HENRY CABOT LODGE,
ROOSEVELT THEODORE

HERO TALES FROM AMERICAN HISTORY

Henry Cabot Lodge

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Содержание

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Hence it is that the fathers of these men and ours also, and
they themselves likewise, being nurtured in all freedom and
well born, have shown before all men many and glorious deeds
in public and private, deeming it their duty to fight for
the cause of liberty and the Greeks, even against Greeks,
and against Barbarians for all the Greeks."—PLATO:

"Menexenus."

TO E. Y. R.

To you we owe the suggestion of writing this book. Its purpose, as you know better than any one else, is to tell in simple fashion the story of some Americans who showed that they knew how to live and how to die; who proved their truth by their endeavor; and who joined to the stern and manly qualities which are essential to the well-being of a masterful race the virtues of gentleness, of patriotism, and of lofty adherence to an ideal.

It is a good thing for all Americans, and it is an especially good thing for young Americans, to remember the men who have given their lives in war and peace to the service of their fellow-countrymen, and to keep in mind the feats of daring and personal prowess done in time past by some of the many champions of the nation in the various crises of her history. Thrift, industry, obedience to law, and intellectual cultivation are essential qualities in the makeup of any successful people; but no people can be really great unless they possess also the heroic virtues which are as needful in time of peace as in time of war, and as important in civil as in military life. As a civilized people we desire peace, but the only peace worth having is obtained by instant readiness to fight when wronged—not by unwillingness or inability to fight at all. Intelligent foresight in preparation and known capacity to stand well in battle are the surest safeguards against war. America will cease to be a great nation whenever her young men cease to possess energy, daring, and endurance, as well as the wish and the power to fight the nation's foes. No citizen of a free state should wrong any man; but it is not enough merely to refrain from infringing on the rights of others; he must also be able and willing to stand up for his own rights and those of his country against all comers, and he must be ready at any time to do his full share in resisting either malice domestic or foreign levy.

HENRY CABOT LODGE. THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

WASHINGTON, April 19, 1895.

"Hor. I saw him once; he was a goodly king.
Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all
I shall not look upon his like again."—Hamlet

WASHINGTON

The brilliant historian of the English people[1] has written of Washington, that "no nobler figure ever stood in the fore-front of a nation's life." In any book which undertakes to tell, no matter how slightly, the story of some of the heroic deeds of American history, that noble figure must always stand in the fore-front. But to sketch the life of Washington even in the barest outline is to write the history of the events which made the United States independent and gave birth to the American nation. Even to give alist of what he did, to name his battles and recount his acts as president, would be beyond the limit and the scope of this book. Yet it is always possible to recall the man and to consider what he was and what he meant for us and for mankind He is worthy the study and the remembrance of all men, and to Americans he is at once a great glory of their past and an inspiration and an assurance of their future.

To understand Washington at all we must first strip off all the myths which have gathered about him. We must cast aside into the dust-heaps all the wretched inventions of the cherry-tree variety, which were fastened upon him nearly seventy years after his birth. We must look at him as he looked at life and the facts about him, without any illusion or deception, and no man in history can better stand such a scrutiny.

Born of a distinguished family in the days when the American colonies were still ruled by an aristocracy, Washington started with all that good birth and tradition could give. Beyond this, however, he had little. His family was poor, his mother was left early a widow, and he was forced after a very limited education to go out into the world to fight for himself He had strong within him the adventurous spirit of his race. He became a surveyor, and in the pursuit of this profession plunged into the wilderness, where he soon grew to be an expert hunter and backwoodsman. Even as a boy the gravity of his character and his mental and physical vigor commended him to those about him, and responsibility and military command were put in his hands at an age when most young men are just leaving college. As the times grew threatening on the frontier, he was sent on a perilous mission to the Indians, in which, after passing through many hardships and dangers, he achieved success. When the troubles came with France it was by the soldiers under his command that the first shots were fired in the war which was to determine whether the North American continent should be French or English. In his earliest expedition he was defeated by the enemy. Later he was with Braddock, and it was he who tried, to rally the broken English army on the stricken field near Fort Duquesne. On that day of surprise and slaughter he displayed not only cool courage but the reckless daring which was one of his chief characteristics. He so exposed himself that bullets passed through his coat and hat, and the Indians and the French who tried to bring him down thought he bore a charmed life. He afterwards served with distinction all through the French war, and when peace came he went back to the estate which he had inherited from his brother, the most admired man in Virginia.

At that time he married, and during the ensuing years he lived the life of a Virginia planter, successful in his private affairs and serving the public effectively but quietly as a member of the House of Burgesses. When the troubles with the mother country began to thicken he was slow to take extreme ground, but he never wavered in his belief that all attempts to oppress the colonies should be resisted, and when he once took up his position there was no shadow of turning. He was one of Virginia's delegates to the first Continental Congress, and, although he said but little, he was regarded by all the representatives from the other colonies as the strongest man among them. There was something about him even then which commanded the respect and the confidence of every one who came in contact with him.

[1] John Richard Green.

It was from New England, far removed from his own State, that the demand came for his appointment as commander-in-chief of the American army. Silently he accepted the duty, and, leaving Philadelphia, took command of the army at Cambridge. There is no need to trace him through the events that followed. From the time when he drew his sword under the famous elm tree, he was the embodiment of the American Revolution, and without him that revolution would have failed almost at the start. How he carried it to victory through defeat and trial and every possible obstacle is known to all men.

When it was all over he found himself facing a new situation. He was the idol of the country and of his soldiers. The army was unpaid, and the veteran troops, with arms in their hands, were eager to have him take control of the disordered country as Cromwell had done in England a little more than a century before. With the army at his back, and supported by the great forces which, in every community, desire order before everything else, and are ready to assent to any arrangement which will bring peace and quiet, nothing would have been easier than for Washington to have made himself the ruler of the new nation. But that was not his conception of duty, and he not only refused to have anything to do with such a movement himself, but he repressed, by his dominant personal influence, all such intentions on the part of the army. On the 23d of December, 1783, he met the Congress at Annapolis, and there resigned his commission. What he then said is one of the two most memorable speeches ever made in the United States, and is also memorable for its meaning and spirit among all speeches ever made by men. He spoke as follows:

"Mr. President:—The great events on which my resignation depended having at length taken place, I have now the honor of offering my sincere congratulations to Congress, and of presenting myself before them, to surrender into their hands the trust committed to me and to claim the indulgence of retiring from the service of my country.

Happy in the confirmation of our independence and sovereignity and pleased with the opportunity afforded the United States of becoming a respectable nation, I resign with satisfaction the appointment I accepted with diffidence; a diffidence in my abilities to accomplish so arduous a task, which, however, was superseded by a confidence in the rectitude of our cause, the support of the supreme power of the Union, and the patronage of Heaven.

The successful termination of the war has verified the most sanguine expectations, and my gratitude for the interposition of Providence and the assistance I have received from my countrymen increases with every review of the momentous contest.

While I repeat my obligations to the Army in general, I should do injustice to my own feelings not to acknowledge, in this place, the peculiar services and distinguished merits of the Gentlemen who have been attached to my person during the war. It was impossible that the choice of confidential officers to compose my family should have been more fortunate. Permit me, sir, to recommend in particular those who have continued in service to the present moment as worthy of the favorable notice and patronage of Congress.

I consider it an indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my official life by commending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God, and those who have the superintendence of them to His holy keeping.

Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of action, and, bidding an affectionate farewell to this august body, under whose orders I have so long acted, I here offer my commission and take my leave of all the employments of public life."

The great master of English fiction, writing of this scene at Annapolis, says: "Which was the most splendid spectacle ever witnessed—the opening feast of Prince George in London, or the resignation of Washington? Which is the noble character for after ages to admire—yon fribble dancing in lace and spangles, or yonder hero who sheathes his sword after a life of spotless honor, a purity unreproached, a courage indomitable and a consummate victory?"

Washington did not refuse the dictatorship, or, rather, the opportunity to take control of the country, because he feared heavy responsibility, but solely because, as a high-minded and patriotic man, he did not believe in meeting the situation in that way. He was, moreover, entirely devoid of personal ambition, and had no vulgar longing for personal power. After resigning his commission he returned quietly to Mount Vernon, but he did not hold himself aloof from public affairs. On the contrary, he watched their course with the utmost anxiety. He saw the feeble Confederation breaking to pieces, and he soon realized that that form of government was an utter failure. In a time when no American statesman except Hamilton had yet freed himself from the local feelings of the colonial days, Washington was thoroughly national in all his views. Out of the thirteen jarring colonies he meant that a nation should come, and he saw—what no one else saw—the destiny of the country to the westward. He wished a nation founded which should cross the Alleghanies, and, holding the mouths of the Mississippi, take possession of all that vast and then unknown region. For these reasons he stood at the head of the national movement, and to him all men turned who desired a better union and sought to bring order out of chaos. With him Hamilton and Madison consulted in the preliminary stages which were to lead to the formation of a new system. It was his vast personal influence which made that movement a success, and when the convention to form a constitution met at Philadelphia, he presided over its deliberations, and it was his commanding will which, more than anything else, brought a constitution through difficulties and conflicting interests which more than once made any result seem well-nigh hopeless. When the Constitution formed at Philadelphia had been ratified by the States, all men turned to Washington to stand at the head of the new government. As he had borne the burden of the Revolution, so he now took up the task of bringing the government of the Constitution into existence. For eight years he served as president. He came into office with a paper constitution, the heir of a bankrupt, broken-down confederation. He left the United States, when he went out of office, an effective and vigorous government. When he was inaugurated, we had nothing but the clauses of the Constitution as agreed to by the Convention. When he laid down the presidency, we had an organized government, an established revenue, a funded debt, a high credit, an efficient system of banking, a strong judiciary, and an army. We had a vigorous and well-defined foreign policy; we had recovered the western posts, which, in the hands of the British, had fettered our march to the west; and we had proved our power to maintain order at home, to repress insurrection, to collect the national taxes, and to enforce the laws made by Congress. Thus Washington had shown that rare combination of the leader who could first destroy by revolution, and who, having led his country through a great civil war, was then able to build up a new and lasting fabric upon the ruins of a system which had been overthrown. At the close of his official service he returned again to Mount Vernon, and, after a few years of quiet retirement, died just as the century in which he had played so great a part was closing.

Washington stands among the greatest men of human history, and those in the same rank with him are very few. Whether measured by what he did, or what he was, or by the effect of his work upon the history of mankind, in every aspect he is entitled to the place he holds among the greatest of his race. Few men in all time have such a record of achievement. Still fewer can show at the end of a career so crowded with high deeds and memorable victories a life so free from spot, a character so unselfish and so pure, a fame so void of doubtful points demanding either defense or explanation. Eulogy of such a life is needless, but it is always important to recall and to freshly remember just what manner of man he was. In the first place he was physically a striking figure. He was very tall, powerfully made, with a strong, handsome face. He was remarkably muscular and powerful. As a boy he was a leader in all outdoor sports. No one could fling the bar further than he, and no one could ride more difficult horses. As a young man he became a woodsman and hunter. Day after day he could tramp through the wilderness with his gun and his surveyor's chain, and then sleep at night beneath the stars. He feared no exposure or fatigue, and outdid the hardiest backwoodsman in following a winter trail and swimming icy streams. This habit of vigorous bodily exercise he carried through life.

Whenever he was at Mount Vernon he gave a large part of his time to fox-hunting, riding after his hounds through the most difficult country. His physical power and endurance counted for much in his success when he commanded his army, and when the heavy anxieties of general and president weighed upon his mind and heart.

He was an educated, but not a learned man. He read well and remembered what he read, but his life was, from the beginning, a life of action, and the world of men was his school. He was not a military genius like Hannibal, or Caesar, or Napoleon, of which the world has had only three or four examples. But he was a great soldier of the type which the English race has produced, like Marlborough and Cromwell, Wellington, Grant, and Lee. He was patient under defeat, capable of large combinations, a stubborn and often reckless fighter, a winner of battles, but much more, a conclusive winner in a long war of varying fortunes. He was, in addition, what very few great soldiers or commanders have ever been, a great constitutional statesman, able to lead a people along the paths of free government without undertaking himself to play the part of the strong man, the usurper, or the savior of society.

He was a very silent man. Of no man of equal importance in the world's history have we so few sayings of a personal kind. He was ready enough to talk or to write about the public duties which he had in hand, but he hardly ever talked of himself. Yet there can be no greater error than to suppose Washington cold and unfeeling, because of his silence and reserve. He was by nature a man of strong desires and stormy passions. Now and again he would break out, even as late as the presidency, into a gust of anger that would sweep everything before it. He was always reckless of personal danger, and had a fierce fighting spirit which nothing could check when it was once unchained.

But as a rule these fiery impulses and strong passions were under the absolute control of an iron will, and they never clouded his judgment or warped his keen sense of justice.

But if he was not of a cold nature, still less was he hard or unfeeling. His pity always went out to the poor, the oppressed, or the unhappy, and he was all that was kind and gentle to those immediately about him.

We have to look carefully into his life to learn all these things, for the world saw only a silent, reserved man, of courteous and serious manner, who seemed to stand alone and apart, and who impressed every one who came near him with a sense of awe and reverence.

One quality he had which was, perhaps, more characteristic of the man and his greatness than any other. This was his perfect veracity of mind. He was, of course, the soul of truth and honor, but he was even more than that. He never deceived himself He always looked facts squarely in the face and dealt with them as such, dreaming no dreams, cherishing no delusions, asking no impossibilities, —just to others as to himself, and thus winning alike in war and in peace.

He gave dignity as well as victory to his country and his cause. He was, in truth, a "character for after ages to admire."

DANIEL BOONE AND THE FOUNDING OF KENTUCKY

… Boone lived hunting up to ninety;
And, what's still stranger, left behind a name
For which men vainly decimate the throng,
Not only famous, but of that GOOD fame,
Without which glory's but a tavern song,—
Simple, serene, the antipodes of shame,
Which hate nor envy e'er could tinge with wrong;

'T is true he shrank from men, even of his nation;
When they built up unto his darling trees,
He moved some hundred miles off, for a station
Where there were fewer houses and more ease;

* * *

But where he met the individual man,
He showed himself as kind as mortal can.

* * *

The freeborn forest found and kept them free,
And fresh as is a torrent or a tree.

And tall, and strong, and swift of foot were they,
Beyond the dwarfing city's pale abortions,
Because their thoughts had never been the prey
Of care or gain; the green woods were their portions

* * *

Simple they were, not savage; and their rifles,
Though very true, were yet not used for trifles.

* * *

Serene, not sullen, were the solitudes

Of this unsighing people of the woods.

—Byron.

Daniel Boone will always occupy a unique place in our history as the archetype of the hunter and wilderness wanderer. He was a true pioneer, and stood at the head of that class of Indian-fighters, game-hunters, forest-fellers, and backwoods farmers who, generation after generation, pushed westward the border of civilization from the Alleghanies to the Pacific. As he himself said, he was "an instrument ordained of God to settle the wilderness." Born in Pennsylvania, he drifted south into western North Carolina, and settled on what was then the extreme frontier. There he married, built a log cabin, and hunted, chopped trees, and tilled the ground like any other frontiersman. The Alleghany Mountains still marked a boundary beyond which the settlers dared not go; for west of them lay immense reaches of frowning forest, uninhabited save by bands of warlike Indians. Occasionally some venturesome hunter or trapper penetrated this immense wilderness, and returned with strange stories of what he had seen and done.

In 1769 Boone, excited by these vague and wondrous tales, determined himself to cross the mountains and find out what manner of land it was that lay beyond. With a few chosen companions he set out, making his own trail through the gloomy forest. After weeks of wandering, he at last emerged into the beautiful and fertile country of Kentucky, for which, in after years, the red men and the white strove with such obstinate fury that it grew to be called "the dark and bloody ground." But when Boone first saw it, it was a fair and smiling land of groves and glades and running waters, where the open forest grew tall and beautiful, and where innumerable herds of game grazed, roaming ceaselessly to and fro along the trails they had trodden during countless generations. Kentucky was not owned by any Indian tribe, and was visited only by wandering war-parties and hunting-parties who came from among the savage nations living north of the Ohio or south of the Tennessee.

A roving war-party stumbled upon one of Boone's companions and killed him, and the others then left Boone and journeyed home; but his brother came out to join him, and the two spent the winter together. Self-reliant, fearless, and the frowning defiles of Cumberland Gap, they were attacked by Indians, and driven back—two of Boone's own sons being slain. In 1775, however, he made another attempt; and this attempt was successful. The Indians attacked the newcomers; but by this time the parties of would-be settlers were sufficiently numerous to hold their own. They beat back the Indians, and built rough little hamlets, surrounded by log stockades, at Boonesborough and Harrodsburg; and the permanent settlement of Kentucky had begun.

The next few years were passed by Boone amid unending Indian conflicts. He was a leader among the settlers, both in peace and in war. At one time he represented them in the House of Burgesses of Virginia; at another time he was a member of the first little Kentucky parliament itself; and he became a colonel of the frontier militia. He tilled the land, and he chopped the trees himself; he helped to build the cabins and stockades with his own hands, wielding the longhandled, light-headed frontier ax as skilfully as other frontiersmen. His main business was that of surveyor, for his knowledge of the country, and his ability to travel through it, in spite of the danger from Indians, created much demand for his services among people who wished to lay off tracts of wild land for their own future use. But whatever he did, and wherever he went, he had to be sleeplessly on the lookout for his Indian foes. When he and his fellows tilled the stump-dotted fields of corn, one or more of the party were always on guard, with weapon at the ready, for fear of lurking savages. When he went to the House of Burgesses he carried his long rifle, and traversed roads not a mile of which was free from the danger of Indian attack. The settlements in the early years depended exclusively upon game for their meat, and Boone was the mightiest of all the hunters, so that upon him devolved the task of keeping his people supplied. He killed many buffaloes, and pickled the buffalo beef for use in winter. He killed great numbers of black bear, and made bacon of them, precisely as if they had been hogs. The common game were deer and elk. At that time none of the hunters of Kentucky

would waste a shot on anything so small as a prairie-chicken or wild duck; but they sometimes killed geese and swans when they came south in winter and lit on the rivers.

But whenever Boone went into the woods after game, he had perpetually to keep watch lest he himself might be hunted in turn. He never lay in wait at a game-lick, save with ears strained to hear the approach of some crawling red foe. He never crept up to a turkey he heard calling, without exercising the utmost care to see that it was not an Indian; for one of the favorite devices of the Indians was to imitate the turkey call, and thus allure within range some inexperienced hunter.

Besides this warfare, which went on in the midst of his usual vocations, Boone frequently took the field on set expeditions against the savages. Once when he and a party of other men were making salt at a lick, they were surprised and carried off by the Indians. The old hunter was a prisoner with them for some months, but finally made his escape and came home through the trackless woods as straight as the wild pigeon flies. He was ever on the watch to ward off the Indian inroads, and to follow the warparties, and try to rescue the prisoners. Once his own daughter, and two other girls who were with her, were carried off by a band of Indians. Boone raised some friends and followed the trail steadily for two days and a night; then they came to where the Indians had killed a buffalo calf and were camped around it. Firing from a little distance, the whites shot two of the Indians, and, rushing in, rescued the girls. On another occasion, when Boone had gone to visit a salt-lick with his brother, the Indians ambushed them and shot the latter. Boone himself escaped, but the Indians followed him for three miles by the aid of a tracking dog, until Boone turned, shot the dog, and then eluded his pursuers. In company with Simon Kenton and many other noted hunters and wilderness warriors, he once and again took part in expeditions into the Indian country, where they killed the braves and drove off the horses. Twice bands of Indians, accompanied by French, Tory, and British partizans from Detroit, bearing the flag of Great Britain, attacked Boonesboroug. In each case Boone and his fellow-settlers beat them off with loss. At the fatal battle of the Blue Licks, in which two hundred of the best riflemen of Kentucky were beaten with terrible slaughter by a great force of Indians from the lakes, Boone commanded the left wing. Leading his men, rifle in hand, he pushed back and overthrew the force against him; but meanwhile the Indians destroyed the right wing and center, and got round in his rear, so that there was nothing left for Boone's men except to flee with all possible speed.

As Kentucky became settled, Boone grew restless and ill at ease. He loved the wilderness; he loved the great forests and the great prairie-like glades, and the life in the little lonely cabin, where from the door he could see the deer come out into the clearing at nightfall. The neighborhood of his own kind made him feel cramped and ill at ease. So he moved ever westward with the frontier; and as Kentucky filled up he crossed the Mississippi and settled on the borders of the prairie country of Missouri, where the Spaniards, who ruled the territory, made him an alcalde, or judge. He lived to a great age, and died out on the border, a backwoods hunter to the last.

GEORGE ROGERS CLARK AND THE CONQUEST OF THE NORTHWEST

Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there beyond the seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the lesson,
Pioneers! O Pioneers!
All the past we leave behind,
We debouch upon a newer, mightier world, varied world;

Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the march,
Pioneers! O Pioneers!
We detachments steady throwing,
Down the edges, through the passes, up the mountains steep,
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing, as we go the unknown ways,
Pioneers! O Pioneers!

* * * * * * *

The sachem blowing the smoke first towards the sun and then towards the earth,
The drama of the scalp dance enacted with painted faces and guttural exclamations,
The setting out of the war-party, the long and stealthy march,
The single file, the swinging hatchets, the surprise and slaughter of enemies.

—*Whitman.*

In 1776, when independence was declared, the United States included only the thirteen original States on the seaboard. With the exception of a few hunters there were no white men west of the Alleghany Mountains, and there was not even an American hunter in the great country out of which we have since made the States of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin. All this region north of the Ohio River then formed apart of the Province of Quebec. It was a wilderness of forests and prairies, teeming with game, and inhabited by many warlike tribes of Indians.

Here and there through it were dotted quaint little towns of French Creoles, the most important being Detroit, Vincennes on the Wabash, and Kaskaskia and Kahokia on the Illinois. These French villages were ruled by British officers commanding small bodies of regular soldiers or Tory rangers and Creole partizans. The towns were completely in the power of the British government; none of the American States had actual possession of a foot of property in the Northwestern Territory.

The Northwest was acquired in the midst of the Revolution only by armed conquest, and if it had not been so acquired, it would have remained a part of the British Dominion of Canada.

The man to whom this conquest was clue was a famous backwoods leader, a mighty hunter, a noted Indian-fighter, George Rogers Clark. He was a very strong man, with light hair and blue

eyes. He was of good Virginian family. Early in his youth, he embarked on the adventurous career of a backwoods surveyor, exactly as Washington and so many other young Virginians of spirit did at that period. He traveled out to Kentucky soon after it was founded by Boone, and lived there for a year, either at the stations or camping by him self in the woods, surveying, hunting, and making war against the Indians like any other settler; but all the time his mind was bent on vaster schemes than were dreamed of by the men around him. He had his spies out in the Northwestern Territory, and became convinced that with a small force of resolute backwoodsmen he could conquer it for the United States. When he went back to Virginia, Governor Patrick Henry entered heartily into Clark's schemes and gave him authority to fit out a force for his purpose.

In 1778, after encountering endless difficulties and delays, he finally raised a hundred and fifty backwoods riflemen. In May they started down the Ohio in flatboats to undertake the allotted task. They drifted and rowed downstream to the Falls of the Ohio, where Clark founded a log hamlet, which has since become the great city of Louisville.

Here he halted for some days and was joined by fifty or sixty volunteers; but a number of the men deserted, and when, after an eclipse of the sun, Clark again pushed off to go down with the current, his force was but about one hundred and sixty riflemen. All, however, were men on whom he could depend—men well used to frontier warfare. They were tall, stalwart backwoodsmen, clad in the hunting-shirt and leggings that formed the national dress of their kind, and armed with the distinctive weapon of the backwoods, the long-barreled, small-bore rifle.

Before reaching the Mississippi the little flotilla landed, and Clark led his men northward against the Illinois towns. In one of them, Kaskaskia, dwelt the British commander of the entire district up to Detroit. The small garrison and the Creole militia taken together outnumbered Clark's force, and they were in close alliance with the Indians roundabout. Clark was anxious to take the town by surprise and avoid bloodshed, as he believed he could win over the Creoles to the American side. Marching cautiously by night and generally hiding by day, he came to the outskirts of the little village on the evening of July 4, and lay in the woods near by until after nightfall.

Fortune favored him. That evening the officers of the garrison had given a great ball to the mirth-loving Creoles, and almost the entire population of the village had gathered in the fort, where the dance was held. While the revelry was at its height, Clark and his tall backwoodsmen, treading silently through the darkness, came into the town, surprised the sentries, and surrounded the fort without causing any alarm.

All the British and French capable of bearing arms were gathered in the fort to take part in or look on at the merrymaking. When his men were posted Clark walked boldly forward through the open door, and, leaning against the wall, looked at the dancers as they whirled around in the light of the flaring torches. For some moments no one noticed him. Then an Indian who had been lying with his chin on his hand, looking carefully over the gaunt figure of the stranger, sprang to his feet, and uttered the wild war-whoop. Immediately the dancing ceased and the men ran to and fro in confusion; but Clark, stepping forward, bade them be at their ease, but to remember that henceforth they danced under the flag of the United States, and not under that of Great Britain.

The surprise was complete, and no resistance was attempted. For twenty-four hours the Creoles were in abject terror. Then Clark summoned their chief men together and explained that he came as their ally, and not as their foe, and that if they would join with him they should be citizens of the American republic, and treated in all respects on an equality with their comrades. The Creoles, caring little for the British, and rather fickle of nature, accepted the proposition with joy, and with the most enthusiastic loyalty toward Clark. Not only that, but sending messengers to their kinsmen on the Wabash, they persuaded the people of Vincennes likewise to cast off their allegiance to the British king, and to hoist the American flag.

So far, Clark had conquered with greater ease than he had dared to hope. But when the news reached the British governor, Hamilton, at Detroit, he at once prepared to reconquer the land. He

had much greater forces at his command than Clark had; and in the fall of that year he came down to Vincennes by stream and portage, in a great fleet of canoes bearing five hundred fighting men-British regulars, French partizans, and Indians. The Vincennes Creoles refused to fight against the British, and the American officer who had been sent thither by Clark had no alternative but to surrender.

If Hamilton had then pushed on and struck Clark in Illinois, having more than treble Clark's force, he could hardly have failed to win the victory; but the season was late and the journey so difficult that he did not believe it could be taken. Accordingly he disbanded the Indians and sent some of his troops back to Detroit, announcing that when spring came he would march against Clark in Illinois.

If Clark in turn had awaited the blow he would have surely met defeat; but he was a greater man than his antagonist, and he did what the other deemed impossible.

Finding that Hamilton had sent home some of his troops and dispersed all his Indians, Clark realized that his chance was to strike before Hamilton's soldiers assembled again in the spring. Accordingly he gathered together the pick of his men, together with a few Creoles, one hundred and seventy all told, and set out for Vincennes. At first the journey was easy enough, for they passed across the snowy Illinois prairies, broken by great reaches of lofty woods. They killed elk, buffalo, and deer for food, there being no difficulty in getting all they wanted to eat; and at night they built huge fires by which to sleep, and feasted "like Indian war-dancers," as Clark said in his report.

But when, in the middle of February, they reached the drowned lands of the Wabash, where the ice had just broken up and everything was flooded, the difficulties seemed almost insuperable, and the march became painful and laborious to a degree. All day long the troops waded in the icy water, and at night they could with difficulty find some little hillock on which to sleep. Only Clark's indomitable courage and cheerfulness kept the party in heart and enabled them to persevere. However, persevere they did, and at last, on February 23, they came in sight of the town of Vincennes. They captured a Creole who was out shooting ducks, and from him learned that their approach was utterly unsuspected, and that there were many Indians in town.

Clark was now in some doubt as to how to make his fight. The British regulars dwelt in a small fort at one end of the town, where they had two light guns; but Clark feared lest, if he made a sudden night attack, the townspeople and Indians would from sheer fright turn against him. He accordingly arranged, just before he himself marched in, to send in the captured duck-hunter, conveying a warning to the Indians and the Creoles that he was about to attack the town, but that his only quarrel was with the British, and that if the other inhabitants would stay in their own homes they would not be molested. Sending the duck-hunter ahead, Clark took up his march and entered the town just after nightfall. The news conveyed by the released hunter astounded the townspeople, and they talked it over eagerly, and were in doubt what to do. The Indians, not knowing how great might be the force that would assail the town, at once took refuge in the neighboring woods, while the Creoles retired to their own houses. The British knew nothing of what had happened until the Americans had actually entered the streets of the little village. Rushing forward, Clark's men soon penned the regulars within their fort, where they kept them surrounded all night. The next day a party of Indian warriors, who in the British interest had been ravaging the settlements of Kentucky, arrived and entered the town, ignorant that the Americans had captured it. Marching boldly forward to the fort, they suddenly found it beleaguered, and before they could flee they were seized by the backwoodsmen. In their belts they carried the scalps of the slain settlers. The savages were taken redhanded, and the American frontiersmen were in no mood to show mercy. All the Indians were tomahawked in sight of the fort.

For some time the British defended themselves well; but at length their guns were disabled, all of the gunners being picked off by the backwoods marksmen, and finally the garrison dared not so much as appear at a port-hole, so deadly was the fire from the long rifles. Under such circumstances Hamilton was forced to surrender.

No attempt was afterward made to molest the Americans in the land they had won, and upon the conclusion of peace the Northwest, which had been conquered by Clark, became part of the United States.

THE BATTLE OF TRENTON

And such they are—and such they will be found:
Not so Leonidas and Washington,
Their every battle-field is holy ground
Which breathes of nations saved, not worlds undone.
How sweetly on the ear such echoes sound!
While the mere victor's may appal or stun
The servile and the vain, such names will be
A watchword till the future shall be free.

—Byron.

In December, 1776, the American Revolution was at its lowest ebb. The first burst of enthusiasm, which drove the British back from Concord and met them hand to hand at Bunker Hill, which forced them to abandon Boston and repulsed their attack at Charleston, had spent its force. The undisciplined American forces called suddenly from the workshop and the farm had given way, under the strain of a prolonged contest, and had been greatly scattered, many of the soldiers returning to their homes. The power of England, on the other hand, with her disciplined army and abundant resources, had begun to tell. Washington, fighting stubbornly, had been driven during the summer and autumn from Long Island up the Hudson, and New York had passed into the hands of the British. Then Forts Lee and Washington had been lost, and finally the Continental army had retreated to New Jersey. On the second of December Washington was at Princeton with some three thousand ragged soldiers, and had escaped destruction only by the rapidity of his movements. By the middle of the month General Howe felt that the American army, unable as he believed either to fight or to withstand the winter, must soon dissolve, and, posting strong detachments at various points, he took up his winter quarters in New York. The British general had under his command in his various divisions twenty-five thousand well-disciplined soldiers, and the conclusion he had reached was not an unreasonable one; everything, in fact, seemed to confirm his opinion. Thousands of the colonists were coming in and accepting his amnesty. The American militia had left the field, and no more would turn out, despite Washington's earnest appeals. All that remained of the American Revolution was the little Continental army and the man who led it.

Yet even in this dark hour Washington did not despair. He sent in every direction for troops. Nothing was forgotten. Nothing that he could do was left undone. Unceasingly he urged action upon Congress, and at the same time with indomitable fighting spirit he planned to attack the British. It was a desperate undertaking in the face of such heavy odds, for in all his divisions he had only some six thousand men, and even these were scattered. The single hope was that by his own skill and courage he could snatch victory from a situation where victory seemed impossible. With the instinct of a great commander he saw that his only chance was to fight the British detachments suddenly, unexpectedly, and separately, and to do this not only required secrecy and perfect judgment, but also the cool, unwavering courage of which, under such circumstances, very few men have proved themselves capable. As Christmas approached his plans were ready. He determined to fall upon the British detachment of Hessians, under Colonel Rahl, at Trenton, and there strike his first blow. To each division of his little army a part in the attack was assigned with careful forethought. Nothing was overlooked and nothing omitted, and then, for some reason good or bad, every one of the division commanders failed to do his part. As the general plan was arranged, Gates was to march from Bristol with two thousand men; Ewing was to cross at Trenton; Putnam was to come up from Philadelphia; and Griffin was to make a diversion against Donop. When the moment came, Gates, who disapproved

the plan, was on his way to Congress; Griffin abandoned New Jersey and fled before Donop; Putnam did not attempt to leave Philadelphia; and Ewing made no effort to cross at Trenton. Cadwalader came down from Bristol, looked at the river and the floating ice, and then gave it up as desperate. Nothing remained except Washington himself with the main army, but he neither gave up, nor hesitated, nor stopped on account of the ice, or the river, or the perils which lay beyond. On Christmas Eve, when all the Christian world was feasting and rejoicing, and while the British were enjoying themselves in their comfortable quarters, Washington set out. With twenty-four hundred men he crossed the Delaware through the floating ice, his boats managed and rowed by the sturdy fishermen of Marblehead from Glover's regiment. The crossing was successful, and he landed about nine miles from Trenton. It was bitter cold, and the sleet and snow drove sharply in the faces of the troops. Sullivan, marching by the river, sent word that the arms of his soldiers were wet. "Tell your general," was Washington's reply to the message, "to use the bayonet, for the town must be taken." When they reached Trenton it was broad daylight. Washington, at the front and on the right of the line, swept down the Pennington road, and, as he drove back the Hessian pickets, he heard the shout of Sullivan's men as, with Stark leading the van, they charged in from the river. A company of jaegers and of light dragoons slipped away. There was some fighting in the streets, but the attack was so strong and well calculated that resistance was useless. Colonel Rahl, the British commander, aroused from his revels, was killed as he rushed out to rally his men, and in a few moments all was over. A thousand prisoners fell into Washington's hands, and this important detachment of the enemy was cut off and destroyed.

The news of Trenton alarmed the British, and Lord Cornwallis with seven thousand of the best troops started at once from New York in hot pursuit of the American army. Washington, who had now rallied some five thousand men, fell back, skirmishing heavily, behind the Assunpink, and when Cornwallis reached the river he found the American army awaiting him on the other side of the stream. Night was falling, and Cornwallis, feeling sure of his prey, decided that he would not risk an assault until the next morning. Many lessons had not yet taught him that it was a fatal business to give even twelve hours to the great soldier opposed to him. During the night Washington, leaving his fires burning and taking a roundabout road which he had already reconnoitered, marched to Princeton. There he struck another British detachment. A sharp fight ensued, the British division was broken and defeated, losing some five hundred men, and Washington withdrew after this second victory to the highlands of New Jersey to rest and recruit.

Frederick the Great is reported to have said that this was the most brilliant campaign of the century. With a force very much smaller than that of the enemy, Washington had succeeded in striking the British at two places with superior forces at each point of contact. At Trenton he had the benefit of a surprise, but the second time he was between two hostile armies. He was ready to fight Cornwallis when the latter reached the Assunpink, trusting to the strength of his position to make up for his inferiority of numbers. But when Cornwallis gave him the delay of a night, Washington, seeing the advantage offered by his enemy's mistake, at once changed his whole plan, and, turning in his tracks, fell upon the smaller of the two forces opposed to him, wrecking and defeating it before the outgeneraled Cornwallis could get up with the main army. Washington had thus shown the highest form of military skill, for there is nothing that requires so much judgment and knowledge, so much certainty of movement and quick decision, as to meet a superior enemy at different points, force the fighting, and at each point to outnumber and overwhelm him.

But the military part of this great campaign was not all. Many great soldiers have not been statesmen, and have failed to realize the political necessities of the situation. Washington presented the rare combination of a great soldier and a great statesman as well. He aimed not only to win battles, but by his operations in the field to influence the political situation and affect public opinion. The American Revolution was going to pieces. Unless some decisive victory could be won immediately, it would have come to an end in the winter of 1776-77. This Washington knew, and it was this which nerved his arm. The results justified his forethought. The victories of Trenton and Princeton restored

the failing spirits of the people, and, what was hardly less important, produced a deep impression in Europe in favor of the colonies. The country, which had lost heart, and become supine and almost hostile, revived. The militia again took the field. Outlying parties of the British were attacked and cut off, and recruits once more began to come in to the Continental army. The Revolution was saved. That the English colonies in North America would have broken away from the mother country sooner or later cannot be doubted, but that particular Revolution Of 1776 would have failed within a year, had it not been for Washington. It is not, however, merely the fact that he was a great soldier and statesman which we should remember. The most memorable thing to us, and to all men, is the heroic spirit of the man, which rose in those dreary December days to its greatest height, under conditions so adverse that they had crushed the hope of every one else. Let it be remembered, also, that it was not a spirit of desperation or of ignorance, a reckless daring which did not count the cost. No one knew better than Washington—no one, indeed, so well—the exact state of affairs; for he, conspicuously among great men, always looked facts fearlessly in the face, and never deceived himself. He was under no illusions, and it was this high quality of mind as much as any other which enabled him to win victories.

How he really felt we know from what he wrote to Congress on December 20, when he said: "It may be thought that I am going a good deal out of the line of my duty to adopt these measures or to advise thus freely. A character to lose, an estate to forfeit, the inestimable blessing of liberty at stake, and a life devoted, must be my excuse." These were the thoughts in his mind when he was planning this masterly campaign. These same thoughts, we may readily believe, were with him when his boat was making its way through the ice of the Delaware on Christmas Eve. It was a very solemn moment, and he was the only man in the darkness of that night who fully understood what was at stake; but then, as always, he was calm and serious, with a high courage which nothing could depress.

The familiar picture of a later day depicts Washington crossing the Delaware at the head of his soldiers. He is standing up in the boat, looking forward in the teeth of the storm. It matters little whether the work of the painter is in exact accordance with the real scene or not. The daring courage, the high resolve, the stern look forward and onward, which the artist strove to show in the great leader, are all vitally true. For we may be sure that the man who led that well-planned but desperate assault, surrounded by darker conditions than the storms of nature which gathered about his boat, and carrying with him the fortunes of his country, was at that moment one of the most heroic figures in history.

BENNINGTON

We are but warriors for the working-day;
Our gayness and our guilt are all besmirch'd
With rainy marching in the painful field;
There's not a piece of feather in our host
(Good argument, I hope, we shall not fly),
And time hath worn us into slovenry.
But, by the mass, our hearts are in the trim,
And my poor soldiers tell me, yet ere night
They'll be in fresher robes.

—Henry V.

The battle of Saratoga is included by Sir Edward Creasy among his fifteen decisive battles which have, by their result, affected the history of the world. It is true that the American Revolution was saved by Washington in the remarkable Princeton and Trenton campaign, but it is equally true that the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga, in the following autumn, turned the scale decisively in favor of the colonists by the impression which it made in Europe. It was the destruction of Burgoyne's army which determined France to aid the Americans against England. Hence came the French alliance, the French troops, and, what was of far more importance, a French fleet by which Washington was finally able to get control of the sea, and in this way cut off Cornwallis at Yorktown and bring the Revolution to a successful close. That which led, however, more directly than anything else to the final surrender at Saratoga was the fight at Bennington, by which Burgoyne's army was severely crippled and weakened, and by which also, the hardy militia of the North eastern States were led to turn out in large numbers and join the army of Gates.

The English ministry had built great hopes upon Burgoyne's expedition, and neither expense nor effort had been spared to make it successful. He was amply furnished with money and supplies as well as with English and German troops, the latter of whom were bought from their wretched little princes by the payment of generous subsidies. With an admirably equipped army of over seven thousand men, and accompanied by a large force of Indian allies, Burgoyne had started in May, 1777, from Canada. His plan was to make his way by the lakes to the head waters of the Hudson, and thence southward along the river to New York, where he was to unite with Sir William Howe and the main army; in this way cutting the colonies in two, and separating New England from the rest of the country.

At first all went well. The Americans were pushed back from their posts on the lakes, and by the end of July Burgoyne was at the head waters of the Hudson. He had already sent out a force, under St. Leger, to take possession of the valley of the Mohawk—an expedition which finally resulted in the defeat of the British by Herkimer, and the capture of Fort Stanwix. To aid St. Leger by a diversion, and also to capture certain magazines which were reported to be at Bennington, Burgoyne sent another expedition to the eastward. This force consisted of about five hundred and fifty white troops, chiefly Hessians, and one hundred and fifty Indians, all under the command of Colonel Baum. They were within four miles of Bennington on August 13, 1777, and encamped on a hill just within the boundaries of the State of New York. The news of the advance of Burgoyne had already roused the people of New York and New Hampshire, and the legislature of the latter State had ordered General Stark with a brigade of militia to stop the progress of the enemy on the western frontier. Stark raised his standard at Charlestown on the Connecticut River, and the militia poured into his camp. Disregarding Schuyler's orders to join the main American army, which was falling back before

Burgoyne, Stark, as soon as he heard of the expedition against Bennington, marched at once to meet Baum. He was within a mile of the British camp on August 14, and vainly endeavored to draw Baum into action. On the 15th it rained heavily, and the British forces occupied the time in intrenching themselves strongly upon the hill which they held. Baum meantime had already sent to Burgoyne for reinforcements, and Burgoyne had detached Colonel Breymann with over six hundred regular troops to go to Baum's assistance. On the 16th the weather cleared, and Stark, who had been reinforced by militia from western Massachusetts, determined to attack.

Early in the day he sent men, under Nichols and Herrick, to get into the rear of Baum's position. The German officer, ignorant of the country and of the nature of the warfare in which he was engaged, noticed small bodies of men in their shirtsleeves, and carrying guns without bayonets, making their way to the rear of his intrenchments. With singular stupidity he concluded that they were Tory inhabitants of the country who were coming to his assistance, and made no attempt to stop them. In this way Stark was enabled to mass about five hundred men in the rear of the enemy's position. Distracting the attention of the British by a feint, Stark also moved about two hundred men to the right, and having thus brought his forces into position he ordered a general assault, and the Americans proceeded to storm the British intrenchments on every side. The fight was a very hot one, and lasted some two hours. The Indians, at the beginning of the action, slipped away between the American detachments, but the British and German regulars stubbornly stood their ground. It is difficult to get at the exact numbers of the American troops, but Stark seems to have had between fifteen hundred and two thousand militia. He thus outnumbered his enemy nearly three to one, but his men were merely country militia, farmers of the New England States, very imperfectly disciplined, and armed only with muskets and fowling-pieces, without bayonets or side-arms. On the other side Baum had the most highly disciplined troops of England and Germany under his command, well armed and equipped, and he was moreover strongly intrenched with artillery well placed behind the breastworks. The advantage in the fight should have been clearly with Baum and his regulars, who merely had to hold an intrenched hill.

It was not a battle in which either military strategy or a scientific management of troops was displayed. All that Stark did was to place his men so that they could attack the enemy's position on every side, and then the Americans went at it, firing as they pressed on. The British and Germans stood their ground stubbornly, while the New England farmers rushed up to within eight yards of the cannon, and picked off the men who manned the guns. Stark himself was in the midst of the fray, fighting with his soldiers, and came out of the conflict so blackened with powder and smoke that he could hardly be recognized. One desperate assault succeeded another, while the firing on both sides was so incessant as to make, in Stark's own words, a "continuous roar." At the end of two hours the Americans finally swarmed over the intrenchments, beating down the soldiers with their clubbed muskets. Baum ordered his infantry with the bayonet and the dragoons with their sabers to force their way through, but the Americans repulsed this final charge, and Baum himself fell mortally wounded. All was then over, and the British forces surrendered.

It was only just in time, for Breymann, who had taken thirty hours to march some twenty-four miles, came up just after Baum's men had laid down their arms. It seemed for a moment as if all that had been gained might be lost. The Americans, attacked by this fresh foe, wavered; but Stark rallied his line, and putting in Warner, with one hundred and fifty Vermont men who had just come on the field, stopped Breymann's advance, and finally forced him to retreat with a loss of nearly one half his men. The Americans lost in killed and wounded some seventy men, and the Germans and British about twice as many, but the Americans took about seven hundred prisoners, and completely wrecked the forces of Baum and Breymann.

The blow was a severe one, and Burgoyne's army never recovered from it. Not only had he lost nearly a thousand of his best troops, besides cannon, arms, and munitions of war, but the defeat affected the spirits of his army and destroyed his hold over his Indian allies, who began to desert

in large numbers. Bennington, in fact, was one of the most important fights of the Revolution, contributing as it did so largely to the final surrender of Burgoyne's whole army at Saratoga, and the utter ruin of the British invasion from the North. It is also interesting as an extremely gallant bit of fighting. As has been said, there was no strategy displayed, and there were no military operations of the higher kind. There stood the enemy strongly intrenched on a hill, and Stark, calling his undisciplined levies about him, went at them. He himself was a man of the highest courage and a reckless fighter. It was Stark who held the railfence at Bunker Hill, and who led the van when Sullivan's division poured into Trenton from the river road. He was admirably adapted for the precise work which was necessary at Bennington, and he and his men fought well their hand-to-hand fight on that hot August day, and carried the intrenchments filled with regular troops and defended by artillery. It was a daring feat of arms, as well as a battle which had an important effect upon the course of history and upon the fate of the British empire in America.

KING'S MOUNTAIN

Our fortress is the good greenwood,
Our tent the cypress tree;
We know the forest round us
As seamen know the sea.
We know its walls of thorny vines,
Its glades of reedy grass,
Its safe and silent islands
Within the dark morass.

—Bryant.

The close of the year 1780 was, in the Southern States, the darkest time of the Revolutionary struggle. Cornwallis had just destroyed the army of Gates at Camden, and his two formidable lieutenants, Tarlton the light horseman, and Ferguson the skilled rifleman, had destroyed or scattered all the smaller bands that had been fighting for the patriot cause. The red dragoons rode hither and thither, and all through Georgia and South Carolina none dared lift their heads to oppose them, while North Carolina lay at the feet of Cornwallis, as he started through it with his army to march into Virginia. There was no organized force against him, and the cause of the patriots seemed hopeless. It was at this hour that the wild backwoodsmen of the western border gathered to strike a blow for liberty.

When Cornwallis invaded North Carolina he sent Ferguson into the western part of the State to crush out any of the patriot forces that might still be lingering among the foot-hills. Ferguson was a very gallant and able officer, and a man of much influence with the people wherever he went, so that he was peculiarly fitted for this scrambling border warfare. He had under him a battalion of regular troops and several other battalions of Tory militia, in all eleven or twelve hundred men. He shattered and drove the small bands of Whigs that were yet in arms, and finally pushed to the foot of the mountain wall, till he could see in his front the high ranges of the Great Smokies. Here he learned for the first time that beyond the mountains there lay a few hamlets of frontiersmen, whose homes were on what were then called the Western Waters, that is, the waters which flowed into the Mississippi. To these he sent word that if they did not prove loyal to the king, he would cross their mountains, hang their leaders, and burn their villages.

Beyond the, mountains, in the valleys of the Holston and Watauga, dwelt men who were stout of heart and mighty in battle, and when they heard the threats of Ferguson they burned with a sullen flame of anger. Hitherto the foes against whom they had warred had been not the British, but the Indian allies of the British, Creek, and Cherokee, and Shawnee. Now that the army of the king had come to their thresholds, they turned to meet it as fiercely as they had met his Indian allies. Among the backwoodsmen of this region there were at that time three men of special note: Sevier, who afterward became governor of Tennessee; Shelby, who afterward became governor of Kentucky; and Campbell, the Virginian, who died in the Revolutionary War. Sevier had given a great barbecue, where oxen and deer were roasted whole, while horseraces were run, and the backwoodsmen tried their skill as marksmen and wrestlers. In the midst of the feasting Shelby appeared, hot with hard riding, to tell of the approach of Ferguson and the British. Immediately the feasting was stopped, and the feasters made ready for war. Sevier and Shelby sent word to Campbell to rouse the men of his own district and come without delay, and they sent messengers to and fro in their own neighborhood to summon the settlers from their log huts on the stump-dotted clearings and the hunters from their smoky cabins in the deep woods.

The meeting-place was at the Sycamore Shoals. On the appointed day the backwoodsmen gathered sixteen hundred strong, each man carrying a long rifle, and mounted on a tough, shaggy horse. They were a wild and fierce people, accustomed to the chase and to warfare with the Indians. Their hunting-shirts of buckskin or homespun were girded in by bead-worked belts, and the trappings of their horses were stained red and yellow. At the gathering there was a black-frocked Presbyterian preacher, and before they started he addressed the tall riflemen in words of burning zeal, urging them to stand stoutly in the battle, and to smite with the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. Then the army started, the backwoods colonels riding in front. Two or three days later, word was brought to Ferguson that the Back-water men had come over the mountains; that the Indian-fighters of the frontier, leaving unguarded their homes on the Western Waters, had crossed by wooded and precipitous defiles to the help of the beaten men of the plains. Ferguson at once fell back, sending out messengers for help. When he came to King's Mountain, a wooded, hog-back hill on the border line between North and South Carolina, he camped on its top, deeming that there he was safe, for he supposed that before the backwoodsmen could come near enough to attack him help would reach him. But the backwoods leaders felt as keenly as he the need of haste, and choosing out nine hundred picked men, the best warriors of their force, and the best mounted and armed, they made a long forced march to assail Ferguson before help could come to him. All night long they rode the dim forest trails and splashed across the fords of the rushing rivers. All the next day, October 16, they rode, until in mid-afternoon, just as a heavy shower cleared away, they came in sight of King's Mountain. The little armies were about equal in numbers. Ferguson's regulars were armed with the bayonet, and so were some of his Tory militia, whereas the Americans had not a bayonet among them; but they were picked men, confident in their skill as riflemen, and they were so sure of victory that their aim was not only to defeat the British but to capture their whole force. The backwoods colonels, counseling together as they rode at the head of the column, decided to surround the mountain and assail it on all sides. Accordingly the bands of frontiersmen split one from the other, and soon circled the craggy hill where Ferguson's forces were encamped. They left their horses in the rear and immediately began the battle, swarming forward on foot, their commanders leading the attack.

The march had been so quick and the attack so sudden that Ferguson had barely time to marshal his men before the assault was made. Most of his militia he scattered around the top of the hill to fire down at the Americans as they came up, while with his regulars and with a few picked militia he charged with the bayonet in person, first down one side of the mountain and then down the other. Sevier, Shelby, Campbell, and the other colonels of the frontiersmen, led each his force of riflemen straight toward the summit. Each body in turn when charged by the regulars was forced to give way, for there were no bayonets wherewith to meet the foe; but the backwoodsmen retreated only so long as the charge lasted, and the minute that it stopped they stopped too, and came back ever closer to the ridge and ever with a deadlier fire. Ferguson, blowing a silver whistle as a signal to his men, led these charges, sword in hand, on horseback. At last, just as he was once again rallying his men, the riflemen of Sevier and Shelby crowned the top of the ridge. The gallant British commander became a fair target for the backwoodsmen, and as for the last time he led his men against them, seven bullets entered his body and he fell dead. With his fall resistance ceased. The regulars and Tories huddled together in a confused mass, while the exultant Americans rushed forward. A flag of truce was hoisted, and all the British who were not dead surrendered.

The victory was complete, and the backwoodsmen at once started to return to their log hamlets and rough, lonely farms. They could not stay, for they dared not leave their homes at the mercy of the Indians. They had rendered a great service; for Cornwallis, when he heard of the disaster to his trusted lieutenant, abandoned his march northward, and retired to South Carolina. When he again resumed the offensive, he found his path barred by stubborn General Greene and his troops of the Continental line.

THE STORMING OF STONY POINT

In their ragged regimentals
Stood the old Continentals,
Yielding not,
When the grenadiers were lunging,
And like hail fell the plunging
Cannon-shot;
When the files
Of the isles
From the smoky night encampment bore the banner of the rampant Unicorn,
And grummer, grummer, grummer, rolled the roll of the drummer,
Through the morn!
Then with eyes to the front all,
And with guns horizontal,
Stood our sires;
And the balls whistled deadly,
And in streams flashing redly
Blazed the fires;
As the roar
On the shore
Swept the strong battle-breakers o'er the green-sodded acres
Of the plain;
And louder, louder, louder cracked the black gunpowder,
Cracked amain!

—Guy Humphrey McMaster.

One of the heroic figures of the Revolution was Anthony Wayne, Major-General of the Continental line. With the exception of Washington, and perhaps Greene, he was the best general the Americans developed in the contest; and without exception he showed himself to be the hardest fighter produced on either side. He belongs, as regards this latter characteristic, with the men like Winfield Scott, Phil Kearney, Hancock, and Forrest, who reveled in the danger and the actual shock of arms. Indeed, his eager love of battle, and splendid disregard of peril, have made many writers forget his really great qualities as a general. Soldiers are always prompt to recognize the prime virtue of physical courage, and Wayne's followers christened their daring commander "Mad Anthony," in loving allusion to his reckless bravery. It is perfectly true that Wayne had this courage, and that he was a born fighter; otherwise, he never would have been a great commander. A man who lacks the fondness for fighting, the eager desire to punish his adversary, and the willingness to suffer punishment in return, may be a great organizer, like McClellan, but can never become a great general or win great victories. There are, however, plenty of men who, though they possess these fine manly traits, yet lack the head to command an army; but Wayne had not only the heart and the hand but the head likewise. No man could dare as greatly as he did without incurring the risk of an occasional check; but he was an able and bold tactician, a vigilant and cautious leader, well fitted to bear the terrible burden of responsibility which rests upon a commander-in-chief.

Of course, at times he had some rather severe lessons. Quite early in his career, just after the battle of the Brandywine, when he was set to watch the enemy, he was surprised at night by the British

general Grey, a redoubtable fighter, who attacked him with the bayonet, killed a number of his men, and forced him to fall back some distance from the field of action. This mortifying experience had no effect whatever on Wayne's courage or self-reliance, but it did give him a valuable lesson in caution. He showed what he had learned by the skill with which, many years later, he conducted the famous campaign in which he overthrew the Northwestern Indians at the Fight of the Fallen Timbers.

Wayne's favorite weapon was the bayonet, and, like Scott he taught his troops, until they were able in the shock of hand-to-hand conflict to overthrow the renowned British infantry, who have always justly prided themselves on their prowess with cold steel. At the battle of Germantown it was Wayne's troops who, falling on with the bayonet, drove the Hessians and the British light infantry, and only retreated under orders when the attack had failed elsewhere. At Monmouth it was Wayne and his Continentals who first checked the British advance by repulsing the bayonet charge of the guards and grenadiers.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.