

of that river. In 1777 it was in the power of the British, and the triumphant junction of Burgoyne's and Howe's army could have been effected if the latter knew his business; as it was, if the expedition which captured all its posts had only held them; Gates's victory at Saratoga would be neutralised, the rebellion crushed by famine, and from Canada to Long Island Sound a virtual barrier would have shut out the New England States from its supplies. In the avidity with which he now hastened to secure by infamous means an advantage twice at least virtually in his possession may be read the woeful lessons of experience which soldiers like Clinton has bequeathed to the country who employed him. A pert officer of the rebel army writes of him to a correspondent in discussing a plan for his seizure which his careless habits rendered feasible, that "Congress could not be better served by any one of its own officers, and it would be impossible to find a greater blunderbuss, prolific as England undoubtedly was in the production of such animals."

On the 18th September Washington and his staff crossed the Hudson at Peek's Kill en route to Hartford to confer with Rochambeau—immediately afterwards Arnold willing to bring matters to a crisis requested Clinton to send André to meet him at some convenient point near the American lines. For this purpose the Vulture sloop of war was stationed at Teller's Point, on the Hudson, and communications being opened with the shore; on the evening of the 21st September a boat was sent with a letter from Gen. Arnold and a pass for General Robinson, or his agent, to accompany the boat's crew to a point known as the Long Clove, two miles below Havers-town and five miles below the house of Joshua Hett Smith, the agent who owned the boat and managed the transaction. Major André, under the name of John Anderson, embarked and was brought to an interview with General Arnold; but before the business between them was finally adjusted the approach of daylight rendered it necessary that a place of safety should be sought where André might lie concealed and next night drop down to the Vulture. Against his remonstrances Arnold carried him within the American lines and concealed him in Smith's house, where he arrived in the dawn of the morning of the 22nd. But meantime the appearance of the Vulture had given uneasiness to the commander at Verplanks, and with a four pounder gun commenced such a fire on her as to compel the vessel to shift her moorings and drop down stream out of range. From the upper windows of the house in which he had taken refuge André beheld this transaction which exerted such a fearful influence on his own fate. During the greater part of the day he was closeted with Arnold, who delivered to him the following memoranda which he foolishly accepted against the express orders of Gen. Clinton.

(1) "An estimate of the forces at West Point and its dependencies, Sept. 13th, 1780,

showing a total of 3086 men of all sorts.
(2) "An estimate of the number of men necessary to man the works at West Point and vicinity, showing a total exclusive of artillery corps of 2,438 troops.

(3) "Artillery orders issued by Major Bauman, Sept. 5th, 1780, showing the disposition of the corps in an alarm.

(4) "Bauman's return of the ordnance in the different forts, batteries, &c., at West Point and its dependencies, Sept. 5th, 1780, showing the distribution of 100 pieces.

(5) "Copy of a statement of the condition of affairs submitted by Washington to a council of war, Sept. 6th, 1780.

(6) "Remarks on works at West Point, a copy to be transmitted to his Excellency General Washington, Sept., 1780.

"Fort Arnold is built of dry fascines and wood, is in a ruinous condition, incomplete and subject to take fire from shells or carcasses.

"Fort Putnam stone, wanting great repairs; the wall on the east side broken down and rebuilding from the foundation; at the west and south side have been a Chevaux de Frise; the west side broke in many places. The east side open; two bomb proofs and provisions magazine in the fort and slight wooden barracks—a commanding piece of ground 500 yards west between the fort and No. 4, or Rocky Hill.

"Fort Webb built of fascines and wood, a slight work very dry and liable to be set on fire as the approaches are very easy without defences save a slight abatis.

"Fort Wyllys built of stone five feet high, the work above plank-filled with earth, the stone work 15 feet, the earth 9 feet thick; no bomb proofs; the batteries without the fort.

"Redoubt No. 1. On the south side of wood, 9 feet thick, the west, north and east sides 4 feet thick; no cannon in the works; a slight and single abatis; no ditch or pickett; cannon on two batteries; no bomb proofs.

"Redoubt No. 2. The same as No. 1. No bomb proofs.

"Redoubt No. 3. A slight woodwork 3 feet thick, very dry; no bomb proofs; a single abatis; the work easily set on fire; no cannon.

"Redoubt No. 4. A wooden work about 10 feet high and four or five feet thick, the west side faced with a stone wall 8 feet high and four thick; no bomb proof; two six pounders; a slight abatis; a commanding piece of ground 500 yards west.

"The North Redoubt on the east side built of stone, 4 feet high above the stone, wood filled in with earth; very dry; no ditch; a bomb proof; three batteries without the fort; a poor abatis; a rising piece of ground 500 yards south, the approaches under cover to within 20 yards; the wood easily fired with faggots dipt in pitch, &c.

"South Redoubt much the same as the North; a commanding piece of ground 500 yards due east, 3 batteries without the fort."

Those were written on six pieces of paper, probably for the facility of concealment such an arrangement afforded; they were all, except the fourth, in Arnold's handwriting, and are accurate descriptions of the miserable attempts at fortifications which had deterred Sir Henry Clinton from attempting to gain the command of the Hudson River. That their state was not known in New York argues great stupidity on the part of the General commanding, and entire want of enterprise on the part of his subordinates.

Through the mismanagement on the part

of Smith it was decided that André should return by land, although the Vulture had returned to her former berth. On the evening of the 22nd Smith and André accompanied by a negro servant and their horses crossed the Hudson at King's Ferry—André having changed his military coat and hat retaining his nankin breeches and white top ped boots. From Verplanks the road, with its ancient guide post and inscription—"Dishe his di Roode toe de Kshing's Ferry," led north westerly for fourteen miles towards Salem, intersected however at three miles distant by the direct highway from Peekskill through Tarrytown to New York. Between 8 and 9 o'clock the party stumbled on an American patrol, the officer on duty demanded to see the passes given by General Arnold of which they had two, as follows:

"Head Quarters, Robinson's House,
"Sept. 22nd, 1780.

"Joshua Smith has permission to pass the guards to the White Plains and to return, he being on public business by my direction.

"B. ARNOLD,
"Maj. Genl."

"Head Quarters, Robinson's House,
"Sept. 22nd, 1780.

"Permit Mr. John Anderson to pass the guards to the White Plains or below if he chooses, he being on public business by my direction.

"B. ARNOLD,
"Maj. Genl."

They were advised not to venture further that night as they would be sure to be interrupted by the marauders known on either side as Cow-boys or Skinners; they remained during the rest of the night at the house of a loyal Scotch settler and resumed their journey at daybreak on the 23rd September. At Pine's bridge, on the Croton, Smith took leave of André, although the understanding with Arnold was to continue with him to White Plains, and if he had performed his compact André would have been saved. Left to his own resources he abandoned the route he was on, and striking to the right took the Tarrytown Road at a point about half a mile north of Tarrytown; he was stopped by three marauders, robbed of his watch and stripped of his boots, in the search for money or valuables. The documents received from General Arnold were discovered, and as André could not convince his captors that he would reward them, and as they were probably deserters from the loyal militia, they carried him to the nearest American commanding officer, Lieut. Colonel Jameison at North Castle. Still retaining his incognito as John Anderson he induced the American commander to send a communication to General Arnold stating that he had been detained, he at the same time sending the captured documents to Washington. Arnold on receipt of this intimation at once quitted West Point, got on board the Vulture sloop and reached New York in safety. André after allowing a reasonable time to elapse wrote a letter acknowledging himself to be the Adjutant General of the British army, stating frankly and free