm of Lake Champlain known as South Bay, a distance of 38 miles. The first was that principally followed by the British troops, and involved a portage, or carrying place, of four miles at Ticonderago; the second was altogether open navigation from the head of the bay.

All reasons of policy, justice and common sense would have pointed out Sir Guy Carleton as the man of all others best qualified to conduct an expedition on which the fate of the British Empire in America depended. But the puerile motives which governed the English cabinet at that period sacrificed all those considerations to the ease of Lord North, who endeavoured to get rid of a political enemy by appointing him to an important military command and silence an able debater by the assumption that he was a great General. Accordingly in an evil hour for England the gay, witty, unscrupulous and thoroughly superficial John Burgoyne was appointed to lead the expedition, and Carleton, in disgust, resigned his Governorship of Canada, but not before he had endeavored to aid as far as his advice and power could his favored rival.

On the 1st of June, 1777, Burgoyne assembled his troops numbering over 7,000 men of all arms at St. John's with the intention of penetrating to Albany by the valley

of Lake Champlain, while Lt.-Col. St. Leger with a detachment of 700 Rangers, (embodied Loyalists) moved up the St. Lawrence to Oswego for the purpose of co-operating with the Six Nation Indians, under the control of Sir John Johnson, with the loyalists which he had rallied to the Royal cause, and securing the valley of the Mohawk, thus cutting off from Albany any aid likely to be derived from the settlers in the surrounding townships, those being principally of Dutch descent, were not tainted with loyal feelings and were likely to give some trouble. This expedition, to be effective, should have consisted of at least 2,000 men and a respectable train of artillery. Its line of operations presented far greater facilities for expedition than that pursued by the main army, because the portages beyond Oswego were small, and the line of waters being that of the present Erie Canal, had been rendered navigable for batteaux long before.

Instead of this the artillery carried with the corps were contemptible, provisions and equipments worse. Its fate materially hastened the great catastrophe, and both accurately measured Burgoyne's capacity as a General.

Having collected his whole forces at Crown Point restored the fortifications ruined by the Americans when they evacuated that post in 1776, and established magazines; he appears to have divided his army, and with a division on the eastern shore of the lake, and the fleet in the centre he advanced on Ticonderago.

This fortress, so famous in the war of 1754-64, was built by the French Canadians in 1756, and called "Carillon," (Chimes) from the rapids above and below it, in the bed of the river, by which the waters of Lake George are sent into Lake Champlain. Ticonderago, a corruption of Cheonderago, its Iroquois name, means precisely the same thing. It is situated on the extreme point of a peninsula formed by the junction of the channel of the river which connects both lakes with Champlain. A deep swamp covered the southern face, except a small space near the river on which the Canadians had erected those famous lines before which

Abercrombie and 17,000 British and Provincial soldiers were defeated by one-fifth of their number of Canadian peasants in 1758. It will thus be seen that the ground on which the fort stood was an irregular triangle, two sides covered by water, the third by the swamp and lines.

The Americans had greatly strengthened the defences. On the opposite or eastern shore of lake Champlain they had erected a strong fortification on a commanding height called Mount Independence, connecting both by a substantial bridge, and this was protected by a boom on the northern or Lake Champlain face. As the mountain was intrenched from crest to base it might be safely assumed that all communications with Lake George or South Bay were effectually prevented. The American depots were at Skarsborough near Whitehall at the head of the bay, and the lake was inaccessible as long as Ticonderago stood.

It would appear that no provision had been made against what actually happened—an approach by land—and therefore when the British right wing had invested Ticonderago, prepared to cross the river to the right bank the Americans set fire to and abandoned such works as they had on the peninsula between Lake George and South Bay. This happened on the 2nd of July.

The stream connecting Lakes George and Champlain is about four miles in length. It is broken by a series of rapids and falls, the surface of the former being 157 feet above the level of the latter, the connecting channel, known as La Chute River, runs from south to north, at the foot of the lower falls it takes a sharp bend to the eastward, and on its northwestern shore Ticonderago is placed within the loop of land formed by the junction of river and lake. Mount Independence was opposite the junctions of the river, lake and South Bay on the eastern shore, while on the western shore of South Bay just at the confluence of the river rose Mount Defiance or Sugar Loaf Hill, commanding the works on both the peninsula and the eastern shore. It will be seen that these three points formed a triangle to west, south and east. This was at once seized and