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CHAPTER XXIX.

At three o'clock on the morning of the 18th of June the evacuation of Philadelphia was commenced, and at ten o'clock the British troops were encamped on the Jersey shore of the Delaware, opposite the city. About 3,000 persons left their homes and properties for ever, and of those loyalists who remained several were banished more thrown into prison and tried for their lives, and two gentlemen of worth and respectability, named Roberts and Carlisle, both Quakers, were hanged, seemingly for no other reason than that they were the possessors of property and did not choose to forego their allegiance.

It has often been asked why Sir Henry Clinton did not withdraw his troops with the fleet. The answer is obvious—the refugees had to be carried away, and the consequences of overloading the vessels in case of adverse winds were too grave to warrant any such proceeding, and the same reason will hold good for not putting the baggage on board.

The distance from Philadelphia to New York by the Northern road was 90 miles, the Raritan River would have to be passed, and as there were many advantageous positions in which an army could be posted on its eastern bank, and the country to its source was in possession of Gen. Gates, with the Northern army of the United States, such an operation was not to be thought of—it was then Sir H. Clinton's intention to march his troops to Sandy Hook, but in so doing it was necessary to follow the common road to both lines as far as Englishtown. The country to the northward of that road is broken and mountainous, and Washington, who had crossed the Delaware on 22nd June with 20,000 men, had occupied all the passes and had pushed forward his left wing so as to overlap the line of retreat, while he fol-

lowed cautiously along the main road having a corps of 600 men on the right flank of the British army. No obstruction worth recording occurred on the line of march although, from the quantity of baggage, it extended for twelve miles, which was frequently delayed by the necessity of repairing bridges. In the meantime Gen. Washington, whose military abilities were of an inferior order, was most anxious to bring on a general action, but Gen. Lee (the only man deserving the title which the war produced) thought it would be unwise to attempt anything of the kind as the British troops were veteran soldiers and Clinton was evidently manœuvring to get the United States troops within striking distance. As yet they had not been able to capture a baggage cart belonging to him, and if the undisciplined American soldiers were brought into contact with those men where an equal number on both sides only could be engaged defeat was certain and might lead to the dissolution of their whole army. Moreover, although the American advance had been augmented to over 600 men still they were not able to effect anything against the retreating British. His advice, therefore, was to harass the retreat by detachments but risk nothing, and in this opinion five other General Officers coincided—only three being for Washington's idea, viz., Greene, Lafayette and Wayne, the first and last desperate and gallant leaders but no Generals, the other a young man of 21 years of age, a brave soldier but wholly without military conduct, experience or knowledge, and whose life appears to have been one grand mistake; continually placing him where he should not be as nature had denied him the necessary qualifications for successfully conducting any enterprise. He was, however, a live *Marquis*, a Major-General, a favorite of Washington's and an earnest of French alliance and assistance in all matters of importance to the United States.

In this state of affairs in the American camp the British troops took up a position on the 27th of June, on some heights in the neighborhood of Freehold Court House, while the United States troops advanced to

Englishtown, six miles in the rear. Another day's march would place the British troops beyond the possibility of attack, and Washington decided on trying the issue of a general engagement. With this view he detached Gen. Lee in command of his advanced corps with orders to attack the British rear the moment it was in motion, while Wayne and Morgan, already well in advance, should attack the advanced guard and baggage. Gen. Clinton being apprised of Washington's intention by the appearance of American troops in his rear and on his flanks the previous day, frustrated this arrangement by halting the rear till the van had moved off, allowing them a start of over four hours, and had strengthened the rear with the best troops in the army. At eight o'clock on the 28th of June he prepared to march from the heights where he had encamped during the previous night and move into the plain in front of Monmouth, or, as it is called, Freehold Court House. No sooner had he abandoned the heights than they were occupied by the American troops under Gen. Lee, and as soon as the British moved off they descended to the plain and prepared to attack them, but found to their surprise a division of 6,000 veteran troops drawn up in order of battle instead of a mere rear guard. Lee acted with promptitude and decision: he instantly withdrew the men engaged and fell back over the difficult defile he had passed in tolerable order, pursued by the British, who drove them from two positions in succession, while the advance repelled the attacks of Wayne and Morgan, who, fearing to be separated, fell back to Freehold Meeting House, over a mile in rear of the battle ground. Washington, with the main body of the American army, was stationed at this post and immediately halted the retreating troops, and with fresh supports again advanced to the position at which the British troops had halted. A fierce contest now ensued, in which the American troops were driven into the woods covering their rear while their left flank was turned by the light infantry. As no possible object could be gained by driving them from this position and the heat of the