

draw Bay at Verplanck's Point, on the left bank of the Hudson. From the fact of landing his troops on that shore Gen. Putnam, who commanded the American troops at Forts Clinton and Montgomery, fearing that his design was to march through the highlands to form a junction with Burgoyne, drew 2,000 men from those positions and the district and hastened to occupy the passes through the highlands on the eastern shore.

On the 6th October, at day break, 2,000 British soldiers were landed on the western shore above Stony Point, and were marched across almost impassable heights and defiles and after a smart action captured both Fort Montgomery and Clinton, with a loss of 140 men killed and wounded, the Americans lost over 300 men in killed, wounded and prisoners, while Gen. Putnam's force could only look on, being unable to cross the river in the face of the British flotilla. Above Fort Montgomery a boom was thrown across the river, behind the American flotilla was stationed, consisting of two frigates, two galleys and a sloop. Those attempted to escape up the river, but the wind failing they were set on fire and burnt. As soon as this was seen Fort Constitution—a work some miles higher in the river—was abandoned and destroyed. The villages in the neighborhood were pillaged and burned, and although on the morning of the 7th the boom had been opened no attempt was made to push forward to Albany.

On the 13th a flying squadron under Sir James Wallace was sent to Esopus Creek, within forty miles of Albany, with a detachment of troops under Gen. Vaughan. At their approach two small batteries were abandoned and destroyed, with a row galley. The troops landed and burnt Esopus, and although they could have reached Albany in five hours with the flood tide no attempt was made to carry out that easy operation, principally because there was no opposition or villages to burn. This expedition, late as it was, would have been in ample time to succor Burgoyne and turn his defeats into victories if Gen. Clinton or any of his subordinates had brains. But it was not to be. Stupidity, mismanagement, and imbecility marks the conduct of the leaders in this war in so extraordinary a manner that the historical student is forced to the conclusion that those men were judicially blinded. It is nonsense to suppose that the farmers, tanners, barbers, grocers and hard characters who commanded the American peasantry were inspired soldiers especially raised up for the occasion, and that they best men who made war a profession, earned honor on well fought fields, and came to America only to fail while supporting justice against fraud, and constitutional government against usurpation. Such an idea may suit the spread-eagleism of a fourth of July oration, but has no foundation in fact. Neither was it a want of knowledge of bush fighting

that was the cause of failure, as the British had the best bushmen in the world—Canadian and Indians—on their side. The direct cause was want of strategy, founded theoretically on, and in every case precipitated by want of knowledge of the topographical features of the country.

In this very case Clinton shows himself by far an abler strategist than Putnam. He compels the latter to leave an advantageous position, strip it of troops, and place those in such a position that he could have no use of them. Yet the advantages gained are not improved, and were not half as valuable as those let slip away, no advance is made on Albany, Burgoyne's army is left to its fate. The enemies of Great Britain, willing to profit by her troubles, are led by this to give assistance to her rebellious subjects and inflict on the country losses she has never yet recovered.

If Generals such as Clinton could foresee the evils their false acts would bring on their country they would never attempt to exercise a power which must be energetically applied to be of service at all. And in this case where all the documentary evidence has been brought to light on both sides it is surprising to think that the British Administration would trust a General who had so totally failed in working out the great object of his expedition. Having destroyed everything that would burn, the troops were re-embarked and the fleet returned to New York; thus closing the campaign of 1777, with disaster, disgrace, and fearful loss to Great Britain.

Gen. Clinton endeavored in after years to vindicate his conduct, but totally failed. He had passed the last obstruction in the river on the 7th October, the very day Burgoyne fought his last action. Only forty miles of open navigation lay between Sir James Wallace's squadron and Albany, where all the stores for Gen. Gates' army were collected, and the key of the whole strategy of the contest. Yet it was the 13th, a full week after landing at Verplanck's, that a forward movement was carried out, and then only half accomplished. If Clinton knew his business as a soldier Burgoyne would have been saved the disgrace of surrendering a British army.

#### A BRITISH OFFICER'S ACCOUNT OF • CUBAN AFFAIRS.

The following is an extract of a letter from an officer of the West India squadron, dated Havanna, Sept. 4:—

"We were at Neuvitas the 18th last month and it is here that the Cubans have made their best stand. There was one Spanish gunboat, the Africa, off the place when we arrived—the same that seized the Mary Lowell. Neuvitas is guarded on every side by Spanish soldiers, no persons being allowed to leave the town. One or two even of our fellows who were going to take a walk in the country were prevented from doing so by "bristling bayonets." The

Spainards appear to be very fond of shedding blood when there is little or no danger every rebel taken by them being shot. I heard for example, one case mentioned by an English engineer belonging to the Africa of a Scotchman who had lived in Cuba upwards of twelve years, and who was rolling home one night rather the worst of liquor she ting out "Viva Céspedes," the great rebel general, when he was arrested and the next morning summarily shot. Nobody appears to have thought it necessary to make any inquiry into the matter, although it is quite certain that his expression of disloyalty arose simply from his being drunk. On the other hand, the rebels behave quite as cruelly to the Spainards, for they have a practice of binding them tightly by the arms and legs to young trees, which are bent down for the purpose, and which are then suddenly let go, resulting in a literal rending of the limbs from the body. It is difficult to obtain anything like the truth concerning the progress of the revolution, for the Spanish authorities "cook" the accounts of engagements, so as to suit themselves. The Catalonian Volunteers who came out from Spain to fight were sent to the front at once to re-lay the railways which the rebels had destroyed, much to their disgust. Cholera, yellow fever, &c., are helping the latter a great deal at present, by thinning the ranks of the Volunteers and soldiers; so that at present all decided operations are in abeyance, at all events until the sickly and rainy season is over, which will be about November. The individual who represents the English at Neuvitas is a Spainard and a man of considerable property. He owned a small steam yacht, which was one day boarded by a boat's crew from the Africa, when it was discovered that he was carrying despatches between the rebels. His boat was seized and himself put in prison, and it was only owing to our intervention that he was not shot at once, but we got an order for him to be sent to Havanna to be tried, for which place he was to leave on the 9th. I have not yet heard how his case was decided. There was a young English engineer in prison at the same time for a similar offence.

The 21st was our last date from Havanna. All was quite there then, but the volunteers were under arms, the soldiers having gone to the front. I should mention that nearly every man in Havanna is a volunteer, but I should not at all like to say that it follows they are all loyal to Spain. They are a large body and seem to do just as they please, and even go so far as to choose their own commandant. The Captain General of Cuba displeased them a short time since, so they made up their minds to kill him, but he contrived to elude them and fly. One night, too, as late as twelve o'clock, a colonel of engineers in the Spanish service, came on board our ship at Havanna to escape from the volunteers. We had to turn him over to the Americans, as we left the next day, and they put him on board the English mail boat to go to Spain via England. This happened some two months since. The Spainards have a large number of ships out here; the Victoria, an ironclad built on the Thames, has been lying at Havanna for the last three months; also the Spanish Admiral's ship for a longer period, and three or four paddle-wheel steamers, the latter going out occasionally to search strangers. When we first came on the coast we were honored once or twice by their running down to us with open ports, guns run out, and crews at quarters, to see who we were, but I think a great deal of it was mere show.