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THE MASSACRE AT THE CEDARS.

BY S. E. DAWSON.

FROM THE *Canadian Monthly* FOR APRIL, 1874.

Nearly one hundred years have elapsed since the Declaration of Independence announced to the world that all hope of reconciliation was over between Great Britain and her revolted colonies, and that the war, which had in reality existed for a year, could cease only by the utter defeat of one of the contending parties. Since that time England has been engaged in deadly strife with more than half the continent of Europe; but even in France the old traditional hatred as well as the memory of more recent conflicts has died out, while in the United States the smouldering embers of strife have been sedulously fanned by the writers of school-books, and grave historians even have compiled weighty octavos—not with that careful sifting of evidence which becomes the judge, but with the heat of an editor writing leading articles for an election contest, and fearful of conceding one small point to the credit of his adversaries.

As for the English writers upon this period, they have, with few exceptions, adopted the statements of the American histories. If they knew of original authorities, they have not taken the trouble to consult them. Earl Stanhope alone seems to have based his work on original documents, and has thus been able, in some measure, to dispel the cloud of assertion which had so long obscured the truth of history. His sober style is not attractive to the general reader, from the absence of those rhetorical flights which enliven the pages of more popular historians.

It has thus come to be taken generally for granted that, in this struggle, truth and justice were entirely with the Congress; and that, moreover, the war was waged, upon the English side, with ferocity and perfidy, but, upon the American side, with calm and forbearing valour. The well-meaning King George has been a butt for the sneers of many who could not understand his sincere and

honest character. That which in others was firmness and perseverance, in him became stupid obstinacy, and upon him has been sought to be placed the responsibility of a war, which was as popular throughout England at the commencement as any war has ever been.

In matters political, truth is not a necessary condition of success. A certain amount of plausibility is required; but, when the popular mind is in a condition of expectant excitement, a small proportion of truth goes a long way. The manifestos put forth from time to time by Congress had that plausibility, combined with the hardihood of assertion which is so invaluable in partisanship. The Declaration of Independence is a document admirable in its literary style. It mingles its modicum of undoubted colonial grievance with a rhetoric so mournful, rising through many flights of imagination to a height of injury so great, that it remains a model of political composition unequalled to the present day.

There are some counts in that long indictment which, as they are connected with Canada, are specially interesting to Canadians. Among these is the clause, "that he (the King) has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions." On reading this, who can fail to conclude that the King was the first to resolve upon the employment of Indian allies, and that the colonists revolted at such an enormity? Nevertheless, it is the fact that the colonies were the first to invoke the aid of the Indians, and it was not until they found that the weight of the Indian alliance was going against them, that they discovered the merciless nature of their "known rules of warfare."

While none but the New England leaders dreamed of war, and long before a shot had

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THE MASSACRE AT THE CEDARS.

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been fired, efforts had been made to enlist the Indians on the side of the colonies. This will appear from a comparison of some of the documents published in the "American Archives," with the dates of the early events of the war. At Lexington, on April 19th, 1775, the first blood was shed. On June 17th, 1775, was fought the battle of Bunker's Hill. In September of the same year the continental army invaded Canada. St. Johns was captured two months afterward, and Montreal was occupied until the middle of June, 1776. On July 4th, 1776, appeared the Declaration of Independence, and only five weeks previously occurred the event stigmatised as the "Massacre of the Cedars."

There was at first, upon the English side, some hesitation about enlisting Indians. The Earl of Dartmouth, under date, London, Aug. 2nd, 1775, writes to General Gage, that "the steps which you say the rebels have taken for calling in the assistance of the Indians leave no room to hesitate, upon the propriety of your pursuing the same measure." A letter, signed "A Soldier," which appeared in the London papers on October 22nd, 1776, refers to General Carleton's aversion to employ them, and urges their enlistment. Among the colonists, General Schuyler alone seems to have hesitated; no suspicion of wrong in the matter appears to have existed in the mind of any one else. The alliance of the great Iroquois Confederacy was eagerly courted, and for a long time the colonial party thought that all the Indians, even the Mohawks at Caughnawaga, would side with them.* Eventually the Mohawks, Senecas, Cayugas and Onondagas sided with the Crown, but the Oneidas and Tuscaroras espoused the cause of the colonists. In the east, so doubtful was the conduct of the Micmacs, that the settlers at Halifax were forbidden to sell them powder, and they were obliged to resort to the Massachusetts Commissariat. The first Indians who took up arms for the British were the Abenakis.† A small number of that tribe formed part of the garrison of St. Johns, and in Sept., 1775, joined, not in an attack upon the frontiers of the United States, but in the defence of a frontier town of Canada against an invading enemy.

Long previously, as early as the winter of

* Col. Ethan Allan to the Massachusetts Congress, June 9, 1775.

† Maurault—Histoire des Abenakis.

1774-5, the revolutionary party had been tampering with the Indians of Canada. One of their emissaries, writing from Montreal, gives full details of his visit to the Caughnawaga Indians, and informs the Massachusetts Congress that those Indians had received overtures from Israel Putnam, and had assured him in reply that, if they took up arms at all, it would be against the King.‡ During the whole of the winter of 1774-5, and the following summer, emissaries from the colonies were busy among the Indians of Canada and Acadia. In the Colony of Massachusetts the Indians of Stockbridge were enrolled as minute men, and each received from the Provincial Congress a blanket and a ribbon for "taking up the hatchet" against Great Britain.§ This people were not, from the fact of their being in Massachusetts, more civilized than others of their race, because in their reply to President Hancock,|| they ask only to be shown their enemy, and hope that no regulations may be made to prevent them "fighting after the manner of their forefathers." This policy of arming the Indians was therefore adopted even before Lexington. In an Address of the same Congress to the Mohawk tribe, dated April 4th, 1775, it as clearly appears. The Address is long, but, as it is typical of the style of many others, a few extracts are given:

"BROTHERS—Our fathers in Great Britain tell us our lands and houses and cattle and money are not our own—that we ourselves are not our own men but their servants. * * * * Brothers—We used to send our vessels on the Great Lake, whereby we were able to get clothes and what we needed for ourselves and you, but such has lately been their conduct that we cannot, they have told us we shall have no more guns nor powder to use and kill our wolves and other game nor to send to you. * * * How can you live without powder and guns? * * * Brothers—We think it our duty to inform you of our danger, and desire you to give notice to all your kindred, as we fear they will attempt to cut our throats, and if you should allow them to do that, there will nobody remain to keep them from you. We, therefore, earnestly desire you to *whet your hatchet*

‡ J. Brown to the Committee of Correspondence, March 29, 1775.

§ Address of Congress to the Indians of Stockbridge, April 1, 1775.

|| Address of the Stockbridge Indians to Massachusetts Congress, April 11, 1775.

and be prepared with us to defend our liberties and lives. Brothers—We humbly beseech that God, who lives above and does what is right here below to enlighten your mind, &c., &c.”

There is throughout all these Addresses to the Indians a strain of devout aspiration, which, although misplaced as regards the writers, testifies that the people addressed possessed some moral qualities corresponding thereto. This Address surpassed the rest, however, in containing a theological clause. “Brothers: They have made a law to establish the religion of the Pope in Canada which lies so near you. We much fear some of your children may be induced instead of worshipping the only true God to pay his due to images made with their own hands.”

In the whirl of excitement just preceding the first actual hostilities, so tender a solicitude for the souls of youthful Mohawks is really touching. It is a relief not to meet it in the other Addresses in so painful a form; although the same vein of subdued piety runs through all. The Micmac Indians, in one of their Addresses, dated Feb. 5, 1776, are very grateful to this same Congress for “having provided them with ammunition and provisions and having permitted them to have a Priest to pray Almighty God to make them strong to oppose the wicked people of Old England.” At first sight such a permission seems hardly fair to the Micmac children; but, upon closer examination, it appears probable that the love for Mohawk souls arose from the circumstance that the emissary who carried the Address was the Rev. Samuel Kirkland, missionary to the Oneidas. He worked zealously among the Mohawks in an underhand way; but, to do him justice, not without qualms of conscience. He writes in the following strain. He is complaining that Col. Johnson, the resident Commissioner, interferes with him.* “He,” Col. Johnson, “is unreasonably jealous of me. All he has against me, I suppose to be this: a suspicion that I have interpreted to the Indians the doings of the Continental Congress. * * I confess to you, gentlemen, that I have been guilty of this, if it be any transgression. The Indians found out that I had received the abstracts of the said Congress and insisted on knowing the contents. I could not deny them, notwithstanding my cloth, though in all

* Rev. Samuel Kirkland to the Committee of Correspondence at Albany, June 9, 1775.

other respects I have been extremely cautious not to meddle in matters of a political nature. I apprehend my interpreting the doings of Congress to a number of their Sachems has done more real service to the cause of the country, or the cause of truth and justice, than five hundred pounds in presents would have effected. If you think proper you may acquaint your Provincial Congress with the contents of this, but you must be cautious in exposing my name.” Mr. Kirkland concludes by “wishing them the blessings of peace, and that we may all be disposed to acquiesce in the Divine Government.” He does not wish his name divulged at a place so near to Col. Johnson as Albany, but during the two months previous he had with him the Address of the Massachusetts Congress who were clever enough to insert the clause about the Pope and the images to quiet his searchings of heart. Later on he writes in depressed spirits: “The pretended friendship and boasted fidelity of these Mohawks seem to turn out mere delusion and perfidy.”* He still has hopes, however, that the Caughnawagas and Oneidas will remain firm. His schemes eventually failed among the Mohawks and Caughnawagas; three hundred dollars, however, were voted to him by the Continental Congress for his expenses,† and he was appointed as missionary and political agent among the Six Nations, on a salary.

The efforts of the Massachusetts Congress among the Eastern Indians were equally early, equally promising at the commencement, and equally futile in the result. On the 15th of May, 1775, an Address was sent to the Penobscot, St. John and Micmac Indians,‡ (the latter living close to the back settlements of Nova Scotia,) offering them “such clothes and warlike stores as they might need” and, as a matter of course, praying that God might bless them and prevent their enemies from hurting them;” informing them at the same time that the Stockbridge Indians had enlisted on the side of Congress, and offering to enlist them. Deputations from these tribes promising aid were received by the Provincial Congress on June 15, 1775, and by General Washington on January 31, 1776. The General addressed

* Rev. Samuel Kirkland to Gen. Schuyler, March, 1776.

† Vote of Continental Congress, Nov. 11, 1775.

‡ Address of Provincial Congress to the Eastern Indians, May 15, 1775.

a letter to the Micmacs in February of the same year. Eventually all these efforts failed; the Massachusetts Congress were informed by one of their emissaries in the East, under date of July 27, 1776,* that he had worked all summer in vain, and that the tribes would remain neutral; whereupon he was ordered to pay back into the Provincial chest thirty pounds which had been given him for distribution among the Indians.

The Congress of New Hampshire adopted the same tactics. On June 23, 1775, Colonel Bailey issued an address to the Northern Indians (among whom were the St. Francis and other Canadian Indians living north of that colony,) offering them inducements to enlist, reminding them, after the style common in the Indian Addresses, that "they must all meet before God," and telling them that the "British do not think there is a God in Heaven to punish them." The addresses of Washington and Schuyler are, as might be expected from their open and manly character, free from these affectations of religion; still all are striking commentaries on the Indian clause of the subsequent Declaration of Independence. In fact, in New England there never seems to have been a symptom of hesitation as to the propriety of engaging the Indians. The Congress of Massachusetts had a special committee on Indian affairs,† which was instructed to keep its business secret. When, on May 12, a proposition to raise two companies of Indians was before the house, it was referred to this committee as a matter of course. Before a blow had been struck in the North, some Canadian Indians who applied were enlisted by them into the Continental Army, and a month's pay in advance voted by the House of Representatives, who notify General Washington of the fact, without any special explanation.‡ The Oneida Indians, while informing the New Englanders of their intention to remain neutral, add their opinion that the New England Indians ought not to be swept into the conflict; but, whatever doubts might have existed elsewhere, there were none in Massachusetts or Connecticut. Col. Ethan Allan, who had just taken Ticonderoga by surprise, writes an Address to the Canadian Indians, from which the following is an extract:—

* Thos. Fletcher to Massachusetts Congress.

† Votes of Massachusetts Congress, April 12, 1775.

‡ Vote of House of Representatives, August 21, 1775.

"Head Quarters of the Army,
"Crown Point, May 24, 1775.

"By advice of council of officers, I recommend our trusty and well-beloved friend and brother, Captain Abraham Nimham, of Stockbridge, as our ambassador of peace, to our good brother Indians of the four tribes.

* * * Loving brothers and friends: I want to have your warriors come and see me, and help me fight the King's regular troops. You know they stand all along close together, rank and file, and my men fight so as Indians do, and I want your warriors to join with me and my warriors like brothers, and ambush the regulars; if you will I will give you money, blankets, tomahawks, knives, paint and anything there is in the army, just like brothers; and I will go with you into the woods to scout, and my men and your men will sleep together, eat and drink together and fight Regulars, because they first killed our brothers and will fight against us; therefore I want our brother Indians to help us fight; for I know Indians are good warriors and can fight well in the bush."

A copy of this precious production was sent by the Colonel to the General Assembly of Connecticut, for he "thought it advisable that the Honorable Assembly should be informed of all our politics." It elicited no special remark, yet, more than a year after, these very men join in denouncing King George for being about to employ the "merciless Indian savages."

Early in May, 1775, the Second Continental Congress met. It also soon appointed a Committee upon Indian Affairs, which was instructed to keep its proceedings secret. On July 1st a public resolution was passed, "that in case any agent of the ministry shall induce the Indian tribes or any of them to commit actual hostilities against these colonies or to enter into an offensive alliance with the British troops, thereupon the colonies ought to avail themselves of an alliance with such Indian nations as will enter into the same, to oppose such British troops and their Indian allies." This resolution is very conclusive proof that up to that time the British had made no Indian enlistments or alliances. Upon Oct. 23rd, 1775, a delegation from the Continental Congress met General Washington at Head Quarters at Cambridge, and it was then "agreed that those Indians (of the St. Francis, Stockbridge and St. John's tribes) or others may be called on in case of real neces-

sity and that giving them presents is both suitable and proper." This principle was affirmed by resolution of the Congress in the same words on Dec. 2nd of the same year, nor was any reproach even then hinted at the British commanders. On Nov. 8th, 1775, Arnold writes to Washington from his camp at Point Levi, that "he had been joined by forty savages." On May 25th, 1776, "a number of deputies from four of the Six Nations" were reported to Congress as "arrived in town." On the same day a resolution was passed "that it is highly expedient to engage the Indians in the service of the United Colonies." On May 31st, the number of Indians to be taken into pay was fixed at 2,000. On June 10th, Congress "authorized General Washington to offer the Indians a reward of —dollars for every commissioned officer, and —dollars for every private soldier of the King's troops they shall take prisoners in the Indian country or on the frontier." And yet with all this before them, that same Congress had the hardihood to charge against the King, upon the 4th of July, "that he has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions." The failure to reduce Quebec, the dissatisfaction of Canadians under "free institutions" and the consequent certainty of an invasion from Canada, had completely altered their views as to their dusky "Brothers."

Returning now to the summer of 1775 we find that Congress had prepared an army under Schuyler, and resolved upon the invasion of Canada. This would have been an impossibility had the great confederacy of the Six Nations been hostile. New England had in vain attempted to gain their assistance, the next best move was to secure their neutrality. Colonel Guy Johnson was Royal Commissioner to the Confederacy, and made no secret of his profound contempt for the self-constituted "Committees of Safety," of Tryon County, in which he lived. He was suspected by all the Revolutionary Committees of inciting the Indians against the colonists. In those days men were seized and imprisoned by improvised political bodies for very slight offences against the dominant party, and rumors were very rife of plots to secure the person of a man who wielded so enormous a power over the Indians. Of such conspiracies Johnson affirmed

that he had the most certain information, and the Mohawks who lived near kept watch over him until he left for Canada. He declared, moreover, that he had used his best efforts to keep the Six Nations neutral. This is probable in itself, because in 1775 most of the middle colonies were confident of a final reconciliation with the King, and this feeling was especially strong in the Province of New York. It was moreover confirmed by the Mohawk Sachems in the grand council at Albany on August 23rd, where the chief men of all the Six Nations met Schuyler and the Commissioners of Congress, and pledged the whole Confederacy to neutrality. Johnson convoked a meeting of the tribes at Oswego during the month of July, out of the reach of colonial politics, and Schuyler was anxious to know what hostile influences he had exerted there. But the Sachems assured him with all the dignity of Iroquois Chiefs that Guy Johnson had advised them to be neutral, as the quarrel did not concern them, and that the council at Oswego was a council of peace. Johnson's first authority from the King to employ Indians was dated in London on August 2nd, and enclosed in a despatch to General Gage at Boston. It could not have reached him before the end of September. Whatever faults moreover of fickleness and cruelty may have been charged against the Indian nations they have never been charged with public falsehood in solemn councils. After the council at Oswego, Johnson went to Montreal. An American emissary, the well-known Major John Brown, with four assistants, was then in Canada, obtaining information about the disposition of the Canadians and Indians. He writes to Governor Trumbull on August 14th that Johnson had arrived at Montreal with a party of 300, mostly tenants, and some Indians. It is not likely that Johnson attempted to engage the Indians in any alliance before he arrived at Montreal. He was a King's officer, and had no authority from England to do so for many months after. The skirmish at Lexington had irritated more than aroused the English Ministry, who supposed the insurrection was nothing more than an exacerbation of the chronic insubordination of the Boston people. If Johnson had attempted to stir up an Indian war in the back settlements of New York and Pennsylvania, he would have interfered with the negotiations with the other colonies and would have done serious injury to the King's cause among the many loyalists who resided

there; and besides he would have run serious risk of being disowned by the British Government. Arriving at Montreal, however, he found the Governor in great straits from the refusal of the Canadians to assist in defending the country against the invasion which began to threaten. Then he convened a council at Caughnawaga at which he solicited Indian aid; but the Americans had been before him. The Caughnawagas would not stir, or receive the war belt. It was at this council that an ox was roasted whole and a pipe of wine drunk, sometimes figured in American histories under the heading "the Indians of Caughnawaga feast on a Bostonian and drink his blood." The Indians from the West who remained with Johnson were few in number. Carleton, moreover, positively forbade them to cross the border and his commands were obeyed.

Schuyler had scarcely finished negotiating with the Indians when a circumstance occurred which gave him much anxiety. With his troops at Crown Point was a Captain Remember Baker, of the Green Mountain Boys, whom he had frequently employed as a scout. This man, with four others, started off on a scouting party into Canada without orders of any kind, and, having disembarked, he saw from the shore a party of five Indians in a boat.* He attempted to fire, but his gun missed fire, and he, putting his head from behind a tree where he stood to hammer his flint, was instantly shot. His party then fired into the boat, and killed two of the Indians. The remainder escaped. This was the first blood shed upon the Northern frontier, and as it turned out that the Indians were friendly Caughnawagas, messengers were at once despatched to the Six Nations to explain, and a deputation from the Six Nations was sent at Schuyler's request to Caughnawaga to apologize. This caused a few from that village to join, for a short time, the garrison at St. Johns.

Schuyler's mind being released from all apprehension as to his rear, he was able to move for Isle aux Noix upon the 31st August and 1st of September. Upon the 2nd he issued his proclamation to the Canadian people in which he recounts his treaty of friendship with the Six Nations, apologizes for the killing of the Indians, and announces presents for the Caughnawagas and other Canadian tribes. He writes to Washington

* Schuyler's despatches, August 31st.

that his spies inform him that Carleton is endeavoring to incite the Indians, but that he will have no success with the Canada tribes, though he may be joined by some of the more remote nations. He also informs Washington that he has some Indians with him and will have no hesitation in employing any more who offer.

All the despatches and reports of the American officers testify to the good understanding between them and the Canadian Indians. Ethan Allan writes on July 12th "that they are all friendly;" Schuyler is "sure that Carleton cannot move them." Washington writes at a later date, "that the Caughnawagas promised to join Schuyler's army whenever wanted." Major Brown finds them everywhere friendly. Lewis, a Caughnawaga Chief, gives evidence before the Massachusetts Congress to the same effect. The various reports of Livingston and other Canadians in correspondence with Schuyler bear the same testimony. They inform him that Carleton has only 40 Indians at St. Johns, and afterwards that even these have left him. Some of the St. Francis Indians were already enrolled in the Continental army. In order to understand this it must be considered that there could be very little sympathy between regular soldiers, such as Carleton and his red-coats, with the style of campaigning practised by the Indians. Men like Ethan Allan who could "ambush and scout," who could "eat and drink and sleep" with them were much more likely to influence them than a proud and strict disciplinarian like Carleton, and so it happened that excepting a few Abénakis and some Ottawas and Algonquins from the North, the greater number of Canadian Indians in 1775 were either openly hostile to the British flag or neutral in the struggle. And yet, although these things were well known, that tissue of misrepresentations had commenced which partisan historians have woven into the web of history. An officer of the Continental army writes of the Indians on the English side, † "they appear barbarous to the last degree, not content with scalping, they dug up our dead and mangled them in the most shocking manner." This is only hearsay; but he adds with the confidence of an eye witness, "I had the pleasure to see two of them scalped as a retaliation." It depends only upon the side he takes whether the Indian is, as Col. Allan

† Letter from Isle aux Noix, Sept. 17.

endearingly calls him, "a loving brother and friend," or a "merciless and remorseless savage."

The American army, which had been compelled to retire to Isle aux Noix, commenced its final advance on the 17th of September. The chief command was transferred to Montgomery, and with a force of 2,000 men and a number of field guns and mortars, he proceeded to invest St. Johns.† Detachments were sent out to seize the communications, and for such purposes the Indians were found useful.

While success was crowning all the enterprises of the colonists, Carleton met with nothing but reverses and disappointments. Many of the Canadians joined the American army, but few, and these almost exclusively from among the Seigneurs, gave him any aid. Ethan Allan had 250 Canadians on the Richelieu.§ Livingstone and Duggan, the latter a Canadian sympathizer, had a force of 300 men co-operating with Montgomery,|| and Colonel Timothy Bedell, of New Hampshire, commanded a considerable body of Canadians and Indians with which he guarded Longueuil and Laprairie.¶ As Bedell had charge of the outposts to the north, nearly all the Indians were placed under his command. Carleton's only reliable force was 800 regular troops including the garrisons of Quebec, Chambly, and St. Johns. The British inhabitants of Canada were few in number and, although some volunteered as militiamen and did good service in capturing Ethan Allan in his rash attempt on Montreal, they were not sufficiently numerous to give important aid. At Lachine was Colonel Guy Johnson with a mixed force of about 500 men, consisting of 300 of his own tenants, who had left New York to join him, some Canadians, and a few Indians. Brant, who had acted as his secretary, some of his own personal retainers, and a few Mohawk young men, who had refused to obey the commands of their Sachems, were with him. The rest of the Indians were from distant places, mostly Ottawas and Algonquins. With so small a force at his disposal, and hearing of the departure of Arnold's expedition for Quebec, Carleton could make no stand against the enemy. Abandoning

Montreal, he started in a small boat for Quebec, just in time to secure that fortress, the last hope of British rule, and narrowly escaping capture on the way. Small garrisons of British troops yet remained at Oswegatchie, Niagara, Detroit, and some other posts in the West, but, with these exceptions, the whole of Canada was in possession of the Continental army.

In order fully to understand this sudden reverse, it is requisite to remember that an attack upon Canada in force was never anticipated by Carleton. Even as regards the Continental Congress, it was the result of a very sudden change of purpose. Congress had resolved on June 1st, 1775, "that no expedition or incursion ought to be undertaken or made by any colony or body of colonists against or into Canada." This resolution was come to in order to allay the apprehensions of the middle and southern members, who were exceedingly opposed to any course which would prevent that reconciliation which they ardently desired. With this view a resolution was passed, that "this Congress has nothing more in view than the defence of these colonies." The New Englanders knew well where they were going, and were glad to obstruct openly or covertly every path which might lead to a compromise; but the middle colonies, and especially New York, were forced step by step along the road to revolution by the astuteness of the eastern delegates and the blundering pride of the British Ministry. Consequently Carleton was taken by surprise, when, five weeks later, the northern army began to gather. Then in July he began his efforts among the Indians, only to find that he had been outmanœuvred. The Indians, even of Caughnawaga, would not join him, and we must bear in mind that the previous resolve of Congress on July 1st would completely justify him in soliciting their aid in the defence of Canada.

It is not the object of this paper to recount in detail the doings of the American army in Canada. The peasantry were badly treated, often compelled to furnish supplies at the point of the bayonet, and then to receive continental paper in payment; the clergy were neglected and ill-used, and property was continually taken by violence in exchange for unsigned or illegible orders on the Commissariat, which were refused payment even in paper. Arbitrary arrests were made, which still further disgusted the higher class of the

† Schuyler to Continental Congress, Sept. 19.

§ Ethan Allan to General Montgomery from St. Ours, September 20th.

|| Schuyler to Congress.

¶ Col. Bedell to New Hampshire Committee, Oct. 27.

inhabitants. "The licentiousness of our troops," says Schuyler, in a despatch to Washington, "is not easy to be described."* Colonel Hazen, in command at Montreal, sums up the whole conduct of the army by stating in one of his despatches, "We have brought about ourselves by mismanagement what Governor Carleton himself could never effect."

During this winter the employment of the Indians was very frequently discussed in the despatches between the Generals and Congress, as well as between themselves. "The Caughnawaga Indians now here," writes Washington, "are embarrassing. My embarrassment does not proceed so much from the impropriety of encouraging these people to depart from their neutrality (accepting their voluntary offer rather) as from the expense which probably may follow."† A little later he writes, "I have now the pleasure to inform you that our Caughnawaga friends have put the matter upon the footing I wished, that is to join the forces in Canada whenever you shall call for their assistance."‡

It will be seen at once that there is no question of principle; it is one of expense simply. Schuyler writes in reply "that, since Montreal was taken, the hauteur of the Indians is much diminished, for they see they can get their supplies only from the Americans." He has no need of their services, and adds, "the expense we are at in the Indian department is amazing." Writing to Hancock, President of Congress, on Feb. 23, he repeats the argument as to expense, and adds, "that the expense will be much more when they consider themselves in our service, nor would their intervention be of much consequence, unless we could procure that of the other nations. I am very confident that we should be justified in employing the savages, since the Ministry have made attempts to engage them against us, and if no other consideration prevented, I should be for it, but besides the reasons I have given General Washington, I may add that they will consider our employing them is of necessity, and they will look upon themselves of more consequence than they really are, and rise in their demands upon us." Here then is the real reason of

the resolve of Congress of March 8, 1776: "That Indians be not employed as soldiers in the armies of the United Colonies before the tribes to which they belong shall, in a National Council, held in the customary manner, have consented thereto; nor then without express approbation of Congress." Everything then looked quiet in Canada. The Commissioners had gone on to Montreal to complete its union with the colonies, by forming a Provincial Congress, and quieting any uneasiness which might have arisen. There was no need of Indian aid, and to enlist them would be to give them regular pay. What Congress desired was the alliance of the united Six Nations, and not the enlistment of a portion of them to be paid as Continental troops, and to that end their emissaries still laboured.

While such negotiations were going on around Lake Champlain, Col. Butler, at Niagara, was moving the minds of the Six Nations from the extreme west, where dwelt the Senecas, always favourably disposed towards the King. At Detroit also similar influences were at work. The influence of the Canadians began also to be felt among the Indians more and more as they experienced the exactions of the American army; and as it became evident that Carleton would be reinforced and the siege of Quebec raised. The Indians themselves were neglected by the American commanders in Canada, who considered it certain that Quebec would fall before relief could arrive, and the services of the Indians would not be needed. As the spring opened Congress saw the necessity of further exertions, but the winter passed in apparent security.

Early in the spring, in order to guard against any attack from the west, the Americans had built a fort at the village of the Cedars, a spot better suited than the Coteau for commanding the whole channel of the St. Lawrence. The river there is very narrow and, the islands being small, the whole stream can be watched from the Cedars to the Cascades, so that not even a canoe could pass unnoticed. Here was posted an important detachment under Col. Timothy Bedell, who, from his experience of the autumn previous at the outposts of the invading army, and in command of the Canadians and Indians, seemed to be a suitable commander for such a post.

Early in May the British garrisons of the west began to move. Obedient to orders

* Lieut.-Col. Hazen, to General Schuyler, April 1st, 1776. Franklin, Chase and Carroll to President of Congress, May 5th, 1776.

† Washington to Schuyler, Jan. 27th, 1776.

‡ Washington to Schuyler, Feb. 1st, 1776.

from Carleton who, having been reinforced on the opening of navigation, was commencing to act upon the offensive. Capt. Forster, in command of the British post at Oswegatchie (now Ogdensburg) started upon the 12th of May to attack the post at the Cedars. The American version of the subsequent events is given thus by Bancroft :—

“The detachment from Detroit, under Capt. Forster, composed of forty of the eighth regiment, a hundred Canadians, and several hundred Indians, from the North-west, appeared in sight of the Cedars. Bedell, its Commander, committing the fort to Major Butterfield, deserted, under pretence of soliciting a reinforcement. On his arrival at Montreal, Arnold, on the 16th, detached Major Henry Sherburne, of Rhode Island, with one hundred and forty men, to relieve the fort; but before he could make his way through the enemy to the Cedars, Butterfield, on the 19th, though he had two field-pieces and sufficient ammunition and officers and men willing to defend the post, covered like a craven under a dread of the Indians, and after sustaining no other attack than from musketry, surrendered himself and his garrison prisoners at discretion.

“The next day, as Sherburne, ignorant of the surrender, came to the entrance of a wood, which was about five miles from the fort, he was attacked while still in open ground by an enemy who fought under cover of trees. After a skirmish of an hour, the Americans were intercepted in their attempt at a retreat, and more than a hundred were taken prisoners. The savages, who lost in the battle a great warrior of the Seneca tribe, immediately stripped them almost naked, tomahawking or scalping the wounded men, so they lost twenty-eight wounded and killed in battle or murdered afterwards in cold blood, in violation of the express terms of surrender as well as of humanity.

“At the news of the double disaster, Arnold moved with about seven hundred men to recover the captives by force; but as the British officer declared a massacre of the prisoners, four hundred and seventy-four in number, would be the inevitable consequence of an attack, he consented to obtain the release of them all, except four captains, who were retained as hostages, by promising the return of an equal number of British prisoners. The engagement led to mutual criminalities; the Americans preferred a counter-

claim for the punishment of those who had massacred some of the prisoners.”*

It may be well to observe that this transaction took place wholly in Canada, in defence of our invaded frontier, not in attack upon any of the colonies. Bancroft could not have consulted many original authorities upon the real facts, or he would not have stated that the British force came from Detroit. He has evidently contented himself with the report of the Committee of Congress upon the matter, which makes no mention of the place whence Forster started, and with the garrison gossip at Montreal, which magnified Forster's force to one thousand Indians and all the troops of Niagara and Detroit.

The indignation in Canada at the action of Congress in refusing to ratify the cartel signed by their General was very great, but Sir Guy Carleton felt especially aggrieved at the charges made by the Committee of Congress which inquired into the matter. The Committee, after recounting the facts as given by Bancroft, charge Capt. Forster with putting the prisoners under the care of the savages, who plundered them, stripped them, shot some, roasted others, and abandoned several upon an island to perish of cold and hunger. For these causes Congress refused to give up British prisoners in exchange for those sent home from the Cedars, adding, as a further reason, that the prisoners General Arnold had promised to exchange, were not in his possession but in the control of the Congress, who might ratify or disclaim his acts. They stated, however, that if the British Government would deliver up Capt. Forster, with all the aiders and abettors of this “horrid murder,” and would make restitution for the plunder, they would then release an equivalent number of prisoners.

This charge of perfidy and murder was published on the 10th of July, 1776, four days after the proclamation of the Declaration of Independence. It was exceedingly useful in keeping up the fever of hostility to the Crown, and, although entirely false, did duty extremely well in the place of truth. On the other hand Capt. Forster and all the British officers published a detailed statement of the facts as they really occurred. This statement was corroborated by Rev. Father Detarlaye, the Priest at Oka, who had charge of many of the prisoners, and by the hostages detained for

* This passage may be found in the Index of the English edition of Bancroft, under the heading, “The Indians of Canada defeat and butcher the Americans.”

the fulfilment of the cartel, who all by letter solemnly denied that any such outrages had taken place and, on the contrary, affirmed that the terms of the cartel had been honourably fulfilled by the British officers, and that the prisoners had been treated with great consideration.

It happened that, at the very time these events were occurring at the Cedars, a committee of five of the Continental Congress at Philadelphia were engaged in conference with General Washington, Major-General Gates and Brigadier-General Mifflin. They made a report to Congress on the 25th of May, and this report could not have been in any way influenced by the transactions at the Cedars, for the news of that disaster reached Montreal on the 27th of May and, as expresses went slowly in those days, the letter of the Commissioners giving the first imperfect information of the affair did not reach Congress until the 6th of June. The opinions of the chiefs of the American army and an influential Committee of Congress, upon the proper mode of conducting warfare, cannot fail to be an instructive comment upon what Captain Forster was at that very time, unknown to them, actually engaged in doing. Among many other recommendations occur the following:—"That the Commissioners at Albany be directed to use their utmost efforts to procure the assistance of the Indians to undertake the reduction of Niagara, and that as an inducement so to do, they engage, on behalf of the Congress, to pay them £50 Pennsylvanian currency, for every soldier of the Garrison they take and bring to Head Quarters or to the said Commissioners, *and the free plunder of the Garrison,*" and "that the Commissioners in the Middle Department be directed to use their best endeavours to procure the assistance of the Indians under their care; that they prevail upon them, if possible, to undertake the reduction of Detroit upon the same terms as the Commissioners at Albany are directed to engage the Indians against Niagara."

These recommendations by officers of such high rank were singularly enough carried out in Canada, the names only being changed. On the 12th of May Captain Forster left Oswegatchie.* He took with him the whole garrison consisting of 2 lieutenants, 2 ser-

* Authentic narrative of the facts relating to the exchange of prisoners at the Cedars, signed by the officers of the 8th Regiment and of the Volunteers. London, 1777.

geants, 2 corporals, 1 drummer and 33 privates of the 8th Regiment, 11 English and Canadian volunteers and 160 Indians. The Indians, who were under the immediate command of the Chevalier Lorimier, consisted of Iroquois, Missisagues, and a number from the village of the Lake of Two Mountains (now Oka), who were hunting in the neighbourhood of the Fort. On the 14th he arrived at St. Regis where 54 Indians of that village joined the expedition. On the 18th he arrived within a few miles of the fort at the Cedars, then held by Major Butterfield with 390 Continental troops. The same morning a detached party of Indians brought in a prisoner and the scalp of a soldier whom they had killed; and the whole party appearing before the fort summoned it to surrender. The Americans, after taking three hours for consideration, demanded to be allowed to quit the fort with their arms. This was refused and the attack commenced. Some houses affording cover, the attacking party approached within 150 yards of the fort, but having no cannon were obliged to content themselves with a scattering fire at whatever appeared. On the morning of the 19th Mons. de Montigny with 30 Canadians joined Captain Forster; but, as at the same time information arrived that a reinforcement from the American garrison at Montreal was approaching, Mons. de Montigny with his 30 men was ordered back to harass their march. In the meantime, on the 19th at 4 o'clock, Major Butterfield surrendered, stipulating only for the lives of his soldiers† and the clothes upon their backs. These terms were obtained with difficulty by Captain Forster, for the Indians (to use the words of the Select Committee of Congress) thought they had a right to the "*free plunder of the garrison*" and the ransom of their proportion of the prisoners. When they saw the garrison marching out with packs they were much discontented and in the evening, before the prisoners could be lodged in the barracks, some few lost their watches and money.

While these events were occurring at the village of Cedars news arrived that a detachment was advancing to relieve the fort. This was Major Sherborne's party, which having retreated was again marching forward, and had landed at Quinchien, now Vaudreuil. Upon the morning of the 20th Monsieur Lorimier with 80 Indians and Mons. Mauffer with 18 Canadians started to reinforce

† Articles of Capitulation in American Archives.

De Montigny; but, falling in about noon with Sherborne's party, attacked it with great vigor. The Canadian party being under cover the smallness of their numbers was not suspected, and after a short skirmish having outflanked their adversaries and killed some of them (about 5 or 6), they made prisoners of all the rest but a few who took to the woods and were afterwards captured. The surrender was very unexpected and sudden. De Montigny had not arrived to take part in the fight. No stipulation or capitulation of any kind was made, but the detachment surrendered themselves unconditionally as prisoners to this small party consisting of 98 men, 80 of whom were Indians.

It is necessary to distinguish clearly between these two events. First, the capitulation, with stipulations, of the garrison at the Cedars to Captain Forster, on the 19th; and second, the capture on the following day without stipulation of 97 prisoners in an engagement fought six miles away by a party consisting nearly altogether of Indians.

During the skirmish a false report of the defeat of their detachment arrived at the Cedars, and it required all the energies of Captain Forster and his small party of regular soldiers to keep the Indians quiet. There were more prisoners than men to guard them, and the Indians feared that during the attack, which they expected every moment, the prisoners would revolt. In spite of Forster's exertions some few were stripped and threatened, but not one was injured. The parties under Lorimier, Maurer and De Montigny soon arrived and relieved him of all anxiety for the surrendered garrison.

New difficulties, however, arose concerning the prisoners taken at Quinchien. These the Indians claimed as theirs, taken in battle by themselves, and as they had lost a leading chief of the Senecas in the engagement, they were set upon putting some of their prisoners to death. This the British officers resisted, and they succeeded at last in buying at a high price nearly all the prisoners. The few remaining were afterwards ransomed by Captain Forster at St. Regis, on his retreat, with the exception of two who remained of their own accord with the Indians. Those captives, however, which they took at Quinchien, the Indians would and did plunder and strip; but the murdering and the roasting were pure and simple fabrications for the purpose of stirring up the resentment of the American people against the King.

Forster now extended his plan and resolved upon securing a footing on the Island of Montreal, and upon advancing from thence perhaps to Montreal itself. He, therefore, on the 22nd, sent De Montigny forward with 50 Canadians and 20 Indians as far as St. Anne's. There De Montigny took possession of his own house upon the end of the Island. Two hundred and fifty prisoners were placed in his charge. All the officers were sent over the lake to the little village now called Oka; where they were placed under the care of the priests, who took the wounded into their own Presbytery, and fed and lodged the others with all that the village afforded. It would not, even at the present day, be a very luxurious abode for a large number of men. It was simply an Indian village, but the prisoners did not want for food, and were secure from insult under the care of the priests. The circumstances were unprecedented. Usually the number of prisoners is small compared with the number of captors, but here were nearly 500 prisoners upon the hands of a party of 41 regular soldiers and a variable number of Canadians and Indians, at no one time exceeding in the aggregate 500 strong. The situation was the more difficult, as Capt. Forster's plan was to press on for Montreal, which he did, leaving De Montigny to look after the prisoners.

Arrived within three miles of Lachine, Forster found a body of six hundred Continental troops under Arnold entrenched, and with six pieces of artillery. Friendly advices arrived from Montreal that the enemy were calling in their outposts, that 200 men were already on the march, and that before twenty-four hours Arnold would have 1,500 men. Although Forster's party had by that time been joined by volunteers, and amounted to 500 men, he decided, upon hearing such news, to retreat as far as the Cedars, but he could not leave all his prisoners to be recaptured by Arnold, so they were all collected and taken over to Vaudreuil. De Montigny had for greater security moved a number of them to a small island in the lake, and when Arnold arrived at St. Anne's he found every boat carried away, and had the mortification of standing helplessly on the bank and seeing the prisoners moved from the island to the mainland, while his own bateaux with cannon and reinforcements were far behind on Lake St. Louis.

Busy were these early summer days of '76 on the quiet Lake of the Two Mountains.

After a winter's experience of "freedom," the inhabitants rejoiced at the sight of the red coats of the King's soldiers. Canoes darted to and fro, and batteaux laden with prisoners and their guards thronged the still waters of the lake, and gave more than full employment to the boatmen at the portage. Old Fort Senneville, now so picturesque, its ruined masonry clothed with twining green, was then in full activity, guarding the lake and the swift river in rear of the Island with equal vigilance, the spring floods bringing the crowded boats almost to its gates. Opposite, under the shadow of Mount Calvary, was the little Mission Village of the lake, the usual resort of the staid Sulpician or of the silent savage, then thronged with strangers clustering under the trees which overhang the quiet walk sacred to meditative ecclesiastics. The village of Vaudreuil, which has long since resigned its less euphonious name of Quinchien to the little stream which flows near it, was then a place of some consequence, with a church and presbytère, but to the west, the unbroken forest came down close to the banks of the Ottawa, whose solitary waters, since the downfall of the Huron nation, had ceased to be frequented save by the Indians who lived near the distant post of Michilimackinac.

Arnold's arrival at St. Anne's altered the aspect of affairs; and upon the 25th of May De Montigny rejoined Capt. Forster at Vaudreuil. All the prisoners were with them but the officers, and all the anxieties of the Cedars returned. Arnold would shortly attack and the Indians grew very restive and threatening. Acceding then to the requests previously urged by the American officers, Forster concluded with Major Sherborne a cartel of exchange, the second condition of which was, that none of the prisoners should serve against Great Britain during the war. The cartel was signed by the two Majors, Butterfield and Sherborne, and by four Captains, of whom two were among the four afterwards retained as hostages.

Upon the 26th, a party of Arnold's men attacked the British camp at Vaudreuil and were repulsed. Capt. Forster, still fearing for his prisoners, sent the cartel with a flag of truce to Arnold, requesting his signature to it and permission to send away the prisoners through the American lines. Arnold objected to the second clause, which Forster then cancelled. The cartel was then signed and a truce of four days agreed upon, during

which time the prisoners were sent away, the most of them to Caughnawaga but many to Montreal. Capt. Forster then continued his retreat to Oswegatchie.

The Americans were excessively chagrined at this whole affair, as indeed they had reason to be. The officers had behaved badly, for the long winter of garrison life had destroyed the courage and discipline of their army. There was no lack of bravery among these Revolutionary troops, but reverses were required to teach them discipline and reliance upon each other. There was too much of the "public-meeting-of-citizens" sentiment among the men, and the officers were afraid of the constant criticism. That all men are free and equal is a very pretty sentence for a Declaration of Independence, but, in the neighbourhood of an enemy, even of Indians, sentimental politics are better avoided, and those troops will win whose thoughts are only of obedience and duty. This the Americans learned before the war was over. It is a lesson which should be instilled into all militia in time of peace.

The Commissioners of Congress were still in Canada, and to them the idea of breaking the cartel first occurred. General Thompson, then in chief command of the army, writes to Washington, under date June 2nd: "Mr. Chase is of opinion we may with safety break the capitulation made with General Arnold. It is extremely hard to give up all the fruits of the last year's campaign in Canada. *But if engagements of this delicate nature are broken without the fullest testimony to support us, we shall be forever undone.*" The instinct of the soldier is often more true and even more humane than the politics of the civilian.

Having thus narrated in detail the real circumstances of the so-called "Massacre of the Cedars," it will be well to recount some of the assertions of the Committee of Congress to whom the cartel was referred. Their report was long and full of declamation. We have space only for the more important points. After recounting the facts of the investment and surrender at the Cedars mainly as stated by Bancroft they make the following assertions:—

1st. That it does not appear whether the capitulation was verbally or in writing. 2nd. That it was a condition that the baggage should not be plundered. 3rd. That the garrison were stripped of their clothes besides being plundered of their baggage. 4th. That

two of Sherburne's party were put to death on the evening of the capture, and four or five others at different times afterwards. 5th. That one of the garrison who surrendered was killed on the eighth day after surrendered. 6th. That the four hostages who were delivered as security for the fulfilment of the cartel were immediately plundered and stripped by the savages. 7th. That one prisoner was first shot and then, when alive, was roasted, as related by his companion now in possession of the savages, who himself saw the fact. 8th. That others, worn down with famine and cruelty, were exposed on an island naked.

The statement of the British officers and Canadians was drawn up at Montreal in detail, upon the 6th of September. It contains a copy of Captain Forster's letter to Major Butterfield, embodying the terms of surrender in full, and expressly granting only the lives of the garrison and the clothes on their backs. It was never denied that the baggage was plundered. As for the ill-treatment of the prisoners, the Rev. Father Detarlaye, Priest at the Indian Village, had the best of opportunities of knowing the real facts, for the Indians of that village had a large share in these transactions. He writes :

"I can say in praise of the Commander, that he kept the savages in such order that I never saw the laws of humanity better observed. Two or three watches, with as many coats taken, could not be objects of such strong complaints. Did it ever happen among the most civilized nations that the conquered lost no part of their baggage? Did the officers who were at the Lake want bread, fresh meat and fuel? It is true they were not given beds and clothes, because there were none in the place, but the officer who was wounded in the thigh was taken into the house of the missionaries, who furnished him with every comfort."

It has been related that four Captains were retained as hostages for the fulfilment of this cartel. One of them was a brother of General Sullivan, of the Continental army. Indignant at the action of Congress, he writes to his brother, under date, Montreal, August 14th, 1776, in the following strain :—"I am much surprised to hear that the Congress, instead of redeeming us according to the cartel, have not only refused to do it, but have demanded Capt. Forster to be delivered up to answer his conduct in what they are pleased to term the Massacre of the Cedars. I would fain

flatter myself that the Congress would never have thought of such unheard of proceedings, had they not had a false representation of the matter. Do not think that I am under any constraint when I say and call that God who must judge of the truth, to witness that not a man living could have used more humanity than Capt. Forster did after the surrender of the party I belonged to."

Another of the hostages was Captain Bliss. He writes,* at the same date and place, to the Rev. Wm. Emerson, at Concord, in the very warmest praise of Capt. Forster, whom he styles a Christian and a gentleman. He says the reasons of Congress in breaking the cartel are known to none but God and themselves. The third of the four hostages writes to Colonel Morey, in New Hampshire, that ever since he was a prisoner he has been used well, and that there was no massacre or ill-treatment.† He confirms the British account of the purchase of the prisoners from the Indians, and says the cartel was a sacred thing, and was fulfilled by the British.

These letters prove conclusively the falseness of the charges of ill-treatment ; but there is no need of them—the very words of the report bear their own testimony to their falsehood. The report states that as soon as the hostages were delivered up they were handed over to the Indians and plundered and stripped. This painstaking Committee actually thought that the four hostages were new men handed over fresh from the army, whereas they were not *delivered* over, but *retained* in the hands of the British. They were among the captives at Oka, as the signatures of two of them to the cartel witness. If they were "plundered and stripped" when taken, they could not have been "plundered and stripped" a second time.

The Committee were equally unfortunate in their roasting story. "A man," they say, "was first shot and then roasted"—a thing unheard of among Indians. The roasting of captives was always for purposes of torture, and the victims were kept alive as long as possible ; they add, moreover, that the cruelty was seen by his companion, *who was still with the Indians*. Upon this hearsay report, through no one knows how many mouths, the Congress were willing to base so horrible a charge. No name is given, no place, no details. No letter or direct message from this unnamed "man with the Indians" is

* American Archives.

† American Archives.

given. Upon its face it is mere rumour or wilful invention.

The narrative of Bancroft follows the report of Congress in artfully confounding the two events—the capitulation of the Cedars and the capture of Sherburne's party at Quinchien. He says, "28 were killed in battle or murdered in cold blood, in violation of the express terms of surrender." How could there be "terms of surrender" on a battlefield even if the truth of the charge of murder were conceded? If it be true, as he states, that the battle lasted an hour, and the Americans were in the open, 28 is not a large number to be killed in fair fight. Some fighting there certainly was, for there was a wounded officer at Oka, and a Seneca chief was killed, but there was not nearly so much fighting as Major Sherburne desired to make out. He got credit in Philadelphia for much bravery, but such was not the opinion in the Northern army.† As for Butterfield and Bedell, they were cashiered.

Major Butterfield, on his examination, stated that the British officers did what they could to redeem the prisoners. He states that one of his party was murdered the eighth day after they were taken, but can give no name. Captains Estabrook and Wilkins state generally that three or four were murdered, but they cannot tell their names or even the companies they belonged to. It is remarkable that no names were elicited of these murdered men. The whole evidence is vague in the extreme.

Major Sherburne wrote a full account of the proceedings of his detachment, under date New York, June 18. It is evidently upon his authority that Bancroft gives the number at "28 killed in action or murdered in cold blood." He states that he left Montreal with 140 men, but that some were left as guards on the road; "*others were taken sick by the hardships they underwent in crossing the lake,*" so that his detachment was not more than 100 strong when it was attacked. What hardships he might have encountered in fine weather at the end of May in crossing in batteaux from St. Anne's to Vaudreuil, it is hard to say. But if he had, as he says, 100 men, and lost 28, it is very surprising that Capt. Forster accounted for 108 living prisoners of his detachment. The ladies and children who amuse themselves in summer rowing in skiffs on the lake may possibly

† Col. Groaton to Major-Gen. Heath. Ticonderoga, July 31.

know of hardships, but the other point is one of simple arithmetic, and admits of no solution. Capt. Forster gives the number of Sherburne's force as 120, and he is probably nearer the truth, for it is certain that Sherburne had 140 men when he left Montreal. He would require to leave at least 10 men at St. Anne's and 10 at Vaudreuil to take care of his boats and communications. These would have escaped. One or two might have been taken sick on the road, or he might have left more than 20 to guard his boats. He could not have had more than 120 men in the action, and may have had a few less. When he states that he had barely 100 men he is relating his own gallant deeds and his long resistance of one hour and forty minutes. He says that the enemy (under cover) lost 22 killed and wounded, and he lost only 28 *in the open*—killed, wounded and murdered. It may be that some others among the British, Canadians or Indians were killed, but if so, no mention is made elsewhere of them, excepting of the Seneca Chief. If the Indians had lost so heavily Capt. Forster would probably have reported it to account for their turbulence. As it is, he states their loss as this one Chief killed and three Indians wounded.

It is impossible in the face of the clear and precise narrative of the British officers, confirmed by the testimony of the American hostages, to believe the exculpatory and contradictory statements of men who behaved so badly as the officers in command of the American troops. Some points are, however, certain. It is admitted by all that Butterfield had 390 men. Sherburne could not have had more than 120 men, probably he had a few less. The total number of American soldiers of both parties could not have exceeded 510. Of these one was killed at the Cedars on the 18th of May, as previously related.

In the statements drawn up at Montreal, in September, where all the circumstances were known and fresh in everyone's memory, the total number of persons taken is given as 497. These are accounted for in the following manner:—

Indorsed upon the Cartel of Exchange :

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Majors | 2 |
| Captains | 9 |
| Subalterns | 21 |
| Privates | 443 |

| | |
|---|---|
| To which must be added, | |
| Hostages retained—Captains (afterwards released by Carleton) . . . | 4 |
| Canadians found in the garrison and released | 8 |
| Prisoners afterwards bought from Indians and then at Montreal | 8 |
| Remaining with the Indians | 2 |

497

Let this number be deducted from the extreme total of 509 and it will be seen that the total American loss could not have exceeded 12. In all probability Capt. Forster's statement that 5 or 6 were killed is correct. Sherburne had probably 114 men when he went into action, which would allow for 6 men falling out sick, 10 at St. Anne's and 10 at Vaudreuil, as guards. But if it really be the case, as stated by Sherburne and Bancroft, that an obstinate engagement was fought for one hour and forty minutes with an unseen foe, then 12 is a very insignificant loss, and no theory of murdering or roasting is necessary to account for it; and again if, as Sherburne states, he had detached so many men that he had only 100 when he was attacked, he must have fought all that time and surrendered with 8 men more than he had at the commencement.

This, then, was the "Massacre of the Cedars," which did duty for so many years

in inciting the American mind against the British Government, and which, with many other stores as mythical, has jaundiced the hearts of the American people towards England from earliest infancy. As a political stratagem the story was triumphantly successful. The Declaration of Independence had just been issued when the resolutions of Congress appeared concerning this affair. Many in the colonies, who were cleaving still to their allegiance, turned in horror from a Government which could tolerate such barbarities. Had there been in the colonies a free press, it would not have been possible to have started such a slander. But *Rivington's Gazette* had been stopped by the riotous action of an armed mob from Connecticut, which invaded the city of New York,* sacked his office, and melted his types down for bullets, and there was no other printer who dared to publish anything displeasing to the popular party. At this remote period, however, the publication of the original documents renders it possible to ascertain the real facts as they occurred, and Canadians, the more narrowly they enquire into the doings of their forefathers, will have the more reason to be proud of the early history of their country.

* Letter from the New York Congress, Dec. 12th, 1775, to Governor Trumbull, of Connecticut.

