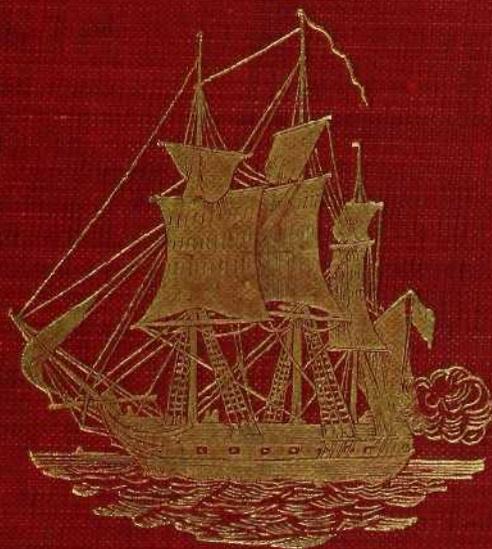


THE FIGHT WITH FRANCE
FOR NORTH AMERICA





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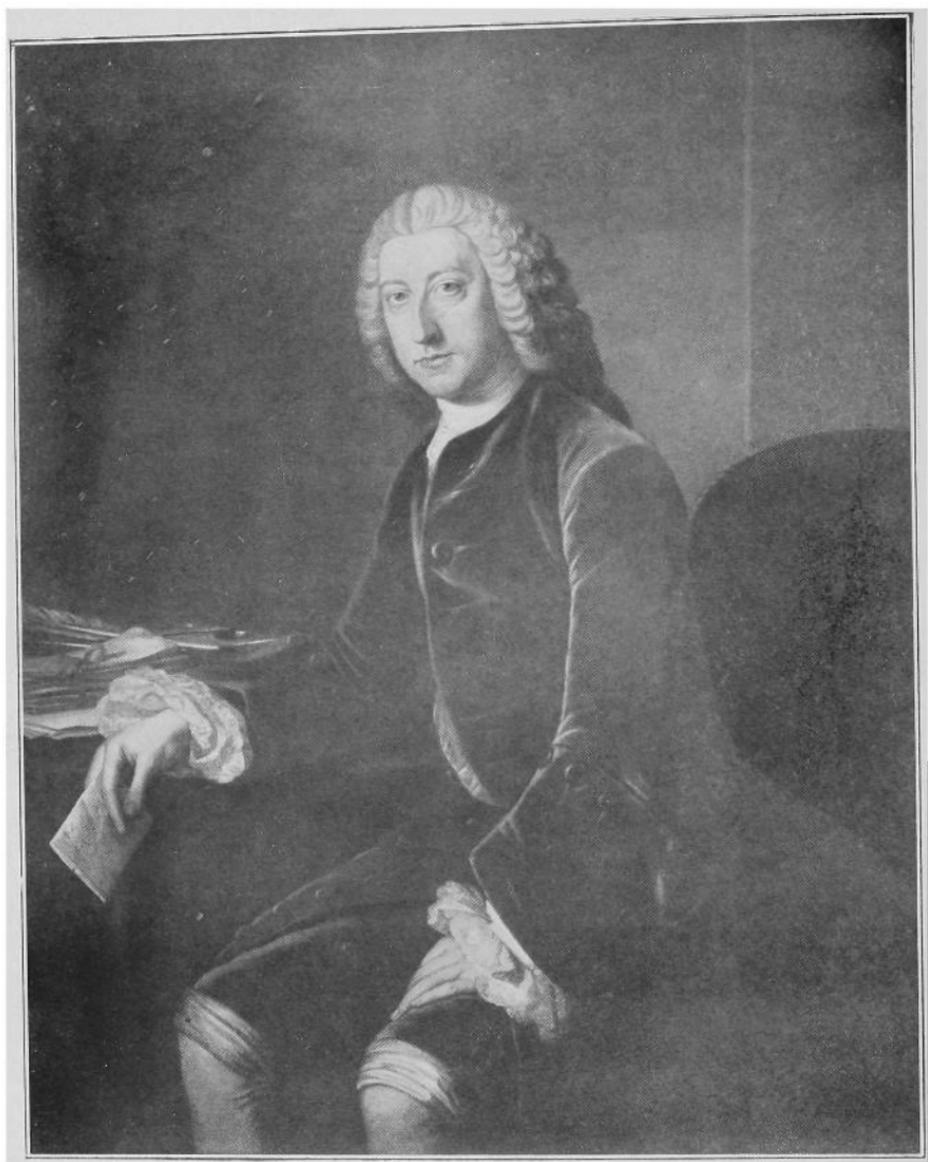


Canada

THE FIGHT
WITH FRANCE FOR
NORTH AMERICA

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WILLIAM PITT, EARL OF CHATHAM.

THE FIGHT
WITH FRANCE FOR
NORTH AMERICA

By A. G. BRADLEY

Author of "Canada in the 20th Century," "Wolfe," &c.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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PREFACE

THE subject of this volume will, for the most part, I have reason to think, possess at least the merit of novelty for the general reader. The oblivion to which in this country the American War of Independence has been consigned is at least comprehensible. It had few dramatic features, and for us was not glorious, either in motive or conduct. But the earlier war with the French power in America was not only rich in picturesque detail and dramatic situation, but formed an important part of the most glorious and most epoch-making struggle in which Great Britain was ever engaged. Yet no English writer, using the term in its narrow sense, has seriously touched the subject since Warburton, early in the century, published his two admirable volumes on the *Conquest of Canada*. The well-known Canadian historian, the late Mr. Kingsford, has devoted a great part of volumes III. and IV. in his exhaustive history of the Dominion to the period in question. But it is idle to speak of what may be called in general terms books of reference (however interesting to the student), when the fascinating pages of the brilliant American, Francis Parkman, are only known to so comparatively small a circle of English readers. On this very account it might seem vain to make any further attempt to recall the American campaigns of Braddock, Loudon, Abercromby,

PREFACE

Amherst, Wolfe and others. Nor can I plead that the South African War, with its many points of comparison, influenced my decision, for this book was already in progress when this second struggle, if I may call it so, for racial supremacy on a distant continent was thrust on the British nation. The fortuitous selection, however, of this moment to retell the story of the Anglo-French struggle for empire in the old days of America may surely be accounted as all in favour of the undertaking.

As a matter of fact, the chief motive that impelled me to the attempt was nothing more than a strong attachment of very old standing to this and kindred subjects—an attachment begotten by many years of residence under the shadow of the Alleghanies, in the most vigorous and impressionable period of life, and stimulated by occasional wanderings with tent and canoe amid the wild and romantic waterways of Canada. I do not know that association with scenes where history has been made in any way strengthens one's qualifications for writing it, but I do know that in a case like this it greatly sweetens the labour.

One practical idea, at any rate, if not based perhaps on a very elevated hypothesis, I had before me in the writing of this book—namely, that a single volume on an unfamiliar subject may perchance in these so-called busy days find readers where a bulkier work of greater merit might be left upon the shelf.

I make no attempt in these pages to address the serious student of this war, if indeed there be any such on this side the Atlantic. I have few incidents to relate that have not been told with greater elaboration elsewhere; indeed, I am writing more

PREFACE

especially for those to whom nearly the whole story will be new, and have even thus no small difficulty in condensing its more salient and familiar features within the necessary limits.

The founding of our Indian Empire is more or less related in the biographies of Clive and Hastings, as well as in other short and handy books, and is by those popular channels made comparatively familiar. Wolfe's life, on the other hand, but partially touches on the struggle which destroyed the French power in America, though he is the hero of it. For Wolfe flashed like a meteor on a contest already many years old, and vanished in a blaze of glory that, though decisive in a sense, was not by any means the closing scene. Every schoolboy knows, or is popularly, though probably very erroneously, supposed to know, the details of the *Plains of Abraham*, but I will undertake to say that there are many thousands of schoolmasters who have never so much as even heard of the still bloodier battle of St. Foy, fought upon the same ground, within six months, by the same troops ; while, so far as my experience goes, the memories of Braddock's defeat, Ticonderoga or Louisbourg are much more often than not of the haziest description, and sometimes are barely even memories in quarters where such recognition would be most expected.

The great Anglo-Saxon family quarrel which robbed Great Britain of the very colonies for whose relief she had spent so much blood and treasure is a question to itself, and a sufficiently big one. But it in no way affects the decisive nature of the French defeat and the far-reaching consequences which contributed to make the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763

PREFACE

the most glorious and the most pregnant moment in recent British history; though Pitt, to be sure, did think it might have been still more emphatically marked. In its significance for the Anglo-Saxon race at large no epoch will compare with it.

The title of this book requires, perhaps, a word of explanation. For one thing, I shall doubtless be informed that Mexico is geographically in North America, and has not yet been annexed to Anglo-Saxon dominion, and may never be. To say that one regards Mexico as belonging rather to the atmosphere of South America would be a poor excuse. It will be more honest to at once admit that I sought long and vainly for a title that would convey, with sufficient brevity, the nature of the work and explain its purport on a book list, before adopting one that involved a technical inaccuracy.

Alternatives will no doubt present themselves at once to most minds, as they did to mine, but it will be sufficient here, I think, to say that none of them seemed to me lucid enough when it is considered how hazy is everything transatlantic to the English mind. "The Seven Years' War in North America" would be the natural and logical title for such a book as this. I have a notion that a reviewer would say that it was sufficient and un mistakeable. But a literary critic would not be human if his own range of books and subjects did not lead him to sometimes underestimate the oblivion under which some chapters of history rest in the popular mind. For myself I feel quite sure that such a title as the above would suggest in many quarters some struggle in which neither England nor France nor the world at large had any great concern.

PREFACE

The printed, as well as the MS. material, in the shape of history, biography, journals, and papers bearing on this war is very ample. In the many volumes of State papers at the Record Office relating to these events, I can find nothing worthy of notice here that has not been utilized in English, American, or Colonial works. Among modern historians Parkman, Kingsford and Warburton stand alone in the attention they have given to this period in America. Among older and more or less contemporary writers, Smollett, Mante and Entick are prominent; while of the numerous diarists Knox is the most exhaustive and valuable upon the English side.

It is not, indeed, from lack of sources of information that so undue a mist would seem to cover this fateful chapter of British history. I only hope that my effort to present it in handy form may help to remind some few at any rate of that incomparable moment when the star of England shone with a lustre greater even than during the epoch that witnessed Waterloo and saw Napoleon carried in a British ship to St. Helena.

A. G. B.

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CHAPTER I

THE war of the Austrian succession, ever memorable to Englishmen for the fierce fights of Dettingen and Fontenoy, was brought to a close in August, 1748, by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. For her lavish expenditure of blood and money, Great Britain had reaped little other profit than a qualified measure of renown. She had shown to the world, however, that nearly thirty years of peace had not robbed her soldiers of their ancient valour, even when handled, as they too often were, with conspicuous incapacity and officered by a system that took no cognizance of merit and was based almost wholly on favouritism and corruption.

At Fontenoy the twelfth regiment, to take a chance instance, was led into action by a captain. At Dettingen the major was in command, while James Wolfe, then a callow youth of sixteen, had to grapple as best he could with the onerous and responsible duties of adjutant, complaining bitterly in his letters of the lack of discipline. Marlborough's officers were dead or doting. Privilege and faction regulated the pay list, though it is well to remember that the beardless colonel died as freely and fought as courageously as the grey-haired subaltern. Let it ever be borne in mind, too, that the king himself and his burly son, the Duke of Cumberland, were

THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR

bright examples of this cardinal virtue of physical courage, and asked no man to dare what they would not dare themselves—nay, were only eager to. They, at least, were not responsible for the unwholesome thing that squandered human life and courted disgrace. If the Duke's level of capacity, moderate though it was, had been maintained throughout the service, there would not have been a great deal to complain of; while to a modern monarch, who asks for nothing better than the heat of battle, and when in it bears himself right nobly, much may surely be forgiven, or ought to be. If George II. had been spoiling for war, and had personally contributed for no sufficient reason to the closing of Walpole's long and prosperous peace in 1739, the people at large, without his excuse—for Hanover was nothing to them—were equally bellicose. If the peace of 1748 left the country with little to show for its big bill, the renewal of the conflict eight years later proved in this matter of a profit and loss account a most singular and brilliant contrast. The mighty struggle commonly known as the Seven Years' War should be kept separate in Englishmen's minds from all other contests in which the nation has been engaged, for it lifted Great Britain from a constantly fluctuating position of more or less equality with rival powers to the first place among the nations of the world.¹ It made her the permanent mistress of the seas and of a world empire unshaken by the military and social upheavals of Europe, whose territorial disputes and dynastic struggles seem by comparison almost trifling

¹ The revolt of the American colonies may almost be called a domestic rupture. At any rate, it did not, as was expected, lower the position of Great Britain.

SUPREMACY IN NORTH AMERICA

but for the torrents of blood they caused to flow. Above all, it inspired her people with a sense of conscious power, of worthy pride sobered by the vast responsibilities that accompanied so great a position, and a self-confidence that was never again seriously shaken.

But as here we have to do only with the Western continent, and not with the contemporaneous founding of the Indian Empire, it will be enough to recall the main issue that was at stake in North America. Whether Canada—or, to speak more pertinently, what is now British North America—was to be French or English seems a sufficiently large question when weighed in the balance with the possession of Minorca or the boundary of a German duchy. But even this shrinks in importance when compared with the still greater issue of Anglo-Saxon or Gallic supremacy on the continent of North America.

Recent events at the sources of the Nile should stimulate our interest in a crisis of infinitely greater moment that a century and a half ago was solved by the gauge of battle. We know something nowadays of that kind of colonization, which consists in hauling up flags and map-making and tactics that are merely obstructive of a rival's industrial enterprise without the power of wholesome competition. It may be human and natural and entirely venial, but on that very account is only entitled to consideration on the same low plane—that of physical force. It is a far cry from Fashoda to the Ohio, from 1899 to 1754. But the most enthusiastic dreamer of African dreams will hardly contend that the Nile hinterland, even with Egypt thrown in, was com-

TREATY OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE

parable as a stake to the North American continent—a white man's country and a white man's climate.¹ This, however, was the stake for which France played in the days of Louis XV., and, thus venturing, lost not only her former position, but her very existence as a transatlantic power.

Though nearly all Europe was in arms, it is with France and England that we are here alone concerned. Great as were the exertions put forth against other powers by these two nations, it was only each other that they had real cause to dread. Their respective armies might win or lose in the Low Countries or Germany, a million of human beings might perish, and torrents of blood might flow, and volumes of military history might be made; but so far as the Western actors in it were concerned, it began and ended with the game of war, waged upon wholly frivolous or personal accounts. Except for the still far-off results of the military development of Prussia under Frederic, the destinies of the world were but little affected by the long misery and suffering under which Europe groaned. To France and England, at any rate, the issue was as nothing compared to that for which their scattered outposts were contending in the pathless forests of America, on the burning plains of India, among the fogs and ice-fields of the North.

The peace, or so-called peace—more accurately described by some historians as an armed truce—which lasted from 1748 to 1756 witnessed the first stealthy

¹ Since this chapter was written, the South African war has given us the picture of another great racial struggle; the minor details of which are, at times, singularly suggestive of the Seven Years' War.

THE AMERICAN POLICY OF FRANCE

efforts of the French American policy, the awakening of England to her danger, and the actual opening of the struggle.

As a matter of fact, the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle had not been signed, nor indeed actually formulated, when the French rulers of Canada, with the sympathy of their king and Government, commenced the operations from which they hoped so much. Their purpose, stated briefly, was to confine the future influence and territory of England to the thirteen colonies which lay at present a mere strip along the Atlantic coast. Behind the more northern of these the scope of Western development was limited, for obvious geographical and other reasons. The treaty Indians of the Six Nations occupied the rear of New England and New York; while behind these, again, stretched the great water-way of the St. Lawrence and its lakes, which constituted the Canadian boundary. But at the back of all the other colonies, trending southwards and nearly parallel with the coast-line, the great range of the Alleghanies lifted its shaggy peaks. The limits of civilization had barely touched it. Nowhere had British settlement as yet aspired to leap this broad barrier of forest-covered mountains into the dreaded Indian-haunted wilderness beyond. The policy of France was to prevent it, if possible, ever doing so, and to make the rampart which nature and Indian hostility had already made so formidable still more effective by erecting a chain of military posts behind it. The French were well established on the St. Lawrence and its parent lakes. They had considerable settlements at the mouth of the Mississippi. Their cherished scheme was to connect the two by a long line of

STRENGTH OF THE RIVAL RACES

forest fortresses, to form firm alliances with the warlike Indians behind the Alleghanies, and to hold for themselves the vast Western territories, of whose value and extent their daring explorers had given them a due appreciation.

The English colonists may fairly be described as unconscious of these schemes or of their import. They had more than sufficient territory for their needs upon the east of the Alleghanies. The mass of them were stay-at-home farmers and planters. Neither Imperial dreams nor future divination were in keeping with their habit of thought. Frenchmen were but vague figures in the imagination of all men south of the Hudson, and the great West but a hazy expression. The British Government, too, troubled its head very little about its colonies; and if in the latter there was a small handful of men who did divine a future so pregnant with vital issues, and raised the alarm, posterity has given them little more of honour than their contemporaries gave them of reward.

Before proceeding, however, to the story of the great struggle, it is indispensable that the reader should have some idea of the relative positions of the two parties to it in North America.

Now the French in Canada, exclusive of some 10,000 Acadians, who were nominally British subjects, numbered about 60,000 souls. The English colonists, on the other hand—or, to be more accurate, the colonial subjects of Great Britain in North America—were reckoned by the middle of the eighteenth century at nearly a million and a half. A fifth or a sixth of this number, to be sure, were negro slaves—a source of weakness rather than of strength. But, in any

THE THIRTEEN COLONIES

case, the preponderance of the British was so overwhelming that the notion of the French being a menace to their present security or a rival for future dominion seems at the first blush incredible. The test of numbers, however, was never a more fallacious one than in this particular case, nor is the apparent paradox at all simplified by the fact of the Englishman's robust personal qualities, both as a man, a soldier, and a colonist.

A short glance at the situation and distribution of the rival races will, I think, show that though the French aspirations were sufficiently audacious, they were very far from being hopeless. The French were concentrated at one point; the British were scattered over an immense area. The former bowed unquestioningly to an autocratic rule; the latter were divided into thirteen distinct self-governing commonwealths. While the Canadians were the obedient tools of king and Church, were generally poor, alert, and warlike, the English colonists were jealous of all authority, absorbed in trade and agriculture, and eminently peaceful. We have now grown so accustomed to think of the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants of our former colonies as Americans and more or less a homogeneous nation, that it requires a mental effort, together with some little grasp of the old state of affairs, to prepare oneself for a proper appreciation of the struggle of 1755-60.

The reader will not resent, I trust, being reminded of the fact that the thirteen colonies whose growing power the French so dreaded, and thus dreading tried to stifle, are represented, with some slight modifications, by the thirteen original States of the Union. They may be seen in the map of to-day

INTER-COLONIAL JEALOUSY

much as they were in the old French wars, trailing down the Atlantic coast from the Canadian border to the then Spanish province of Florida.

Not one of these thirteen commonwealths had any sort of constitutional link with its neighbour. The only tie that bound them together was their common allegiance to the Crown. They were for the most part jealous of each other, and more often inclined to thwart than to promote mutual interests. Some had affinities of race and creed, and in matters non-administrative more readily coalesced; while others, again, cherished towards one another a positive aversion. Each colony had, at some period during the preceding century, begun life upon its own account, and had grown up quite independently of its neighbour and after its own fashion. Some of them, indeed, in the elementary stages of existence had gone so far as to indulge in mimic conflicts, and over the matter of boundaries there was perennial friction. This long straggling line of jealous and often jarring commonwealths resting on the sea-coast was the base of British action against the compact, military colony of France; and a most unsatisfactory base it for a long time proved.

The four New England provinces with that of New York had the friendly but uncertain Six Nations and the French, with their bloodthirsty, so-called Christian Indians, more or less perpetually upon their flank. The rest, from Pennsylvania to infant Georgia, with rare exceptions, had forgotten the earlier horrors of Indian warfare, and had scarcely so much as even set eyes upon a Frenchman. Their pioneers had straggled through the forests that covered, as with a mantle, all Eastern America to the foot-hills

THE WEST NOT YET CONSIDERED

of the Alleghanies; but colonial life in its active and vital sense still clustered along the sea-coast, or hugged the waterways that led there. Between the Alleghanies and the ocean most of the colonies had a territory, roughly approximating to the size of England, with a population of but one or two hundred thousand souls in each. Their people wanted plenty of elbow-room, particularly to the southward, where negro labour was largely used; but even in such case the time had hardly come when lust of land prompted perilous enterprises. Society was not yet dense enough to produce a surplus who considered it worth while to cross the mountains and renew the fight with a fiercer wilderness and a more formidable, for better armed, savage than their grandfathers and great-grandfathers had waged war against in the days of the Stuarts and William of Orange. Men who had a sufficient livelihood, too, were less feverish and more contented in those times than in later ones. Nor were they much better equipped for subduing the savage and the wilderness in the days of the Georges than they had been in those of the Tudors and Stuarts. Those all-powerful factors of civilization — steam and electricity — were undreamt of. Machinery and scientific road-making were in their infancy. It is not surprising that Virginia, for instance, with a white population of 200,000, and a territory between the mountains and the sea as large as England, and as generally habitable, should have troubled itself little with thoughts of distant adventure. There was no incentive whatever for the Virginian, or Carolinian, or Marylander of 1750 to cross the Ohio watershed and fight the most formidable savage warrior that the world has

THE NEW ENGLAND COLONIES

ever seen, for the privilege of growing corn and hay, or stock, that he could not get to any market, even if he lived to make the attempt. The average colonist of those days, leading, south of the Hudson at any rate, a humdrum, comfortable life, cannot be blamed if he failed to grasp the situation, or read the map of America as we read it now, and was inclined to look upon the reputed schemes of wandering Frenchmen as hardly worthy the attention of practical men, till the rude awakening came.

A glance at the map will show that the New England colonies, at that time four in number, together with New York, had no outlet to the then scarcely known and little appreciated West. As I have said, they had behind them the famous "Six Nations," a leading factor in the American politics of that day, by far the most powerful Indian combination, and at the same time the most in touch with colonial civilization. Unlike the other Indian tribes, their sympathies had been consistently pro-English. But even so, they may be said to have held, in some sort, the balance of power between the English and the French, which latter nation were perpetually intriguing for their alliance.

Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, standing in the order named as regards relative importance, constituted the Puritan colonies of that day, Vermont and Maine being carved out of them later. These provinces alone understood, though perhaps not very perfectly, the art of combination for offensive and defensive war. They were practically homogeneous in stock and creed and habits of thought. Both the Indian and the Frenchman were still for them a burning reality, and they knew

THE NEW ENGLAND COLONIES

them only too well. They were much the most warlike group of the British colonies, not from choice, but from necessity. Their origin and Puritan tone of life are so familiar as to be hardly worth an allusion ; but the vulgar error of supposing the New Englanders to be all of humble extraction, while the Southern colonists had a monopoly of blood, cannot be sufficiently held up to ridicule. Numbers of cadets of arms-bearing and land-owning families went to New England, but both political and social life was there cast in democratic lines, and local conditions did not favour the acquisition of great estates. An influential and higher class of varied origin arose in New England as in the South, but they had to maintain their position by superior force of character and intellect, perhaps, rather than by superior estate. At the same time, as near an approach to social equality as is possible among an educated and civilized community existed in New England. Local government was highly organized, and politics a matter of universal interest. People lived in communities, very much under the eye of their neighbours, and of a public opinion to which no slight deference was paid.

This latter was narrow, vigorous, and at times tyrannical, and strongly influenced by a religious bigotry that bordered on fanaticism. Tempered by modern progress and a high education, the New England character has broadened into a type whose good points are greatly in the ascendant. In the colonial period the asperities of the average New Englander were uppermost, his virtues less evident to his fellow-colonists, by whom he was cordially disliked ; while the same antipathetic feeling dis-

NEW ENGLANDERS AS SOLDIERS

tinguishes the sentiments of all English travellers of that day.¹ In education, however, at that time the New Englanders as a community were far in advance of the rest of the continent, and, for that matter, of the rest of the world. Indigence and ignorance were almost unknown; and though there were no rich people, there were scarcely any who were very poor. The same religious and political zeal which had created their schools, churches, and local governments made some sort of military organization easier for them than for their more apathetic neighbours.

At the same time, while better constituted for raising, feeding, and paying regiments, their social system contained in itself drawbacks to military efficiency not so obvious in the other colonies. Every private, whether farmer, fisherman, or mechanic, was a politician, and, though ready to fight, watched with jealous eye lest his terms of service, often loaded with conditions, were in danger of being infringed. Still worse, perhaps, the officers were chosen by the men they were to command — not a bad plan in a company of experienced bush-fighters bound on perilous enterprise, but one fatal to discipline when extended to a whole army of raw militiamen. Massachusetts was far the most powerful of the New England colonies, while Connecticut was easily second. These provinces, moreover, had produced both writers and preachers whose fame had crossed the Atlantic. They had performed, too, more than one spontaneous feat of arms which did them credit and gained them the thanks of the mother

¹ The higher class of Bostonians are usually exempted from the strictures of these travellers.

THE COLONY OF NEW YORK

country. In the very last war, in the year 1745, and at a moment of depression to British arms in Europe, their raw militia, with the help of the fleet, had attacked and captured the great French fortress of Louisbourg. In the coming war they were to far eclipse the efforts of all the other colonies combined, and twenty years later, in that of the Revolution, were to hold an only less decisive lead. Yet in 1860 the seceding States of the South had so far forgotten American history as to profess a conviction that "The Yankees would not fight." The awakening was bitter, as we all know.

New York to some extent had shared with the Puritan colonies the perils of French and Indian neighbourhood, and like them had been compelled, only in a less degree, to organize and to fight. She was widely different, however, both in origin and composition. The Hudson River was her great artery, and along its banks for the most part the life of the colony throbbed. The city at its mouth was then, as now, the most light-hearted and cosmopolitan upon the Atlantic coast. Its population was somewhat heterogeneous, but the English and the Dutch largely preponderated, and alone influenced the life and tone of the colony. On the seaboard nearly all trace of the early jealousy that had not unnaturally distinguished the two races had disappeared with the tie of a common danger, a common Protestantism and a free government. The cast of society was aristocratic and in curious contrast to the Anglo-Dutch peoples of South Africa. The Hollanders were indeed partly responsible for the tone. Great estates upon the Hudson had been originally granted to Dutch gentlemen on condition of their settling

PENNSYLVANIA

them with dependants in semi-feudal fashion. The Patroon families were few in number, but perhaps the nearest approach to a feudal aristocracy in North America. English families who had achieved wealth and distinction or had official positions intermarried with these, while there was a tendency in the older parts of the colony for broad acres and gentility to identify themselves together and to hold aloof from the mass of the people. In spite of the strong Dutch element, the prevailing creed was Anglican. The succession of William of Orange to the English throne, and still more perhaps a zealous Protestantism and a lively dread of both the Indians and Catholic French, had produced a loyalty that, with some notable exceptions, was in a fashion more ardent than that of the republican Puritans of New England. Nor did the admirable Huguenot element, which found here a hearty welcome and freedom from persecution, in any way dissent from the attachment to a Government that made their lives once again worth living. No stratum of provincial life was greatly agitated by religious or political dogmas. It was an easy-going, prosperous, but perhaps slightly colourless community, which at its capital went to balls and plays and made merry according to its degree without any fear of the village deacon or the Quaker legislator.¹ New Jersey, or the Jerseys—for it was once divided—and Delaware, were colonies of secondary importance, and somewhat polyglot in population; communities of farmers of various nationalities,

¹ This description would not apply to the Dutch of Albany and the Upper Hudson, concerning whom see a later note.

THE SOUTHERN COLONIES

lacking in any characteristics that one can take hold of without undue elaboration.

Pennsylvania, on the other hand, from her size, prosperity, and large population, was of great importance. As a military factor, however, she was almost a cipher—a condition due, of course, to the powerful Quaker element in her population. What was not Quaker was very largely German, stupid for the most part, speaking only its own language, and always indifferent to everything but its own personal concerns. To the back country on the Alleghanies the stream of a more virile population, to be sure, had been long finding its way from the north-east of Ireland, about whom a word will be said later. But Pennsylvania, as a whole, was fat, prosperous, and fanatically pacific. Her seaboard counties were fertile and well farmed, while if Boston was the most serious, and New York the most worldly, Philadelphia was the most comfortable of colonial capitals. Fight Indians or Frenchmen, however, more particularly as they were tolerably safe themselves, its people would not: a sore point enough with their neighbours, as we shall see later on.¹

Maryland and Virginia may, for purposes of general description, be fairly classed together. Negro slavery was a feature in all the colonies, but it was not till the traveller reached Maryland that he found it a leading factor in social and economic life. Then,

¹ Pennsylvania had been originally settled by Swedes in 1627. They were forcibly subjugated in 1655 by the neighbouring Dutch of New Amsterdam (New York), who themselves passed under English rule in 1664. Philadelphia and Pennsylvania proper were founded by Penn in 1682.

VIRGINIA

as a century later, though in a less marked degree, the slave line, which was identical with the northern boundary of the old Catholic province, divided Anglo-Saxon America in half. The Southern colonies were already diverging upon lines so similar to one another, and so at variance with the rest, as to give them in time quite a reasonable pretext for posing as a separate nation. In 1750, however, things had not gone nearly so far. Yet Virginia was even then so pronounced a type of the Southern provinces that a brief description of her condition will enable us to dismiss the others with a word.

As Massachusetts was the oldest and most powerful of all the Northern colonies, so was Virginia the oldest and most influential of the Southern group. Her people were almost wholly of English stock, and at this time numbered nearly 200,000, with more than half as many negro slaves. They were a community of agriculturists, divided into three practically distinct social grades. There were no towns worth mentioning, and no trade to speak of. The production of tobacco, and the foodstuffs necessary to those who grew it, was the sole industry; the ownership of land and negroes the test by which men were graded. Upon the basis of this an aristocracy arose, which was to some extent crystallized by laws of primogeniture and entail. All the world knows Virginia was the cavalier colony, and knowing this much has been greatly addicted to exaggerating its significance. Virginia was first settled neither by political nor religious refugees, nor yet by idealists of any kind. Its early colonists were Englishmen by blood, in no way discontented with English institutions, but on the contrary anxious to reproduce as

THE EVOLUTION OF VIRGINIA

nearly as might be another England beyond the Atlantic.

The contour of the country, the early shipment of convicts and others as indented servants, together with the episcopal and English spirit, encouraged after the first rude beginnings the unit of land as the fountain of power and influence. Some of the colonists were cadets of good families, though what proportion (a small one probably) they ultimately formed of those who emerged as large landholders and the founders of notable families is most uncertain and of little importance. At any rate, the period, though not remote enough perhaps to win respect from the Latin or the Celt, is sufficiently so to satisfy the modest genealogical requirements of the average Anglo-Saxon. The popular local legend that the Virginian gentry were largely descended from scions of the then small body of English nobility is too ludicrous to call for serious notice.

The nomenclature of the earlier settler in Virginia at once dissipates so absurd a theory. A moment's thought would remind any person of ordinary historical knowledge that the small group of privileged individuals who constituted the British nobility of the seventeenth century had opportunities at home and on the Continent of forwarding the interests of their offspring of a more congenial and brilliant kind than would be implied by banishment to the life of a settler in the backwoods of America. The numerous squirearchy of that day are of course quite another affair, and that they of their abundance contributed a quota of younger sons to what became the ruling class of Virginia is quite a reasonable notion, for the alternative as

THE INFLUX OF CAVALIERS

often as not was apprenticeship to a tradesman or country attorney.¹

However that may be, the early sentiment of the colony was to get as much land as you could, and as much unpaid labour. Conditions encouraged an imitation of English life so far as circumstances would admit. As soon as the rough and ready democracy, inevitable to the pioneer period of a community struggling for a livelihood in a timbered country peopled with hostile Indians, had opportunity to stratify, it seized it. When the grandchildren of the first settlers were still young, the nucleus of another England had arisen: parsons and parish churches, county lieutenants and magistrates, and the beginnings of a rural aristocracy.

The death of Charles I. sent another wave of immigration to the colony, that intensified its early predilections for conservative English ways. This was composed of loyalists from every class of the community whom the fortune of war had deprived of property or employment. Though many of them, including most of those who were of note or influence at home, returned at the Restoration, the stimulus given

¹ People possessed of the popular fallacy that in the "good old times" the sons of country squires held aloof from trade and only followed "the professions" would experience a rude shock on the slightest examination of family history in the 17th and earlier 18th century, and for most obvious reasons. The squirearchy was relatively much more numerous than now. Individual families larger. There was no standing army worth mentioning. The navy was mostly officered by rough sea dogs. Macaulay's familiar picture of the country parson carousing in the servants' hall, and marrying my lady's waiting woman, is at least suggestive enough of the social dignity of the Church. The Bar was extremely expensive, and much more the resort of heirs to property than of younger sons.

SOCIAL VIRGINIA

to the Anglican and stratified form of life already formulated in Virginia was very great, and fixed it in such fashion as neither republicanism nor still greater social earthquakes in modern times have been able wholly to destroy. "Everybody here," wrote a seventeenth-century governor of Virginia (alluding to the planters), "would fain be a gentleman."

By 1750 it had been tolerably well settled who were and who were not. There were the great planters, the plain farmers or yeomen, the labouring white men, indented servants of a varied but mostly low type, and lastly the negro slaves. The first three classes merged indefinitely into one another, of course, but of the ascendancy of the upper class in social and political life there was not the smallest doubt. They formed the Governor's Council or Upper House, and except in the newer back counties, where life was naturally more democratic, filled the House of Burgesses, which was a salaried assembly. They monopolized all the Crown appointments, and at the same time profited by a system of taxation that fell far more hardly on the poor than on the rich. They were, however, penurious to a fault in the expenditure of public money, always excepting the matter of their own salaries. They were at constant loggerheads with the royal governor, or the deputy who usually represented him, either upon the question of patronage or of his official salary; but this in no way interfered with the "Church and King" tone of the colony. They sent their sons to England for their education when they could afford it, but otherwise utilized the services of the very indifferent clergy as no doubt equally indifferent tutors. They

MODE OF LIFE IN VIRGINIA

led patriarchal, isolated lives on plantations cut out of the forests, and for the most part abutting on tidal rivers, whence English ships carried home their sole produce—tobacco—and supplied them with such necessaries as they could not procure at home, and such luxuries as they could afford. They were a pleasant, hospitable people, who, unlike the typical New Englander, at once took the fancy of the stranger, their whole system of life being based on uneconomic principles. They were inclined themselves to be extravagant, and to forestall their incomes, and as their one crop, tobacco, restricted by navigation laws to an English market, fluctuated terribly in price, the colony was liable to equivalent fluctuations in fortune. Its upper class, however, with many of the faults due to a life of peculiar seclusion from the outer world, and the demoralizing influence of negro slavery, were generally frank, sensible, and able for any emergencies to which they might be called from their normal humdrum and comfortable life when once aroused.¹

The middling class owned in the aggregate a vast quantity both of land and negroes. But, unlike the Northern yeomanry, they had no education, for there were no schools. The presence of slavery had even thus early implanted a certain contempt for manual labour, which is wholly mischievous in a grade of society that has neither birth nor education, nor yet possessions sufficient to justify abstention from it. The energy and utility of the common farmers of Virginia

¹ Burnaby, Smythe, Weld, Captain Anbury, the Swedish scientist Dr. Kalm, and other European travellers, have left interesting pictures of social life in Virginia and the Southern colonies at or about this period.

NORTH AND SOUTH CAROLINA

and the Southern colonies were then, and for a century afterwards, greatly sapped by this demoralizing influence. Upon the class below it had a far worse effect, the "poor white" of the South from that day to this being the most degraded type of Anglo-Saxon in existence, and beyond all doubt the greatest out-cast.

I have dwelt thus long on Virginia for the reason already given; namely, that she may fairly stand, with modifications, as a type of her Southern neighbours. Maryland had all her features, though in some points less pronounced. In her inception she had presented the unwonted spectacle of a Roman Catholic province inculcating the notion of complete toleration.¹ With time and increased population, however, she had drifted into a community chiefly Anglican in creed as well as in blood and sentiment. North Carolina was a rough and rude imitation of both. Her upper class was weak, and did not stand out like that of Virginia. Though a large slave-owning colony, North Carolina never achieved the social *éclat* of her slave-owning neighbours. Her population, though largely of British origin, was much less homogeneous than that of Virginia, which had only a small German element in its back country, and a slight dash of Huguenot blood in its older settlements.

¹ In 1692 the Church of England was established by law, Dissenters and Catholics placed under penalties and disabilities, and a tax of forty pounds' weight of tobacco per head enacted for the support of the clergy. Protestant Dissenters were soon released from the penal laws, but these remained in force for Catholics, as did the church tax for the whole population, till the revolutionary war; a strange return to Lord Baltimore and the Catholic founders of the province.

LIFE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina, on the other hand, had a well-to-do, well-educated, and powerful, though small, aristocracy. They drew their wealth from slave-tilled plantations of rice and indigo; but, unlike the Virginians, who loved a country life and hated towns, the South Carolina planter was also a merchant, and lived mostly in Charleston, which seaport had some reputation for social elegance and even intellectual activity. There were plain up-country farmers, however, even then in South Carolina, largely Scotch-Irish, and many "poor whites."¹ There was a great deal of Huguenot blood, too, in the colony, though the tone of life was wholly English. Of Georgia, which was destined to run upon similar lines, there is no need to speak, as she was still in her infancy.

Now there had been no considerable immigration to America during the first half of the eighteenth century. The increase of population, though it had been rapid, was mainly native born. The chief exception to this was furnished by the Scotch-Irish exiles who since the beginning of the century had

¹ South Carolina approximated more nearly to a West India colony. Its merchant-planters visited England more than any other American community. Charleston, though small, was tastefully built, and much admired by strangers. Trade restrictions, which in various ways irritated other colonies, did not affect S. Carolina. It was prosperous and growing wealthy, and had no reservations in its devotion to the British Crown. Colonial visitors from the north remarked on the richness of the dress of both men and women. The church and parish formed the unit of local government. Most of its higher class were sent to England for their education. Out of over a hundred American students entered at the Inns of Court during the years following the French war, nearly half, says a recent American historian, came from S. Carolina alone—small as she was; a significant test of her social development and intellectual alertness.

THE ULSTER IMMIGRANTS IN AMERICA

been leaving Londonderry and Belfast in a steady stream. They had been introduced there, as every one knows, to fight the wild Celt of Ulster and to reclaim the lands he would not till, and they had done both with conspicuous success. North-eastern Ireland from a blood-stained wilderness had become a land of plenty, busy with the hum of trade and agriculture. But the English merchants were afraid of the new linen trade that was arising in Ireland, and the Anglo-Irish bishops did not like the Presbyterians. So the Irish linen trade was crippled as the wool trade had been destroyed, and the Presbyterian religion was treated on a par with that of Rome. The first piece of insanity was the work of the English Government, the second that of the Irish House of Lords, under the influence of the Irish bishops. In the latter case, the efforts to emancipate the Presbyterians, which the whole kingdom approved of, were defeated by the Anglican prelates in the Dublin Parliament by methods familiar enough to those acquainted with the performances of that strange assembly. The irony of the matter was not only that the Scotch immigrants had created industrial Ulster, and had covered themselves with glory as a loyal garrison at a great crisis, but that their crime lay in adhering to the form of Protestantism which was actually recognised by their persecutors as the established religion of the country their ancestors had left at the king's invitation!

These two crushing blows, falling near together, drove from a country that sorely needed them thousands of an industrious, hardy, virile, and God-fearing stock. It is said that a hundred thousand of these Ulster Protestants crossed the Atlantic

ULSTER BLOOD IN AMERICA

in twenty years.¹ Now the Irish Catholic immigration to America, it should be remembered, is a comparatively modern affair. Before the famine of 1848-49 it was inconsiderable. In the first half of the eighteenth century there was practically no such thing. The Scotch-Irishman, however, loomed always large as a strenuous and picturesque figure in that critical and picturesque period. To come of Scotch-Irish blood is held to be of itself a good thing among Americans of colonial stock. The other sort of Irishman has, on the contrary, to face a prejudice almost inconceivable to the Englishman unacquainted with American social life—a prejudice aggravated, no doubt, by the conspicuous part which he plays in the more disreputable phases of American politics.

The Scotch-Irishman as a historical figure is regarded with no little respect, and justly so, as having been one of the stoutest contributors to the making of America. These early immigrants went scarcely at all to the New England colonies, landing principally at Philadelphia, and in lesser numbers at Charleston. They seemed determined not to place themselves again in the power of any Government, or again to trust themselves within reach of sectarian jealousy or unfriendly legislation. They found their way in no long time to the back-country of Pennsylvania on the north, and to that of the Carolinas on the

¹ A fresh wave of Ulster emigration reached America just prior to the revolutionary war, when, the long leases under Lord Donegal and other great proprietors falling in, heavier fines for renewal and higher rents were asked than the old tenants would face. Catholic competition, however, maintained the price asked; and the Presbyterian exiles, full of bitterness, joined Washington's armies in large numbers.

THE SCOTCH-IRISH BORDERERS

south, and threw themselves, in both cases, with consummate courage upon the forest-covered barrier which was then the Ultima Thule of Anglo-Saxon America. Being continually reinforced from Ulster, they gradually pushed on to the rear of the outermost colonial settlement along the base of the Alleghany mountains. Those from Pennsylvania crept slowly southwards into Virginia. Those from the Carolinas moved northwards in the same fashion, till the second generation of the original immigrants formed a continuous though thin line of settlements, stretching behind the Southern colonies from Pennsylvania to Georgia: a vanguard of virile frontiersmen, who were equally handy with plough, axe, rifle, or tomahawk. They crossed the line of five colonies, but had little traffic with any, being, in fact, a people unto themselves, worshipping God in their own fashion, and educating their children to the best of their power, as they pushed their clearings deep into the shadow of the Alleghanies, and fought Indians so continuously that their austere natures took on, in some sort, the bloody traditions of the wilderness. If they lost something of their old-country morality and piety they were of inestimable service in defending the Indian frontier and in later times conquering and settling the States that lay immediately behind it. To meet the Indian of that period in the woods upon equal terms required a special training and an exceptional hardiness. The average colonist was no match for him. The rangers of New England and the Scotch-Irish frontiersmen of the middle and Southern colonies were almost the only men who could be relied upon to successfully face them in the woods upon anything like equal terms. The battle

BACKWOODSMEN AND INDIANS

of the Great Kennawha, fought a quarter of a century later between a thousand picked borderers and a thousand Indians, is, in the opinion of the best living authority, Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, the first occasion on which a body of Americans defeated an Indian force of like strength in a pitched battle in the forest. I mention this to give some notion of the quality of the foe whom English and French alike had to face, and that ideas derived from the discrepancy in arms between modern civilization and barbarism may not obscure the tremendous difficulties of Indian warfare in eighteenth-century America.

The red man was not quite such a sure shot as the American borderer, but he was better at taking cover and at ambuscades than even the most accomplished backwoodsman. His discipline, too, which perhaps sounds strange, was better. He was rarely foolhardy, for a warrior's life was precious to the tribe. A maximum of damage to the foe with a minimum of loss to themselves was the recognised Indian principle; and when this was practised by crafty savages, who scarcely knew what fear meant, it told heavily against white men, who frequently threw their lives away in useless exhibitions of courage, and often refused to recognise inevitable defeat. It must not, however, be supposed that these Alleghany borderers were all Scotch Irishmen. They formed indeed the main element, but many Germans, as well as adventurers from the English settlements, joined their communities, sharing the perils of the border wars, and the scarcely less hazardous pursuits of an ever-doubtful and precarious peace.

Nor in these remarks on the various colonies have

COLONIAL GOVERNMENTS

I said anything of their Governments or their relations with the Crown. The subject in detail is so complicated that an entire chapter would not cover it. Fortunately, however, there was such a general family resemblance between them in this particular that a page or two will be sufficient for what is necessary here. Some of the colonies were still proprietary, some had long ceased to be, others never had been. The difference was not so material as it sounds. The proprietors of colonies such as Pennsylvania and Maryland held them in fief from the Crown, as the English Palatinates of Durham, Chester, and the Welsh Marches had once been held, and they were subject to the same Imperial restrictions as their non-proprietary neighbours. In some colonies, therefore, the Governor was appointed by the proprietors; in others by the Crown, represented by the Board of Trade. He was generally an Englishman, though there are many instances of the honour being conferred on prominent colonists. In all cases, however, the Governor was supported by a council, usually twelve in number, appointed for life by the Crown, either directly or through himself as its representative. Besides this, and of at least equal importance, was an elective assembly. The Governors more often than not were represented in the colony by a deputy. They were by no means the dignified and hospitality-dispensing figureheads that now preside over our constitutional colonies. Their influence was very real, their seat a thorny one. They had to uphold the rights of the Crown in the face of constant attempts to encroach upon it. They were the dispensers of all patronage, though the home Government sometimes went behind them,

THE COLONIAL GOVERNORS

and the colonial assemblies were frequently fighting for a share of it. The power of the purse lay with the assembly, which was apt to be niggardly to a degree in everything except the salaries of its own members. That of the Governor, too, was in their power, and they used this power freely to squeeze concessions out of him. It is scarcely too much to say that the legislature of every colony was in a chronic state of friction with its Governor. That the majority of these were men of very middling capacity goes almost without saying in a period when jobbery was the mainspring of all political patronage.

It is only natural, too, at a time when bribery and corruption were a matter of course in the mother country that the colonial Governor's patronage was often not above suspicion of similar methods, a state of things which the disappointed aspirants for local office, it need hardly be said, resented with much virtuous indignation. But appointments in those days were at least made from the class presumably best qualified to fill them, and even in the matter of honesty and public spirit would compare extremely favourably with the type of individual that the enlightened elector of modern New York or Philadelphia has to behold with resignation entrusted with the control of public affairs and the public purse. Nor were the colonial Governors by any means men always wanting in discretion and ability, as we shall see. But whether good or bad they were equally the object upon which the colonial burgess vented his suspicion, his discontent, his economic theories or his eloquence. It was the duty of the Governor to direct the Indian policy of the colony,

DIFFICULTIES OF CO-OPERATION

to attempt combination with other colonies for offence or defence, and to do his best to see that the navigation laws, which forbade exports to any country but England and in any but English ships, were enforced. The duties of a colonial Governor, in short, were wearing and irksome ones. His salary was not usually a large one; at any rate, that of a Deputy Governor's was not: and he had often to fight his assembly for the full amount of even that modest remuneration.

It will now, I trust, be obvious how ill adapted were these disintegrated and self-absorbed provinces for effective and active combination. The vast distances that separated them, with the consequent lack of intercourse and communications, the abundant elbow-room that each still enjoyed, the jealousies and mutual prejudices which swayed them, the number of Governments that had to be consulted, with their narrow views and diverging interests, all conspired to make unity well-nigh impossible. It was fortunate that a handful of men were found who rose superior to these difficulties, or, to be more exact, saw at a glance their insuperable nature and aroused England to her danger before it was too late.

Let us now turn to Canada, the seat of French transatlantic power, and note the contrast she presented. Her southern boundary was roughly identical with that which now divides the Dominion from the United States, except as regards Acadia or Nova Scotia, a province which, though as yet peopled only by French peasants or *habitants*, had been for long under English rule. Coming westward, however, to Lake Ontario, we approach more debateable ground, and on passing the great Canadian fort at Niagara

CANADA

and reaching Lake Erie the French could look southward over a vast country which both nations vaguely claimed.

So far as the French were concerned, this vagueness was now to assume more definite shape. But Canadian life at this time was mainly concentrated upon the banks of the St. Lawrence, having Montreal for its western limit and Quebec with the settlements immediately below it for its eastern and greater rallying point. With the numerous and scattered trading posts far remote from these old-established centres I will not now burden the reader's mind.

Though the colony was actually much older, as a substantial reality it can only be said to date from the immigration which Louis XIV. poured into it about the middle of the seventeenth century. Founded by clerics of the narrowest ultramontane school, in a period of over fifty years it had only accumulated a population of some 3,000 souls. The pioneering exploits of the Jesuit missionaries form a heroic page of American history, with which, however, we have nothing to do here. It will be sufficient to say that everything had been made subsidiary to maintaining the religious dogma which had sent these early Fathers cheerfully to the stake and torture. The material result of this policy was disheartening, as may be gathered from the statistics quoted above. The feeble colony had, in fact, just contrived to hold its own by dint of hard fighting and the divisions of its Indian enemies, aided by the consummate diplomatic skill of the Jesuit pioneers.

But Louis XIV., while still young, had set himself with no little energy to rectify this state of things, and by dint of great inducements poured quite a large

COLONIAL ZEAL OF LOUIS XIV.

stream of immigrants into New France. Officers and soldiers already out there were given grants of land. Peasants, selected with some care, were shipped out from Dieppe and Rochelle, more particularly from the former, as the Huguenot atmosphere of the Biscayan seaport alarmed the rigid Catholics of Quebec. No English colony had been either started or nourished by the Crown in this fashion. Convicts and the victims of unsuccessful rebellion were the only class of persons that the British Government had directly interested itself in transporting free to its colonies. A remarkable feature, however, of this paternally organized exodus to Canada was that families or married couples formed no part of it. Shipments of single men were forwarded to replace the bachelor soldiers whose swords had been turned into ploughshares, and single women gathered in the same fashion and not without care in the selection were sent out in succeeding shiploads. Under the immediate supervision of the Church these ex-soldiers and imported maidens, making choice as best they could, were joined together in the bonds of matrimony.

The girls were divided into two classes, demoiselles when possible for the officer settlers, while the humbler majority were allotted to the peasant soldiers. The king himself took a keen interest in this matrimonial mart, and was determined that Canada should be populated without loss of time. The young Canadian who remained single was pulled up before the authorities and made to show good cause for his backwardness, while those who continued obdurate were singled out for taxation and other unpleasant attentions, and their lives made generally miserable. If a father did not see to

SOCIAL EVOLUTION OF CANADA

it that his daughter was married on arriving at a suitable age, he was soundly rated; and if he did not then take the hint, worse things befel him. On the other hand, the willing and blushing bridegroom was presented with a handsome bonus, and substantial premiums were offered to those who contributed most abundantly to the increase of population. A noblesse was part of the scheme, and a noblesse was consequently formed and gradually added to. It was not very easy to make one. The tendency to acquire and settle upon a large tract of land and gather dignity from the importance it gave, which distinguished the Anglo-Saxons of the more Southern colonies, had no counterpart in Canada. The French theory of aristocracy was somewhat the same; but the Frenchmen in Canada who had to play the part were generally not much better suited for it than was the country, which gave but small returns for most laborious work, and whose social life centred chiefly in one capital. A considerable number of the portionless, lower noblesse with which France swarmed had come out with their regiments to Canada; but in spite of inducements to stay, most of them, with the natural gregariousness of Frenchmen added to the chances of military renown, had returned to France. Blue blood and an old name, both in the France and England of that day, preferred the sword to the ploughshare or the monotony of the backwoods, save where really stirring adventure offered a compensation. American light literature, disregarding accessible evidence, and seizing with avidity on any point that breaks the democratic level of immigration, has exaggerated the origin of the French Canadian noblesse as it has done that of the govern-

CANADIAN NOBLESSE

ing classes in the Southern colonies, and given them glorified antecedents which pale materially before the light of the simplest investigation. A small number, however, of the petty French noblesse, officers chiefly, were on the spot to form a nucleus, and to these were rapidly added others who had no claim to birth or blood, but only a little money or a little influence. What there was of an aristocracy in the English colonies had created itself by acquiring land, which, under an industrial system, was capable of giving comparative wealth and all that this means. There was no scheme of a noblesse, but its Anglo-Saxon equivalent had developed naturally, and was moreover of a practical and unmistakable description.

The Canadian noblesse, however, was an artificial affair, a forced matter in its inception, and though a very distinct order of society, acquiring but little substance. Just as an early Governor of Virginia wrote that everybody wanted to be a gentleman, so the seventeenth-century Governors of Canada reported that there was a universal craving to get a patent of nobility with its somewhat barren accompaniments, and assumptions of empty rank were common and easy enough in a country where outside the official class neither noble nor simple at that time earned much more than their food and clothes. Seigneuries large in extent, covered with dense forests, cleared only on the river front, formed the unit of life outside the few towns. The log-houses of the peasant tenantry extended along the river front, while the scarcely superior mansion of the seigneur, with the inevitable mill and not seldom a parish church, stood close at hand. Trifling rents, and those paid, when paid at all, in kind, just served to keep

CANADIAN SEIGNEURIES

this strange species of nobleman and his family in food and clothes. Even this result was not always achieved, kings of France having more than once to send out provisions to save their transatlantic nobility from starvation. Sometimes even their wives and daughters worked in the field. Whatever his origin, however, once ennobled, the seigneur was not at liberty to follow any trade or calling, and it is small wonder that "sloth and pride," according to contemporary French writers, were his distinguishing points. But these very attributes and the conditions of his life, while inimical to success in peace, made him formidable in war. The ragged Canadian *gentilhomme*, inured to the chase and a stranger to luxury, equally at home in the trackless forest or on the boiling rapid, was the *beau ideal* of an irregular soldier. Brave, hardy, adventurous, and somewhat callous to human suffering, he was an admirable leader to a peasantry who shared most of his qualities and were only less ready than himself to answer the call to arms.¹

But by the period we are treating of Canada had made some advance in prosperity, and in normal times was at least self-supporting. There were a few prosperous seigneuries and a handful of well-to-do seigneurs, though whether rich or poor the pride of caste, greatly aided by official encouragement, had been maintained. But neither seigneur nor *habitant* had any share in the government of the country, which was wholly autocratic.

In the city of Quebec, unsurpassed for its pride of pose by any capital in the world, was centred the

¹ Dr. Kalm and La Hontaine, among others, have left interesting pictures of Canadian life as they saw it in the middle and the beginning of the eighteenth century, respectively.

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

power to which all Canada yielded unquestioned obedience. There, in the chateau of St. Louis, upon the famous rock, whence cannon frowned over the spires and gables of church and monastery, sat the all-powerful Viceroy of the King of France. Nor was he, like the governor of an English province, commissioned to this important post with little or no regard to personal capacity. On the contrary, much care was usually exercised in his selection. He was nearly always a fighting man or statesman of approved ability; sometimes he was both. To speak of him, however, as all-powerful is perhaps hardly accurate. It would be more exact to describe him as the leader of a Triumvirate, of whom the other members were the Intendant and the Archbishop. The former of these two functionaries was a person of legal acquirements rather than of rank. He looked after the finances, and to some extent shared the government with his chief. He did much of the confidential correspondence of the colony with the home authorities, and may be described as a check in the king's interest upon the absolutism of the Governor. The third member of the trio, the Archbishop, guarded the interests of the powerful Church of Canada, with its monasteries, convents, colleges, and wide landed possessions, and kept watch over that supremacy which it regarded as vital to the salvation of Canadians and in some sort its due on account of the great share it had taken in the early struggles of the colony. To this triumvirate was joined in times of stress a military commander, as will be amply demonstrated later on. However much these officials might disagree among themselves in times of peace, when outside danger

THE FRENCH FUR TRADE

threatened they sank their differences for the moment, and showed a united front. In Government circles, the ecclesiastics and perhaps the Governor himself excepted, a system of monstrous corruption flourished. The fur trade, which formed the real wealth of the colony, though little enough of it remained there, was practically a Government monopoly. It employed perhaps a third of the Canadian population, at bare living wages, and made the fortune, by means of well-understood devices, of a small handful of officials, who hurried back to France with their gains. Supplies, too, as well as large sums of money, were continually pouring into Canada for public purposes, and were manipulated by the official clique at Quebec, with a corrupt disregard for the public welfare that even for those days was remarkable.

In spite of all this, however, a fine daring and much patriotic zeal animated the French Canadian people as a whole. Bigoted, ignorant, and superstitious, they marched against English Protestants or Indian savages as upon a crusade. They had infinite belief in their superiority to the former, and a childlike faith in anything told them by their ecclesiastics, who beyond a doubt severely tested their credulity. The spacious West, to which they all had access at one time or another, was the finest of schools for backwoods warfare, while the habit of obedience to social or military superiors went hand in hand with an unquestioning loyalty to their Church. They had been accustomed to ravage the New England frontier, and having often got the better of the industrious Puritan farmer had imbibed some contempt for the colonial Englishman as a soldier

BIGOTRY TOWARDS PROTESTANTS

which an extraordinarily boastful temperament made appear even yet more blatant. The impecunious, idle, and numerous noblesse were always at hand to lead in every kind of adventure. Numbers of them lived almost wholly in the woods among the Indians, adopting their dress and costumes, egging them on against the English settlements, and frequently leading them on their bloody raids.

What might have happened had not the fatuous bigotry of the Canadian priesthood repulsed the Huguenot from their shores, one almost shrinks from contemplating. If the French and Canadian Government had been as tolerant and far-sighted in this particular as in some others, and given an opportunity to the most virile blood of France, which for so many generations invigorated that of other nations and their colonies, history must have been written differently. But, compared with that steady, plodding subjection of the wilderness by the British colonist, Canadian civilization was a failure. One can have nothing, however, but admiration for the courage and enterprise with which its people faced the unknown in the trackless, perilous path of the fur trade. Montreal was the depôt and starting-point for all concerned in it, and stood near the Western limit of civilization. Frontenac, where Kingston now stands, was the first great outpost in the forests beyond. Niagara, whose name indicates its position, was a still remoter station of great import, and Detroit, yet further on, was a still larger one. The stormy waters of Lake Superior were familiar even then to the French voyageur, whose canoe crept along its gloomy shores and exploited its lonely bays. Even this, however, seems almost

ENTERPRISE OF FRENCH TRADERS

as nothing to the astonishing remoteness at which stockaded forts held by small bands of hardy Frenchmen were to be found. To many of us in middle age it seems only yesterday that the man who settled on the prairies beyond Fort Garry (now Winnipeg), was regarded as a veritable pioneer. An air of mystery still surrounded the "Great Lone Land," and one gazed on the grey tombstones¹ of Scottish traders of the early nineteenth century with something like awe. But the French were here trying to choke the infant efforts of the Hudson Bay Company quite early in the century before. They had not only stations on the Lake of the Woods and the Red River, but actually on the Saskatchewan itself. In days when a letter sometimes took a week upon the short route from New York to Baltimore in the then heart of colonial civilization, the aloofness of these old French outposts is verily calculated to stagger the imagination.

But we shall have little to do with them here, and before closing this chapter must return to the banks of the St. Lawrence to touch for a moment upon the military strength of Canada. The militia, in which every male between sixteen and sixty served under compulsion, were reckoned at this time as between 15,000 and 20,000. There were also in regular garrison some 2,000 troops of the colonial marine, officered and mostly raised in France. There were usually, too, some troops of the line in the colony, their numbers varying of course with the state of current events. Of the number of Indians utilized in war by the French it would be vain to hazard any estimate.

¹ In the churchyard of the old St. John's Church, near Winnipeg.

INDIANS

Save for the celebrated "Six Nations," whom neither French diplomacy nor French successes could ever wholly win from their neutrality and English sympathies,¹ most of the Indian tribes ultimately espoused their cause. There were a large number, too, of Mission Indians, nominally Christians, and bound to the interests of the French, being under the influence of their priests. But of the numerous wild tribes to the westward and the fragments of the neutral nations nearer home, it would be superfluous to attempt a classification. To do so would be to thrust upon the reader a mass of detail which he is probably neither prepared nor inclined to digest, even if it were essential to the understanding of the great Anglo-French struggle, in which I hope to engage his interest.

¹ Originally called the "Five Nations," consisting of the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas. They occupied the country stretching from Albany to Lake Ontario, in the order named.

CHAPTER II

IT was in the year 1747, just prior to the peace and treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, that De la Galissonnière arrived in Canada as its Governor. Like many of his predecessors, he was a naval officer, being, in fact, the very commander who, a few years later, opposed Byng in the action off Minorca which brought disgrace and death and immortality to that unfortunate admiral. Though of an ill shape, amounting almost to deformity, the new Governor was a man of singular shrewdness and ability, and regarded the future of North America with anxious foresight. For a moment he was chiefly disturbed at the activity of the small and remote settlements of the Hudson Bay Company, but in a short time the vaster and more direct issues which brooded over the West commanded his whole attention. We have already seen how long was the arm that France thrust out to grasp the fur-bearing regions of the North and North-West. But to the southwards, to that vast fat country which in modern parlance would be called the middle West, she had as yet turned little of her attention. With its head resting on the great Canadian lakes and its feet upon the small French settlement of New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico, this region was still, if we except that unconsidered factor, the indigenous inhabitant, a no-

man's land. An ocean of foliage, almost unthinkable in its immensity, and only broken at intervals by the smooth sheen of noble rivers, the white gleam of turbulent streams, or the scarcely noticeable clearings, where faint smoke-wreaths marked an Indian village, it patiently awaited the struggle that such a virgin empire at such a strenuous period was quite certain to provoke.

Viewed by the light of modern times, all other territories in dispute, or ripe for it, between the two nations, seem to sink into insignificance before this great American hinterland.¹ Nor, of course, was it merely this West of 1747, this Mississippi basin, that was the prize, but those greater and only less fertile realms beyond, which in the days I write of had hardly dawned on the vision of the wildest dreamer.

It is a curious reflection that a cork thrown into a stream which on an ordinary map of the United States would appear to rise upon the very shores of Lake Erie, will eventually float out through the mouth of the Mississippi at New Orleans into the Gulf of Mexico. Now both Lake Erie and New Orleans were French, and this network of converging streams pouring southwards formed a link between them, practically cutting North America in twain. It was this immense, well-watered domain, lying between the northern and the far southern settlements of France, which filled the mind and fired the ambition of Galissonière and others no less important than he. Their aims, which now began to assume definite shape, were to form a far-extended line of

¹ India lends itself in no way to comparison with the settlement of new countries.

forts from the headwaters to the mouth of the Ohio River; and to gain over the Indians of all this region, both by energetic intrigues against the English, and, what was still more effective, by a military occupation of it and a display of force which would be sufficient to intimidate all European interlopers. This achieved, it was thought not unlikely that a fresh wave of French immigration might give solidity to the occupation, and that the English would thus—so they dared to hope—be permanently hemmed in behind the Alleghanies, which formed a continuous and formidable rampart between this new country and the thirteen colonies.

Both nations claimed the Ohio Valley, the French on account of La Salle's discovery of the Mississippi a century before; the English for the more tangible reason that the land of promise lay immediately behind and adjacent to their own colonies, and that their traders had been for long accustomed to cross the mountains in considerable numbers. But claims which clashed so hopelessly could not be settled by treaties, and the French were by a long way the first to recognise that they would be settled by the sword. The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle could do nothing to determine such hopelessly conflicting views, though Commissioners sat for months endeavouring with much futile diligence to adjust the comparatively simple question of international boundary lines in Nova Scotia and the adjoining mainland.

It was not, however, till the summer of 1749 that De la Galissonière started the first French expedition to the Ohio, a purely prospective one, and only just strong enough to protect itself from possible Indian hostilities. It comprised some fourteen officers and

1749] THE OHIO FRENCH TERRITORY

cadets, twenty French regulars, a hundred and eight Canadians, and a few Indians.

Leaving Montreal in early summer, they passed up Lake Ontario, and carrying their canoes round the falls and rapids of Niagara, pushed up Lake Erie as far as the present village of Portland. Here they landed, and, laden with their boats and packs, scaled the lofty ridges on whose further slopes the fountain springs of the Ohio basin gather in the now familiar waters of Chatauqua Lake. After infinite toil through pathless forests and down rocky shallow streams, they reached within a month the broader current of one of the forks of the Ohio, now known as the Alleghany. A French captain, De Céloron, was in command, and among his portables he carried a number of leaden plates bearing significant inscriptions, and as many tin shields engraved with the arms of France. On reaching the Alleghany River he buried one of the first of these in the ground, and nailed one of the latter to a tree, formally proclaiming at the same time that he reasserted the dominion of the king his master over the whole region. The words inscribed upon the leaden plates ran as follows: "Year 1749 in the reign of Louis XV., King of France. We, Céloron, commanding the detachment sent by the Marquis de la Galissonière, Commandant General of New France, to re-establish tranquillity in certain Indian villages in these cantons, have buried this plate at the meeting of the Ohio and Tchadakoin this 29th July, as a mark of the renewal of possession which we had formerly taken of the aforesaid river Ohio and all its feeders, and all territory upon both sides of the aforesaid streams as former Kings of France have

enjoyed or ought to have enjoyed, and which they have maintained by force of arms and by treaties, especially by those of Ryswick, Utrecht, and Aix-la-Chapelle."

Within living memory more than one of these plates have been cast up by the rage of streams that now turn the mill-wheels and bear the commerce of a stirring Anglo-Saxon life. Grim spectres, as it were, from the grave where lie buried and forgotten the splendid dreams of the old pioneers of France, they may still be seen amid the curiosities of museums, and pondered over as rare object-lessons on the vanity of human hopes.

There is no need here to dwell in detail on the doings of this advanced guard, these heralds of an approaching conflict, whose gravity they themselves so little realized as they paddled their bark canoes down the buoyant streams of "La belle rivière." Indian villages, breaking the dense wall of bordering forests, by the river side, they found in plenty, where Delawares, Shawanoes, and Mingoos dwelt, with a fat and fertile country spreading all around. Buffalo browsed in rich meadows of blue grass and wild clover, while elk and deer ranged through stately forests whose timber spoke of a soil more generous and a clime less stern than that which they had left on the banks of the St. Lawrence. Everywhere De Céloron and his followers proclaimed their peaceful intentions—a very necessary precaution, in truth, for so weak a force—and protested that their only object in undertaking so toilsome a journey was to warn their Indian brothers of the treacherous designs of the English. Everywhere, however, to their chagrin, they were received without enthusiasm, and

1749] INDIANS SHOW NO CORDIALITY

sometimes in a fashion that threatened to become serious. In almost every village they found a handful of English traders, whom they warned off as trespassers on French territory, producing in justification of their course a written treaty that was capable of almost any sort of interpretation. The Indians showed no disposition to be rid of the traders, though it was not worth the latter's while to resist an order that could be laughed at the moment the French had turned their backs. So everything went off pleasantly. The Indians drank a good deal of brandy at the expense of their father Onontio (the French king), and listened stolidly to lengthy orations in which they were assured that the English were their real foes, and that it was not trade they desired, but land, which was perfectly true so far as the colonists collectively were concerned, for there were land companies at that very moment blossoming out both in Virginia and Pennsylvania. The French, so the Indians were assured, were their true and only brothers, while their father Onontio, if they would only believe it, was a very paragon of parents. More tin shields were nailed to trees, and more leaden plates buried, the last of them by the banks of the Great Kennawha, in the present State of West Virginia.

After a toilsome pilgrimage, accounted by the travellers as not less than 3,000 miles, De Céloron, with a somewhat diminished company, arrived once more at Montreal, possessed of the uncomfortable conviction that leaden plates and tin shields, and the blessings of Onontio would go a very short way towards securing this earthly paradise for France. It was a lamentable but undeniable fact, he declared to the

new Governor of Canada, Jonquière, who had arrived in his absence, that the English traders could easily undersell their own, that rivalry in this particular was impossible, and that the Indians were everywhere well disposed towards the English. The latter, he declared, must at all hazards be kept upon the east of the Alleghanies, and the Ohio Valley preserved from their intrusion. De Céloron had, in fact, despatched during his wanderings a civilly worded letter to the Governor of Pennsylvania, from whose borders came the majority of traders encountered by the French, expressing surprise that the English should be making so free with territory that all the world knew was the property of his most Catholic Majesty. But if His Excellency of Pennsylvania ever received it, it is quite certain he never vouchsafed a reply. This expedition, though we have passed over it lightly, was geographically and politically an extremely important one. But the English colonists knew almost nothing of it. Even their few far-sighted leaders scarcely took notice of it. But with the French it was the prologue of war.

We must leave the effects of the De Céloron expedition to simmer in the minds of the rulers of Canada, while pausing for a page or two, even thus early, to say something of Acadia or Nova Scotia, that outlying bone of contention between the two nations in the North. A glance at the map will show the reader how very nearly an island is this important peninsula. The narrow isthmus which connects it with what is now New Brunswick was then the boundary across which the troops of France and England watched each other with no friendly eyes from their respective forts.

At the north-east of Acadia, only severed from the mainland by the narrow gut of Canso, lay the island of Cape Breton, a name once as familiar to the world as the Cape of Good Hope, but now almost unknown. Its fame rested on the great fortress of Louisbourg, which with its considerable town and ample harbour dominated the North Atlantic, and was styled the "Dunkirk of America." All Acadia had been handed over to England at the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, with the exception of this little island of Cape Breton, or in other words Louisbourg. The latter, during the late war in the year 1745, had been stormed and captured in spirited fashion by a force of New England militia under Peperall, acting in conjunction with Admiral Warren and an English fleet. It was restored to the French, however, three years later at the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, amid the loud protestations of the few in England who were conversant with the politics of the North Atlantic—protestations fully justified by the immense stress laid upon its restoration by the French. The population of Nova Scotia consisted of a few thousand French-Canadian *habitants*, who chiefly occupied the more fertile spots on the western coast which looked across the Bay of Fundy to the even less populous mainland. There were also, as already indicated, two or three isolated forts where small detachments of British regulars or Colonial militia under a British Governor maintained an existence of appalling monotony and of almost unexampled seclusion from the outer world.

Everything conceivable had been done, both from motives of policy and humanity, to reconcile these outlying French-Canadians to British rule. They

THE FOUNDING OF HALIFAX [1749

had now been recognised British subjects for nearly forty years, and had been consistently treated in a fashion so magnanimous as to be the despair of the French, who through the agency of their priests, backed by their bloodthirsty battalions of so-called Indian converts, had laboured tirelessly to promote discontent with British rule; but of this there will be more to say later. It will be sufficient to state here that the French, with their renewed occupation in greatly increased strength of Louisbourg, had so encouraged and accelerated these evil efforts throughout the province that it was deemed necessary to create a counterpoise, and Halifax was founded upon the eastern shore. It was the only instance, and, I think, remains so, of a British colony of free men founded by the Imperial Government for a definite and Imperial purpose. Surveys were made, the site of a city selected, and offers of land, of temporary maintenance and arms were advertised in England, with special inducements to the many officers and soldiers disbanded after the late war. In July, 1749, three thousand souls—men, women, and children—were landed on the shores of Chebucto Bay. Others followed, and in a short time, with much less of the trouble, hardship, and sickness that usually attends such wholesale ventures, the town of Halifax arose. The nucleus of British settlement was now introduced, that, immensely increased thirty years later by the exiled loyalists of the American Revolution, was to make Nova Scotia a great and prosperous British province. The French settlements lay, as I have said, upon the western side of the peninsula. The Acadians, who there grew hay and oats and apples upon a limited

scale, were sunk in ignorance and superstition. They were thrifty, however, fairly industrious, and of themselves only anxious for an obscure and peaceable existence.¹ Their English Governors had interfered with them in no way whatever, not even taxing them in the lightest degree. The French authorities, with the recovery of the province always in view, and in consequence keenly interested in keeping disaffection alive, regarded this extreme leniency with something like dismay. They went so far as to complain that the British Government condoned even the very crimes of these simple peasants. One most necessary token of submission, however, their new masters had made, or rather endeavoured to make, a point of, and this was the oath of allegiance to King George. To the peasantry themselves, born for the most part in remote seclusion and ignorant of the sentiment, probably of the very meaning of the word patriotism as regarding their mother country, this would in itself have been a small matter. But of the priests they stood in proper awe, and the priests were instructed to spare no pains in endeavours to prevent their flocks taking the obnoxious oath. Unscrupulous energy was shown upon the one side; too much forbearance upon the other by the handful of bored and good-natured soldiers who represented England. For the first thirty years, however, these clerical agents from Canada were not so actively mischievous; the greater part of the thinly scattered population

¹ The Acadians were not fond of the axe. They made little inroad on the forests which covered Nova Scotia, but diked in the marshes which fringed the sea-coast at certain places, and cultivated the reclaimed land.

PRIESTS PROMOTE DISCORD [1749

took some sort of oath of allegiance, and the land had peace.

Then came the great European war, which was chiefly marked in North America by the capture of Louisbourg at the hands of the New Englanders in 1745. This notable achievement sent a passing quiver of excitement through the dense forests of Acadia, even to the villages on the Bay of Fundy. The Canadian missionaries renewed their efforts, which were met with a fresh show of activity in enforcing the oath. But so far no very tangible evil had come of all this. The Acadians were not put to the test; they were far removed from all scenes of racial strife or discord, and among their diked-in meadows and orchards continued to propagate in peace and rude plenty the most reactionary and ignorant breed of white men on the North American continent.

When Louisbourg was given back to the French, however, and some vague claims to the northern shore of the province as the only winter route to Canada were put in by them to the commissioners appointed at the treaty of 1748, all was again agog. The founding of Halifax in the following year, and the advent in force of the dreaded British settler, though on the further shore, seemed to demolish all hopes of French supremacy in the future. England might annex and rule, for their very great content and infinite happiness, the French American colonies, but she might get tired of such an unprofitable business. It was not likely, however, that Great Britain would ever allow a province, whither she had deliberately invited her own people, to pass again into the hands of a Government who hounded even their own Protestants, like lepers, from their gates.

Such activity was now shown in stirring up the hitherto happy Acadians, both at the lately restored Louisbourg and at Quebec, that the British authorities felt that after forty years of indulgent treatment the hour had now come to demand who were their friends and who their foes. Any Acadians who might object to taking the oath of allegiance to King George had been granted ample liberty to remove their effects to the adjoining territory of Canada. The few, however, who had done so had been generally driven to it by priestly intimidation. War seemed again in the air, and war this time of a more serious kind, for America. Cornwallis, uncle of the ill-fated general who surrendered thirty years later to Washington at Yorktown, had just come out as Governor of Nova Scotia. He was an able and sensible young man of thirty-five, and of a kindly disposition, but he decided that the Acadians must once and for all be put to the test of a full and binding oath of allegiance. Most of them had been actually born British subjects. It was thoroughly understood in Canada that, if left to themselves, they would ask for nothing better than to continue such; so the cruel system of intimidation was renewed with redoubled zeal.

The Governor of Canada and the Commandant of Louisbourg were the chief wire-pullers, and their correspondence revealing their precious schemes is extant. If war was inevitable, the French were anxious to defer it as long as possible. Peace was to be outwardly observed, even to effusiveness. The official pens of the French commanders grew almost affectionate when addressing their brother-dignitaries in Halifax and the British forts. Their letters

to the agents of this secret policy almost joked about these diplomatic falsehoods, as they gave precise instructions for the discord that was to be spread among the Acadians and the scalps that were to be torn from the bleeding heads of English settlers by Micmac Indians in French employ. The two leading points in their policy were to frighten the Acadians from taking an oath of allegiance which their simple faith might lead them to regard as binding, and to frighten the newly arrived English settlers out of Nova Scotia. But above all, they wrote to each other, it was imperative that they should not be suspected of such designs.

Their chief agent for carrying fire, and sword, and misery among the hitherto contented Acadians, was an unscrupulous scoundrel called Le Loutre—an energetic, able, but fanatic priest, whose hatred of the English was only equalled by his heartless cruelty to his own people. He had many zealous abettors under his orders, priests of the cold-blooded and bigoted stamp, though even they recoiled sometimes from their leader's methods. Short of physical force, religious terror was the only engine by which the Acadians could be driven. It was this agency, one which Canadian priests so well understood, that had all along been utilized. But now the screw was to be turned on in pitiless and relentless fashion.

Any Acadians who should take the proffered oath were promised inevitable damnation in the world to come—an awful reality to the trembling, credulous *habitant*. To take an oath of allegiance to a heretic king was represented as the most hideous of all sins. They were assured, too, that the English settlers at

the far edge of a hundred miles of unbroken forest would take away their lands. Those who showed signs of risking their salvation, and of judging the English by their past deeds, were threatened with a visit from one of the many bands of Micmac Indians with which Le Loutre now filled the woods. Attacks upon the English settlers pushing out from Halifax were represented as a religious crusade. The murder of straggling soldiers from the British forts was extolled as a meritorious action. The so-called Christian Indians were hounded on till the environs of Halifax became the scene of daily murders, and all this was in peace time! Proclamation after proclamation was sent out by the English authorities, calling on the people to take the oath, recalling their past treatment and promising them a continuation of it. The wretched Acadians, grovelling with superstitious fear, and steeped in the lies poured daily into their ears as to the British intentions, were in a pitiable position. There was no question of patriotism in the ordinary sense of the word. It was sheer terror, physical and spiritual, that paralyzed them. A shade more of intelligence on their part would have righted the whole matter, and the misleading hexameters of Evangeline would never have been written. Long before the last of the many ultimatums sent by the long-suffering English governors, hundreds of Acadians had abandoned their homesteads and fled to the strange and unsympathetic settlements on the Canadian mainland or to the sterile rocks of Cape Breton. Hundreds more, bewildered and despairing, had fled to the woods, mixed with the Indians, shared in their bloody raids, and become irretrievable outlaws.

ACADIAN TROUBLES [1749-55

No word of pity for these unhappy people, so far as we know, passed a French official lip. A prosperous village that showed signs of preferring the familiar and indulgent rule of the Government under which most of its people had lived and flourished all their lives was fired by Le Loutre's own hand to drive them into exile. The tension and rivalry existing between England and France at this time in America admitted of no half-measures. The French fort of Beausejour scowled across the narrow isthmus at the British station of Fort Laurence, and formed an admirable base for the devilries of Le Loutre. Since the re-occupation of Louisbourg by the French, the latter had become the stronger military influence on the north-east coast, and they fondly looked forward, when war should break out, to the recapture of Nova Scotia. That the manhood of 12,000 hardy peasants would be an invaluable aid goes without saying, and accounts for, though it does not excuse, these untiring efforts to destroy the harmony between the Acadians and the British Government. Monckton, of whom we shall hear again, succeeded Cornwallis as British Governor. Hopson and Laurence (of expatriation notoriety) followed, all excellent and kindly men. The ethics of the eighteenth, or perhaps even a later century under similar conditions, could not be expected to tolerate the persistent refusal of nearly the whole population of a legally possessed and leniently administered province, to swear full allegiance to their lawful king at a vital crisis. The whole story from 1747 to 1755 is sad enough. It is the blackest blot on French transatlantic history, and stains the memory of De la Jonquière and Duquesne, who

permitted their innocent fellow-countrymen to be made the tools of a dishonest policy, to be heartlessly sacrificed, and then ruthlessly flung away. The notable deportation of 8,000 Acadians in 1755, taken by itself, is not easy to defend; but who reads of or cares anything for the years of forbearance under ceaseless provocation, which at last broke down before the deadlock which at a critical period faced the English Government? It is a poor consolation, too, to remember that of all the various points to which these unhappy emigrants found their way, it was among their fellow-countrymen in Quebec that they met with least sympathy and kindness, while the greatest measure of compassion, and that of a practical kind, was found among the arch-heretics of New England. All French writers of that day unite in testifying to the complete indifference shown towards the Acadian refugees by their countrymen, and all repudiate the methods of Le Loutre.

It is satisfactory to know that this unprincipled fanatic was eventually caught by the English on the high seas, and was a prisoner for eight years in Jersey Castle under an assumed name. A story runs that a soldier of the garrison, who had served in Nova Scotia, recognised the monster as having once ordered him to be scalped, and tried to stab him with his bayonet. The soldier's rage was so uncontrollable, that he had to be transferred to another garrison. But we have of necessity been anticipating somewhat, and it is a relief to turn from these poor and underground methods of combating destiny to the more honest operations on the Ohio.

In the year 1749 De la Jonquière succeeded Galis-

sonière as Governor of Canada. He succeeded also to his policy of keeping the English upon the eastern side of the Alleghanies. But he was not fated to carry it much further forward; for though he ruled over Canada for nearly two years, the rival nations remained at peace, and it required some exceptional audacity to take the risk of setting the world on fire. De la Jonquière died early, in 1752; and, after a brief interval, the Marquis Duquesne de Meneval came out in his place. He was descended from the famous naval commander of that name, was of haughty mien, a strong disciplinarian, and zealous to a fault in all military concerns. He exacted full service from the militia, about 15,000 strong, drilled and organized them, together with the 2,000 colonial regulars or troops of marine, and worked both arms of the service with much assiduity for nearly two years in his determination to make them a thoroughly efficient force.

In the summer of 1752, when the rivers and lakes had shaken off their load of ice, Duquesne made ready for the first act in the coming drama, and sent out the expedition that was to begin fort-building in the Ohio Valley, the disputed territory. Like Galissonière's less direct challenge three years previously, Duquesne's stronger cohorts paddled up to Lake Erie, but chose on this occasion a better landing-place, at a spot where the town that takes its name from the lake now stands. There were here, however, twenty miles of rough watershed to be surmounted, and the difficulties of carrying their impedimenta over it were so great as to exhaust the patience and capacities of the younger officers and the vitality of their commander, Marin, who died

from his exertions. He was an old and capable officer, and his loss was greatly felt. A successor was sent forward by Duquesne—if not so old as Marin, a veteran in experience, and an explorer of the western plains, one Legardeur de St. Pierre. The difficulties of their progress were increased by loads of useless trappings that were purchased for corrupt reasons by the officials who made money out of commissariat transactions. Two forts were built, one at Erie on the lake, another at the head of Ohio navigation, known as Fort le Bœuf. This was enough to impress the Indian tribes with ideas of French determination and English apathy; an earnest rather of what was coming than a far-reaching movement in itself. At the same time it was quite enough to arouse the British authorities to their danger, and to call for explanations, which hastened on the crisis.

Two colonial Governors stand out pre-eminently at this moment, Shirley of Massachusetts, and Dinwiddie of Virginia. The former was a nimble-minded, energetic, capable man of affairs, who had thoroughly identified himself with the interests of the colonies, and had served on the boundary commission of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. The latter was a shrewd, blunt Scotchman, a deputy of Lord Albemarle's, the titular Governor, whose agreeable manners, Lord Chesterfield tells his son with admiration, were the sole reason of his being the greatest sinecurist of his day. It was as well the homely Scotchman, though the Virginians did not like him, stood in the shoes of his exquisite employer, for he was a faithful and alert watchdog over British interests, while Americans should be for ever grate-

APATHY OF BRITISH COLONISTS [1752

ful to him for giving Washington his first opportunity.

The lesson of De Céloron's expedition of five years previously had been apparently lost on the colonies, since officially they had done absolutely nothing to resent his claims. Traders continued to cross the Alleghanies,¹ while two land companies, in Pennsylvania and Virginia respectively, had acquired grants in the disputed territory upon certain conditions, and had gone so far as to send well-known frontiersmen to locate them. No thoughts of the French, however, seem to have disturbed these sanguine speculators, nor had any steps been taken to resist them. A good deal of quarrelling had taken place between the rival companies, whose pioneers in the woods had so traduced each other that the Indians beheld the English not only unprepared for war, but apparently at loggerheads among themselves. Moreover, it was quite evident to them that the French were right, and that it was land the British were after, not Indian friendship and trade. The more friendly Indians begged these emissaries of the two companies to build forts at once, but their principals on the seaboard, with characteristic and persistent blindness to the French movements, disregarding all warnings, gave no heed to the advice.

The Governors of some of the colonies, however, and in particular the two already indicated, were keenly alive to this activity of the French on the

¹ The Alleghany chain is of considerable though varying width. Its altitude lies between 2,000 and 6,500 feet, increasing as it travels south. Its highest points are in the West of Virginia and North Carolina.

1752] ENCROACHMENTS OF THE FRENCH

Ohio, and despatched upon their own account special envoys. But from the very fact of these being the emissaries of the Governor and not of the colony, the legislatures paid no regard to the significant tidings they brought back. For at this time, as at most, almost every colonial Assembly had some special quarrel, usually one of a trumpery nature, with its Governor. But however trifling was the particular question in dispute, it was that of the hour, the topic of the tavern and the coffee-house, the planter's verandah, the farmer's kitchen, and it loomed much larger in the local mind than fantastic theories of remote French enterprise which might possibly be ripe for consideration when their children's children stood in their shoes.

New York and New England were more enlightened, but the former at least had some excuse for declining further obligations, since she had the Six Nations on her flanks to keep in humour, and had, moreover, to protect the route to Oswego on Lake Ontario, the only English post upon the northern lakes and a continual irritant to France.

The French were greatly encouraged by the sight of such indifference. It almost seemed as if the English were content with their seaboard territories, and were really inclined to give their rivals a free hand behind the mountains. So by slow steps they crept onwards down the feeders of the Ohio. By stealthy methods—the expulsion of English traders, the punishment of unfriendly Indians, the assumption of supreme control—they worked upon the imagination of the savages, who, seeing such vigorous conduct neither resented nor resisted, began to regard the French as the rising, the English as

ENCROACHMENTS OF THE FRENCH [1752

the declining power. English interests beyond the Alleghanies were wholly represented by individual traders, for whom it must be said that they had often gained, not less by their courage and ability than by the cheapness of their goods, great influence over the Indians. But they were, after all, mere private adventurers, and few in number, while the French, who were now showing their teeth so unmistakably, had the evident backing of their Government behind them. There was nothing the Indian respected more than an energetic show of force, except the actual use of it, and those tribes who were friendly to England were now sadly depressed, and fully believed that her power was on the wane.

The desire of the French Government to support their Canadian deputies was undoubtedly somewhat damped by suspicion of the motives that animated some of these forward patriots. It was not the legitimate ambition of the capitalist for new fields that they scented in these leading colonists, and that gave them pause, but the official speculation that in every fresh expedition saw another opening for illicit gain. Bigot, the last and most notable Intendant of Canada, led the gang, and made scarcely concealed mockery of those of his nominees who failed sufficiently to profit by his patronage. But side by side with this system of unblushing robbery, which stunted and impoverished the colony, went a great measure of patriotism, considerable military ability, and a mortal hatred and jealousy of the English. Duquesne wrote home to his Government that the country "was full of rascals," but it was also full of soldiers.

Dinwiddie, the shrewd Scotch Governor of Virginia, was the first to move, and this he could only do by way of protest, since he had no forces worth mentioning and no money to pay the handful that he had. It is a strange coincidence that the agent he selected for the business—the first British soldier, in fact, who went out formally to proclaim King George's title to the West—should have been George Washington. The young Virginian was at this time only twenty-one, a major in the colonial service and adjutant-general of the Virginia militia. In the opinion of Dinwiddie, an opinion which did him credit, there was no one in the colony so well qualified to perform a mission of danger, delicacy, and hardship. Washington's antecedents and career are so generally familiar, one hesitates to linger over them. But as they will certainly not be fresh in the mind of many readers, it may be well to recall the fact that he was the great-grandson of the son of a Northamptonshire squire¹ who had settled in Virginia in the preceding century. George was the eldest of several brothers by his father's second wife, but had no patrimony worth mentioning. The eldest of his half-brothers, however, Laurence Washington, who had a considerable estate, practically adopted him. Laurence had commanded some Virginia volunteers in the disastrous campaign against Carthage, and had afterwards married into the Fairfax family, who had large interests in the colony, and finally settled down on his property on the Potomac, calling it Mount Vernon after the "hero of Portobello." His wife soon died,

¹ Of Sulgrave and Brington. John Washington was the first emigrant, and soon took a prominent part in Virginian affairs.

leaving only a daughter, and he himself, having contracted the seeds of disease in the deadly South American campaign, succumbed in 1752, leaving George guardian to the child and heir to the estate in the event of her death, which happened no long time afterwards. The great Virginian's boyhood, till he began soldiering, had been largely spent in surveying the vast tracts on the eastern slopes of the Alleghanies, which belonged to the Fairfax family—a life which threw him among Indians, rough backwoodsmen, and all the perils of border life at an age when his contemporaries were leading the semi-English life which distinguished the eastern counties of Virginia, or were at school in England, at Eton or Westminster. He constantly enjoyed, however, and greatly to his profit, the society of the old Lord Fairfax, scholar, courtier, soldier, who for a strange whim had secluded himself at his lodge of Greenaway Court amid the noble forests which then covered the Shenandoah Valley. Washington was at this time a tall, stalwart, long-limbed, long-headed, courageous, self-contained youth, who was equally at home in the woods or in the drawing-room, and had even seen something of the outer world, having travelled in the West Indies with his invalid brother. He took keenly to soldiering from the first, and was well equipped by habit and experience for both frontier warfare and frontier diplomacy. A European Dutch soldier, named Van Braam, who had lived at Mount Vernon as half friend, half fencing master, and could speak French, was associated with Washington in this enterprise. So also was Gist, the most famous of frontiersmen, together with four or five other white men, and as

many Indians. Their mission was to march through the woods from the Potomac River to the new French fort of Le Bœuf, only twenty miles south of Lake Erie, no mean performance in the year 1753! The chill rains of late autumn fell ceaselessly upon the small party as they pushed their way through the dripping forests, and it was December before they reached the nearer station of the French at Venango. Here an officer named Joncaire commanded, having seized an English trading-house and hoisted above it the French flag. Washington kept a journal of the whole expedition, and tells us how he dined here with the French officers, who, when flushed with wine, declared that, though the English were in a great majority, their movements were too slow, and for their own part they intended to take the Ohio Valley and "by G—d to keep it." They did their best to entice away Washington's Indians, but with great difficulty he managed to get off with his party intact, and in a short time arrived at Fort le Bœuf, the end of his journey, where Le Gardeur de St. Pierre commanded. To him he delivered Dinwiddie's despatch, expressing much surprise that the French should have built forts on what was notoriously British territory, and demanding by whose authority it was done. The note went on to express a hope that the French officer would retire immediately, and so maintain the harmony now existing between the two nations.

St. Pierre was extremely polite to Washington, but wrote firmly, though civilly, to Dinwiddie that he should certainly stay where he was till ordered by his superior officer to retire. The same attempt to alienate the Indian escort was made here as at Ven-

ango, but without avail. The return journey, as told in Washington's simple matter-of-fact journal, is in itself quite a thrilling story of adventure. In order to save time he left Van Braam with the horses and servants to come on at leisure, and wrapping himself in an Indian match coat, with a pack on his back, rifle in hand, and Gist as his sole companion, the young Virginian, bearing the first formal note of defiance from France to England, prepared to face the perils of the return journey. It was now January, the dead of winter, and some four hundred miles of a pathless and mostly rugged wilderness, riven with torrents and densely clad with forests, had to be traversed. The season alternated between fierce frosts and dripping thaws. The Indians might be encountered at any moment, and their temper in these regions had by French intrigue become most uncertain. One of them, as a matter of fact, actually did hide in a thicket not fifteen paces from the trail, and fired point-blank at Washington, but happily without effect. They caught the culprit, tied his arms and marched him before them for a whole day, lest he should bring his friends in force upon their track. Expecting to cross the Alleghany River on a frozen surface, they found it full of loose blocks of floating ice. Making a raft with their "one poor hatchet," they then embarked in the gloom of a winter's evening on the formidable passage. In mid-channel Washington was knocked off the raft by a block of ice into the freezing flood, and the two men had eventually to spend the night upon an island, their clothing frozen stiff upon them. Gist had all his fingers and some of his toes frost-bitten. Pushing on, however, through grey forests, on whose leafless

boughs the drip of the day became icicles by night, and encountering now a straggling band of Indians, now a horrid spectacle of scalped corpses, half worried by wolves or hogs, they arrived on the borders of inhabited Virginia. Here Washington procured fresh horses and fresh clothes, and rode on with his letter to Dinwiddie at Williamsburg, having been absent just three months.

The latter had ere this received permission from the English Government to oppose force by force, and to erect, on his part, forts upon the Ohio, at the expense of the colonial Governments. The officials of both nations were now committed to an armed occupation of the same country—a proceeding which could have but one result. But the French were ready with men and money, and strong in a united purpose. Dinwiddie, on the other hand, could do nothing with the colonial legislatures. His own were squabbling with him about the precise amount of a royalty on land patents, in a territory that was in the act of slipping from their grasp, and made a concession on this point, which the Governor could not legally grant, the condition of defending their own interests against the common foe. The Germans of Pennsylvania would not stir. To these people in their ignorance one Government, so long as it was not the European tyranny they had escaped from, would do as well as another. The Quakers were against all war on principle, and had found their scruples profitable, since the colonies around them, while protecting themselves, virtually protected Pennsylvania. Maryland, which had no such excuses, was almost equally backward, one of the reasons being, according to their Governor, Sharpe, that no men of

DINWIDDIE AND THE COLONIES [1754

means, position, and intelligence would belong to the legislature, which was certainly not the case in Virginia. Dinwiddie now begged New York and Massachusetts to make a feint against the French on their borders, and distract their attention from the Ohio. Two independent companies from New York and South Carolina, maintained by the Crown, were placed under Dinwiddie's orders, and his own legislature at last voted £10,000 for the defence of their own frontier. Virginia, too, possessed a regiment of some 300 men, mostly raw recruits, of which a Colonel Fry, an Oxford M.A., was in command, with Washington as its major. With this formidable host the excellent Dinwiddie prepared to dispute with France, as best he could, the Empire of the West.

It was now the early spring of 1754. Forty backwoodsmen under an Ensign Ward were sent across the Alleghanies to erect a fort at a place previously selected by Washington, where the two large streams of the Alleghany and Monongahela meet to form the Ohio—a spot to become famous enough in the succeeding years, and in another sense still more famous now.¹ But armed Frenchmen, soldiers and Canadian voyageurs, had been steadily pouring into the Alleghany back country during the past few months; and Le Contrecoeur, at the head of 500 men, very soon tumbled Ward and his rustic engineers back into the English settlements.

Dinwiddie still for the moment the only active champion of British interests, and being now in funds, mustered his raw Virginian regiment and sent

¹ Pittsburg may be called "the Birmingham of America."

them forward to Wills Creek on the Potomac, where an English trading station marked the limit at which the feeble outposts of settlement gave way to the gloom of unbroken forests. The weak companies from South Carolina and New York were to follow with such speed as they could make.

Fry remained at Wills Creek with half the Virginians, while Washington with the remainder struck out into the wilderness, the ultimate object of the British attack being the fort which the French were said to be building at the beforementioned forks of the Ohio, and had already named after their Governor, Duquesne. Washington and his 150 men slowly pushed their way north-westward, cutting roads over the lofty forest-clad ridges of the Alleghanies for their guns and pack-trains. They had covered sixty miles, nearly half the march, and had arrived at an oasis in the mountain wilderness, where stood a trading station, known as "*The Great Meadows*," when word was brought that a French detachment was advancing from the new fort Duquesne to clear the English out of the country. Taking forty of his men with him, Washington groped his way through the whole of a pitch-dark and soaking night to the quarters of the "Half King," a friendly Indian chief, who had formed one of his party in the diplomatic mission of the previous year. The Indian had some news to give of an advanced scouting party of the French, supposed to be lurking in the neighbourhood, and with some of his people joined Washington at daylight in an attempt to track them. In this they succeeded, and surprised the French lying in a ravine, who, on being discovered, all sprang to their feet, rifle in hand. Washington

promptly gave the order to fire. A volley was given and returned. Coulon de Jumonville, the ensign who commanded the French, was shot dead, and a few of his men killed and wounded, while the remaining twenty-one were taken prisoners. The killing of Jumonville raised a great commotion, not only in the colonies, but in Europe. "It was the volley fired by a young Virginian in the backwoods of America," says Horace Walpole, "that set the world on fire." It was pretended by the French that Jumonville was on a quasi-diplomatic errand, and the bearer of a letter merely ordering the English to retire. It was quite true he had on his person a letter authorizing him to expel any English he found in his path, but an unfounded report was circulated by the French that he jumped up and waved this letter towards Washington as a sign of peaceful intentions, and that, in fact, he was treacherously shot. An effort was made, in short, to brand Washington as an assassin, and not without success among the French. If the incident had occurred to-day, there is reason to fear that some Englishmen too would have jumped to that conclusion with ready instinct, and stuck to it, for the simple reason that Washington was a Briton and Jumonville was not. It is equally certain that the policy which eventually made North America Anglo-Saxon, free and prosperous, would have been as loudly opposed by the same type of patriot, on the principle that, as neither nation's claim was worth anything, that of the foreigner was most worthy of support. Apathy, it is true, very nearly accomplished what the perverted sentimentalism of some and the less creditable motives of others would now demand under similar

conditions; but apathy is, after all, quite another matter, though at this crisis of the nation, or to be more accurate, of the Anglo-Saxon race, it came very near to signifying incalculable disaster.

Jumonville and his men, it transpired, had been lying concealed for two days in the neighbourhood of Washington's superior force—scarcely the natural method of procedure for a peaceful convoy! De Contrecoeur, commanding the main force of some 500 men, was advancing in the rear, and his scouting subaltern, who, as a matter of fact, had sent messengers to hurry him up, was simply waiting for his arrival to overwhelm the small British detachment.

Washington after this retired to the Great Meadows, where his second battalion, though without their colonel, who had died, now arrived, together with the South Carolina company, consisting of fifty so-called regulars, raised in the colony but paid by the Crown. The young Virginian was now in command of 350 men, but the Carolina captain, being in some sort a king's officer, refused to take orders from him as a provincial, admirably illustrating one of the many difficulties which then hampered military action in the colonies. His men assumed similar airs, and would lend no hand in road-making, carrying packs, or hauling guns. So Washington laboured on with his Virginians, seeking for some good defensive point at which to receive the attack of the large force he heard was advancing against him. After much labour it was decided to return again to the Great Meadows, and there entrench themselves as best they could. It was not a good situation, but Virginians and Carolinians, reconciled by their common danger, now united in throwing up a rough

WASHINGTON PREPARES TO FIGHT [1754

entrenchment surrounded by log breastworks and a dry ditch.

It was now the middle of June. De Jumonville's brother, Coulon de Villiers, on hearing of his death in Canada, had hurried southward with a strong band of Indians, burning for revenge. There were already 1,400 men at Fort Duquesne, seventy miles from the Great Meadows, and De Villiers arrived just in time to take part in the fresh expedition setting out against Washington. It was intended that if the British could not be caught in the disputed territory, they were to be followed into Pennsylvania and there attacked. But Washington had no intention of retreating, or, to be more precise, his men and horses were in such a weak condition that he was unable to.

So he drew up his force outside the poor entrenchments, which he had aptly called Fort Necessity, and seems to have had some vague idea of encountering the French in the open. But when at eleven o'clock some eight or nine hundred of the enemy, including Indians, emerged from the woods, it soon became evident that, with such excellent cover as nature afforded in the overhanging hills, they were not going to take the superfluous risks of a frontal attack.

The British thereupon withdrew inside their works, and the French riflemen scattered among the wooded ridges that so fatally commanded them. A musketry duel then commenced and continued for nine hours, while a heavy rain fell incessantly. Washington's guns were almost useless, for they were so exposed that the loss of life in serving them was far greater than any damage they could inflict on the enemy.

The men were up to their knees in water and mud; their bread had been long exhausted, and they were reduced to a meat diet, and a very poor one at that. This ragged regiment, in home-spun and hunting shirts, half-starved, soaked to the skin, and with ammunition failing, not from expenditure only, but from wet, fought stubbornly throughout the day. From time to time the very force of the rain caused a lull in the combat, the opposing forces being hidden from one another by sheets of falling water.

The French, as the day waned, proposed a capitulation, which Washington refused. But his ammunition at length gave out entirely, and as the gloomy light of the June evening began to fade, a fresh proposal to send an envoy to discuss terms was accepted. The indispensable Van Braam, as the only one of the British force who could speak French, was sent to negotiate. Nearly a hundred men of the defending force lay killed or wounded, while the French loss, though not so great, turned out to be considerable. The terms offered, after a little discussion, were at length accepted, and were honourable enough; namely, that the garrison were to march out with the honours of war, carrying their effects and one gun with them. The French were indeed in no position to take or maintain prisoners. Moreover, the fiction of peace between the two nations had to be taken into some sort of account.

Now in the articles of capitulation the phrase "*l'assassinat de Jumonville*" appeared. Van Braam read a translation of them aloud to Washington and his officers, and either from an imperfect knowledge of the language, or quite possibly from

WASHINGTON SURRENDERS [1754

a desire to cause no hitch in the extremely uncomfortable situation, rendered the obnoxious phrase in a different fashion, translating it "the killing or death of Jumonville."

The articles were read in English and signed in the darkness and rain by the light of a sputtering tallow dip, and Washington's signature innocently affixed to the statement that he was practically a murderer. One can well believe that this apparent confession was a cause of much joy and triumph to the French, both among those who knew the real facts and those who did not. One does not hear of any Englishmen who rejoiced at this documentary evidence. Washington and his soldiers indignantly denied the monstrous story that Jumonville was a peaceful envoy, and were sufficiently exasperated at the trick played in the translation.¹ Their word was good enough in those days for their countrymen, both in England and America.

The French prisoners who had been taken in the Jumonville affair were to be sent back, while, as hostages for the undertaking, the inaccurate Van Braam and a Scotchman named Robert Stobo, who will turn up again in another place at a much later period in this story, were retained by the French.

The fifty-mile return march over the mountains to Wills Creek was a pitiful business. The wounded had

¹ The articles were written in a bad hand, and smudged with rain. The candle, says an officer present, could scarcely be kept alight for Van Braam to read them out by. No hint of the objectionable word was given; while both sides, from the misery and discomfort of the situation, were in a hurry to terminate the formalities.

to be carried on the backs of their weakened, travel-worn comrades, for the Indians, threatening and noisy, were with difficulty prevented from a general onslaught, and, as it was, killed all the horses and destroyed the medicine chests. It was a sorry band that struggled back with Washington across the Alleghanies, by the rough track that a year hence was to be beaten wider by the tramp of British infantry marching to a fate far more calamitous. They were for the most part poor men, the waifs and strays of Southern life, fighting and toiling and starving for eightpence a day. Both they and their young leader, now full enough, we may be sure, of gloomy thoughts, had done their duty, to the best of their knowledge and experience, against trained soldiers, and most certainly with valour. If they had left the French triumphant in the West, and the prestige of Britain in a woeful plight, it was at least no fault of theirs.

On arriving at Wills Creek they heard that the North Carolina regiment who had been ordered to support them had mutinied on the way, while the New York contingent were still labouring southwards with a tribe of women and children and no equipment for a campaign!

The fight at the Great Meadows was in itself a small affair, but its effect was prodigious. Judged by modern ethics, it seems incredible that formal peace between France and England should remain undisturbed by such proceedings; but we shall see that the peace outlasted events far more critical, owing to the desire of France to get more forward in her preparations before the coming struggle actually opened, and to the apathy reign-

EFFECTS OF BRITISH REVERSE [1754

ing in the councils of England. But, peace or war, the great conflict had begun, and the incapacity of the colonies to help themselves had been so fully demonstrated as to turn men's minds across the sea as to the only quarter from which efficient help could be expected.

CHAPTER III

DINWIDDIE was full of wrath when Washington reached Williamsburg with the news of his discomfiture and the state of affairs beyond the mountains. His zeal, useful as it was, greatly exceeded his military discretion, though this is not to imply for a moment that he was out of temper with Washington. Indeed, he warmly thanked both him and his men, as did also the Virginia legislature, and well they may have, seeing how bravely they had conducted themselves under dangers that no military commander would have sent so weak a force to face. Dinwiddie's ire was expended rather on the dilatoriness with which the other colonies had supported his efforts, for to this he attributed the discomfiture of his little army. The affair of the Great Meadows, we may well believe, was now the talk of the back country from New Orleans to Lake Erie and the joy of Canada. No English trader dare any longer cross the mountains. British prestige had vanished in the West, and the French were everywhere paramount; yet the colonists were still quarrelling briskly, both with one another and with their governors, concerning land grants and patents situated in this very country.

The Virginia legislature, as I have said, passed a

vote of thanks to Washington and his men, and expressed proper regret at their misfortunes. Importuned by Dinwiddie, they voted £20,000 for military purposes, but again saddled with some irrelevant condition that the Governor was by his instructions not free to sign. Soon afterwards, however, they voted the money without the obnoxious rider. "Thank God," wrote the distraught official in the middle of this contest, "I have never before had to do with such obstinate and self-conceited people. A governor is truly an object of pity."

The British ambassador at Paris in the meantime had made urgent representations to the Government of Versailles regarding what his nation considered to be the unjustifiable occupation of the Ohio Valley, but to no purpose.

In the preceding year the lords of the Board of trade and plantations had ordered the various Governors of colonies to make some efforts at combination, and the result had been a conference at Albany, where representatives from seven provinces met, both to discuss this question and to confer with the chiefs of the Six Nations who had ready access to the New York frontier town. Benjamin Franklin, from Pennsylvania, already held to be one of the most capable men in the country, had elaborated a scheme of colonial combination that was pronounced to be excellently conceived, and went a considerable way towards the results that in later days were so painfully but successfully achieved without the help of England. Neither party, however, were prepared to accept it. The mother country thought it gave the colonists too much power, while the latter, on the other hand, jealous to a fault of their inde-



SIR WILLIAM JOHNSON.

pendence, thought Franklin's scheme encroached on what they already possessed. The commissioners were the best men of their respective colonies, and approved of the plan; but they had no authority to act, and their constituents were not in accord with them.

The desperate endeavours of the French to undermine the attachment of the Six Nations towards the English, and procure their support, had not been without effect, and they had been materially assisted by the bad conduct of the Dutch traders from the Hudson, and even of the New York Commissioners. Detachments of these hitherto staunch tribes had been already enticed away, some into Canada, others southward into the Ohio Valley. The revolt of the Iroquois (to use a convenient term), whom the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle had actually recognised as English subjects, would have been disastrous. Of infinite service, however, at this crisis was a young Irishman of good birth, named Johnson, who had settled in the back country on the Mohawk River, and acquired an immense influence over these particular nations. He was now, of course, at Albany in person, and the Indian chiefs did not mince their words. They accused the English of deserting them, while the French were continually soliciting their friendship; of failing to build forts, while their enemies were swarming into the country; of already discussing the partition of their lands and of quarrelling at that very moment with the French about territory that belonged to neither; while for the Dutch traders from Albany they had not a good word to say. The Six Nations were, in fact, on the very verge of repudiating the

old alliance. Johnson, however, was the man of the hour, who stepped into the breach—one of those many Britons whose sway over native races has been of more profit to his country than rifles and regiments, and we shall hear of him again.

The Dutch and English, as I have before noted, were for all practical purposes one people; but the Germans of Pennsylvania and the Jerseys were, in Franklin's opinion, a wholly undesirable element, and even a dangerous one in times like these. He admits that they were plodding, industrious, and peaceable; but their rapid increase and rejection of the language of their adopted country made him fear that the province of Pennsylvania might in time become wholly German, and the English tongue actually die out. In the legislature and the law courts their language, he says, was becoming an intolerable nuisance, and their stupidity, he declares, alarmed him. People were even beginning to consider whether it was advisable to admit them at all as immigrants. They not only refused to arm in defence of the province, but mocked openly at those who did, and were in the habit of remarking that they would as soon be under French as English rule.¹

A little of the most Christian king, of his archbishops, and his thieving officials and iron-fisted generals would very soon have satisfied these poor ignorant Lutherans. Yet in spite of Franklin's contempt for their persons and his dread of their numbers, it may not be amiss to remember that

¹ The familiar American colloquialisms "Yankee Dutchman," "Pennsylvania Dutch," have no allusion to the Dutch proper of New York, but apply wholly to the German-American stock of Pennsylvania and the neighbouring States.

either want or the attraction of pay made soldiers eventually of many of them, for our present 60th Rifles, as will soon appear, chiefly consisted in its inception of German-Americans. But the result of all this chaos, this jealousy between colonies, this general inability to divine the future, and helplessness in face of a determined and united foe, was an urgent demand on the home Government to send out troops and a competent general.

Parliament met in November, 1754, and money was then voted for the despatch of troops to His Majesty's American plantations—only, be it noted, for their protection,—no declaration of war being so much as hinted at. So before January was out, the 44th and 48th regiments of the line had sailed from Cork Harbour, and a fleet of transports was labouring heavily westwards through the wintry seas.

England at this moment was neither happy in her rulers nor well equipped for war. Her navy, it is true, was considerable; but her army had been reduced to twenty thousand men—about the number, in fact, that the small provinces of New England four years later placed in the field. Her generals were of very moderate capacity, though among the younger officers there was some rising talent, which jobbery and corruption could not wholly strangle. Affairs of state, too, were just now in lamentable hands. The ridiculous Newcastle, to whom politics in its petty sense was a passion and who had no conception of anything loftier than distributing patronage with the sole object of retaining office, was Prime Minister. Sir Thomas Robinson had charge of the colonies, in connection with whom it has been said that New-

castle's crowning feat was in finding a coadjutor who was a greater fool than himself. If there had been reasonable prospects of a lasting peace, the British ambassador at Paris, Lord Albemarle, was not calculated to improve them. His success as an absorber of lucrative positions without capacity for any of them is the text of a somewhat memorable paragraph on the value of good manners in one of Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son. He points out the moral of "a mere Dutch gentleman, without estate, learning, parts, political abilities or application," achieving such a position by "his air, his address, his manners, and his graces." He was infatuated with a French mistress, who not only ruined him but sold his secrets to the Government. Albemarle died just before the English expedition sailed, and it was then too late for diplomacy to do anything but stave off the inevitable conflict. But this France alone was interested in doing till her preparations were complete. Great Britain, though her statesmen talked peace, made no further pretensions to act it.

It must not be supposed, however, that the despatch of the British force had been unobserved by France. On the contrary, it was regarded in some sort as a challenge, and 3,000 soldiers, with a new Governor of Canada, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, sailed, after much delay and under a strong naval escort, from Brest, early in May. Yet in the face of these unmistakable demonstrations, the two Governments assured each other of their sentiments of mutual friendship and esteem, advancing at the same time their respective claims in America, which were hopelessly irreconcilable. If the secret in-

structions deposited with each commander had at that moment been published to the world, they would have caused no little astonishment. Boscawen and Holborne, with some eighteen ships of the line between them, were in the meantime despatched in two parties to cut off the French, an attempt which met with very little success. Off the coast of Nova Scotia, however, two advanced British ships came up with an equal number of French stragglers, the *Alcide* and the *Lys*. Hocquart, the commander of the *Alcide*, demanded through a speaking trumpet of Howe (afterwards Lord Howe), of the *Dunkirk*, whether it was peace or war. A French account runs that Howe called out "*La Paix, La Paix,*" and after inquiring the French captain's name poured a broadside into him. Howe's story is that he replied he did not know till he had signalled to Boscawen, but he advised Hocquart to be prepared for war. Then came the signal to fight, and the action opened which ended with the capture of the two French ships, carrying eight companies of soldiers, and the loss of eighty-six men on the French side and thirty-four on the British. The rest of the French fleet were safe in Louisbourg Harbour. The news of this fresh collision caused some excitement in Europe. The Versailles Government recalled its ambassador, but still shrank from declaring war. All this took place in the month of June, during which events of still more serious moment were hastening to a crisis in the forests of the Alleghanies.

On the 20th of February the small British armament cast anchor in Hampton Roads, Virginia, when General Braddock, who was in command, proceeded at once to Williamsburg, the capital of the colony, to

confer with its eager and expectant Governor, Dinwiddie. The fleet then sailed up the Potomac and deposited the troops where the Virginia town of Alexandria, then in its infancy, now looks across the broad river towards the noble buildings of the city of Washington. These two regiments were the first substantial force of British regulars that had ever landed on American soil, unless, indeed, we go back to that curious revolt against Governor Berkeley in 1676 and the brief civil war in Virginia, which was finally extinguished by the landing of a mixed battalion of Guards.

Concerning Braddock, seeing that his name has been immortalized by the tragedy for which some hold him, in part, accountable, a word or two must be said. He was now over sixty years of age, and was the choice of the Duke of Cumberland, then commander-in-chief. As he had neither wealth nor influence, American warfare not being in request by fortune's favourites, we may fairly suppose that he was selected on his merits. No name has been more irresponsibly played upon and few reputations perhaps more hardly used than Braddock's by most writers of history and nearly all writers of fiction. His personality, from its very contrast to the wild woods in which he died, has caught the fancy of innumerable pens, and justice has been sadly sacrificed to picturesque effect. One is almost inclined to think that the mere fact of his name beginning with a letter which encourages a multiplication of strenuous epithets, has been against him. He is regarded as the typical redcoat of the Hanoverian period by all American writers—burly, brutal, blundering, blasphemous, but happily always, and without a dissen-

tient note, brave—brave indeed as a lion. This familiar picture of our poor general, as a corpulent, red-faced, blaspheming bulldog, riding roughshod over colonial susceptibilities, tones down amazingly when one comes to hard facts. Legends of his former life are, with peculiar lack of generosity, quoted for what they are worth, and when examined they seem to be worth nothing. Walpole airs his wit in one or two doubtful aspersions, and a play of Fielding's is with little reason supposed to satirize the general's earlier years. What is really known about Braddock is in his favour. Vanquished in a duel, he had been too proud to ask his life. In command at Gibraltar he was "adored by his men," and this though he was notorious as a strict disciplinarian, a quality which Wolfe at this very time declares to be the most badly needed one in the British army. He had been in the Guards, had enjoyed a private income of some £300 a year, which it may be noted, since spendthrift is one of the epithets hurled at him, he slightly increased during his lifetime. The night before Braddock sailed, he went with his two aides, Burton and Orme, to see Mrs. Bellamy, and left her his will, drawn up in favour of her husband. He also produced a map, and remarked, with a touch of melancholy, that he was "going forth to conquer whole worlds with a handful of men, and to do so must cut his way through unknown woods." He was, in fact, the first British general to conduct a considerable campaign in a remote wilderness. He had neither precedents nor the experience of others to guide him, and he found little help in the colonies where he had been taught to look for much. He has been accused of dis-

BRADDOCK AND THE COLONISTS [1755

paraging the colonial irregulars and neglecting to utilize the Indians. As to the first taunt, having regard to the appearance and discipline of the provincial troops that were paraded before Braddock, he would not, as a soldier trained on European fields, have been human had he refrained from all open criticism; as to the second, we shall see that it was untrue. Information regarding colonial resources was then vague in England. Braddock had been given to understand that the transport and commissariat would be provided by Virginia and her neighbours; whereas he now found that not only was nothing ready, but that there was no ground even for future expectations in that particular. If, as an officer of the Cumberland *régime*, he had used the vigorous language of that school, it would surely have been almost justified by circumstances; but there is no particular evidence that he did even so much. His accomplishments in this line are in all probability part of the more or less fancy dress in which writers have delighted to clothe him. Robert Orme of the 35th regiment, and recently of the Coldstreams, was one of the general's aide-de-camps, and has left us an invaluable journal of this expedition. Orme was highly thought of both by regulars and provincials, and regarded as a man of great sense and judgment, even by those who did not like Braddock and thought him, from their colonial point of view, unconciliatory and overbearing. Orme in his private diary gives no hint that Braddock was the violent, unreasonable, foul-mouthed person of the magazine writer. He was as much disheartened as his chief by the appearance and seeming temper of the colonial troops, and dwells on the trying conditions

which Braddock had to meet and the energy and honesty with which he endeavoured to do his duty.

The two British regiments in the meantime were being raised from 500 men to a strength of 700 by provincial enlistment. The 44th was commanded by Sir Peter Halkett, a good officer, who, ten years previously, had been captured by the Pretender and released on parole. The 48th were under Dunbar, who acquitted himself but poorly as we shall see. The camp of exercise on the Potomac was a strange and inspiring sight to the colonists, who had now begun in some sort to realize the French danger. With all their seeming apathy, the Virginians and Marylanders were staunchly loyal. The echoes from far-off European fields, won or fiercely disputed by the intrepidity of British soldiers, were still ringing in their ears. Stories of Dettingen and Fontenoy were yet told by cabin fires and on the planters' shady porches by new-comers from England and sometimes, no doubt, by men who had assisted in those glorious victories and scarcely less glorious defeats. Here now were these redoubtable redcoats, gay in all the glitter and panoply of war, actually marching and manœuvring on the warm soil of the Old Dominion. If there had been anything in this French scare, there was now at any rate no further cause for alarm. It was a great opportunity, too, for the gentry of the Potomac shore to indulge at the same time their loyal and their social instincts. Tradition says that the ladies appreciated the situation more than the gentlemen of the colony, who were not over-pleased at the supercilious bearing of the British officers. Washington, whose estate at Mount Vernon lay within a few miles of the Alexan-

dria camp, was a frequent visitor. A stickler always for punctilio and with a keen sense of justice, he had resented an order which placed all king's officers over all provincial officers, irrespective of rank or experience, and before Braddock's landing had resigned his commission. Such a keen soldier as he, was sorely tantalized, we may be sure, by all this pomp of war. Nobody ever seems to have thought of snubbing Washington, and to save him the indignity he would not stomach, namely, that of ranking, colonel as he was, under a British ensign, Braddock with kindly forethought placed him on his personal staff. Curiously enough, there seems to have been no general misgiving as to the ability of these well-drilled redcoats to meet the French and Indians in the heart of the forests. On the contrary, save for an occasional note of doubt, the middle colonies only saw in these invincible warriors an instrument which was to sweep the French for ever from their path and from their minds.

A council of colonial governors and British officers was held at Alexandria on April 14th, when a definite plan for the season's operations was drawn up. The chief expedition, of course, was that of Braddock and his regulars against Fort Duquesne, already decided upon. But it was thought advisable to distract the French at other points with such forces as the British Americans had at their disposal. Shirley, the clever and capable Governor of Massachusetts, though of middle age and no soldier, had some passion for military glory, and was immensely gratified at being placed in command of a force destined for the capture of Niagara. Acadia, now in the throes of those troubles alluded to in a former chapter, was to

be the scene of a vigorous movement by Monckton against the troublesome French fort of Beausejour on the boundary. Johnson, the backwoods statesman and soldier, was to strike at the chain of lakes which led due north from Albany to Canada and formed that famous and bloodstained highway between the two countries which will be the scene of many later chapters in this book. For the present it will be enough to say that these blows were to be struck almost entirely by the better organized provincial militia of the Northern colonies. The limited nature of their success will be briefly alluded to hereafter, and the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to that tragic and memorable disaster known as "Braddock's defeat."

In Canada there were now available, or soon would be, 3,000 troops of the line, in addition to the 2,000 marine or colony regulars and the colonial militia, estimated at about 15,000. Nor does this include the Louisbourg garrison, numbering 1,400 regulars. What fraction of this force had moved southwards through the vast wilderness to Fort Duquesne no one for a certainty then knew. It was the key to the Ohio Valley, and, indeed, to the whole situation, and strenuous efforts would be made to hold it. There were not believed to be as yet more than 500 white troops on the spot, but the number of Indians was an entirely unknown quantity, and they were quite as formidable so long as they remained in real earnest on the war-path.

As regards Indian help for Braddock, Dinwiddie had undertaken that 120 warriors should be at his service. It was not his fault that less than half that number, and those anything but zealous, came

straggling in. They were so hampered, moreover, with women and children that the provincial officers assured Braddock that the tax on the commissariat would be greater than the assistance of so small a number was worth. The general has been roundly accused of despising Indian help, whereas he never had a chance to reject it in any substantial form, though he made all the advances which his somewhat helpless position admitted of ; indeed, he made their backwardness one of his chief complaints. As it was, less than a dozen went through to the end with him as scouts. Braddock had now been two months in Virginia, and in spite of indefatigable exertions found himself thwarted and balked at every turn. If he showed some temper and used strong language, he may well be excused, for though 1,500 horses and 125 wagons were needed, and had been promised, by the end of April, 25 wagons only had been secured, and those mostly by his own exertions ! There were, in fact, no wagons to speak of in all Virginia. They were not then necessary to its single industry, as any one familiar with that country and its peculiar conditions can readily understand.

Benjamin Franklin, then postmaster at Philadelphia, was at the general's right hand, dining daily at his table—"the first capable and sensible man I have met in the country," wrote poor Braddock to his Government.¹ Franklin undertook the wagon business, and with great effect he turned to Pennsylvania, a colony of prosperous small farmers, apathetic as to the war, but possessed of abundant

¹ Franklin, it must be admitted, did not return Braddock's regard.

1755] MUSTER AT FORT CUMBERLAND

agricultural requisites. Franklin appealed not to their patriotism but to their pockets, or rather to their fears, telling them roundly that it would be better to hire their wagons and teams to His Majesty's Government than wait till they were dragooned, as with a fine touch of ready audacity he assured them they certainly would be. He, moreover, pledged his personal credit, and both the required wagons and several hundred horses were collected in a few days. With the food contractors in Virginia, too, there was infinite difficulty: the meat was rancid, the flour was short, while many of the horses were afterwards stolen by the very men who had sold them. Whatever were Braddock's faults, and one of them no doubt was cursing both the country and the Government which sent him there, he at least spared neither himself nor his private purse, which last he drew upon freely, Orme tells us, in his struggle for ways and means.

Wills Creek or Fort Cumberland, a former trading station some hundred miles westward up the Potomac, was to be the actual base of the expedition against Fort Duquesne. It was behind the settlements, and stood amid a stump-strewn clearing in the forests on the Maryland shore of the river. By the middle of May, and by various routes, Braddock's whole force had gathered at this backwoods station, which was bounded on one side by the river and on the other three by the leafy walls of the primæval forest. Braddock himself had crossed the Blue Ridge into the valley of the Shenandoah, and paid a visit *en route* to the eccentric Lord Fairfax, near the backwoods village of Winchester, where Washington joined his staff. Thence, moving north-

BRADDOCK'S ARMY ADVANCES [1755

ward, he crossed the Potomac, resumed command of his army at Fort Cumberland, and after a few more struggles with belated contractors of food, forage, or horses, by the 7th of June was in a condition to commence his march with safety.

The small force was divided into two brigades. The first was under Sir Peter Halkett, and contained the 44th regiment, now numbering 700 effective men, with 230 New York, Virginia, and Maryland rangers and 50 carpenters. The second brigade, under Dunbar, included the 48th regiment, 650 strong, 170 rangers from the Carolinas, somewhat less from Virginia, and 35 carpenters, in all nearly 2,000 men. It was absolutely necessary to take supplies for not less than nine weeks, since 122 miles of rugged and heavily wooded mountain country had to be traversed, where no subsistence worth mentioning for either man or beast was to be found, to say nothing of the provisions for the troops to be left as garrison of the backwoods fortress which they hoped to capture. The 44th, under Halkett, were the first to enter the forest; next came the provincials, under Burton, while Dunbar and the 48th, with the general and his staff, brought up the rear. Washington, who from illness and other private reasons had been as yet little with Braddock, ventured to contest the sweeping verdict of the harassed general, namely, that the population of these colonies consisted chiefly of knaves or fools. But Washington had not shared his commander's troubles, though he had plenty of his own of a like nature a few months later, and has left comments upon them as strong as poor Braddock's. All the sympathy the unfortunate general got from the British

1755] DIFFICULTIES OF THE FOREST

public was probably expressed with tolerable accuracy by Horace Walpole, who amused his fellow-dandies at St. James' by remarking that Braddock seemed "in no hurry to get scalped."

The route followed to the Great Meadows was much the same as that used by Washington and his small force in the preceding year, but now a road twelve feet wide had to be opened over the rugged, tree-encumbered ground. Its course lay neither over veldt, nor plain, nor prairie, nor sandy desert, nor Russian steppe; but over two high ranges of mountains and several lesser ridges, clad in the gloom of mighty forests, littered with the wreckage of unnumbered years, riven this way and that by turbulent streams, and swarming with hostile Indians. After a day or two's march it was generally recognised, Orme tells us, that the loads must be lightened. This done, and the officers' kits reduced to bare necessities, they even then took a week to reach the Little Meadows, only twenty miles from Fort Cumberland, and the long line, which had to guard against surprise at every point, straggled over four miles. A strange enough sight in those wild woods must have been the long train of jolting wagons, dragged by ill-conditioned horses, growing daily weaker; the clumsy tumbrils, and artillery, and ammunition carts jolting and crashing over the rough-made track; the strings of heavy-laden pack-horses, stung by deer-flies and goaded by the drivers' whips, sliding and slipping over limestone slabs, and floundering amid stumps and roots; the droves of stunted cattle shambling unwillingly along the unfenced track; the fresh-faced soldiery, in tight scarlet uniforms, pigtails and pipeclay, mitre hats and black-

gaitered legs, sweltering in the fierce, unwonted heat of an American midsummer sun, whose vertical rays pierce even the rich canopy of leaves that high June spreads aloft, and which rustle so temptingly in breezes unfelt below.

By the 19th of June it was evident to Braddock and his officers, including Washington, that greater expedition must be made. To press on with a small force merely carrying rations was out of the question. Indian runners had stated the French at Duquesne to be as yet comparatively few, but the number of their savage allies was altogether outside calculation. Without artillery, the fort would require a long siege—was, in fact, impregnable; and lastly it was perilous any longer to venture in small numbers into a country towards which the French were hastening in unknown strength. The pace, however, was somewhat mended by leaving 600 men, including the sick, and all the weaker horses, to come leisurely on with Dunbar; while Braddock with 1,200 regulars and 200 of the best provincials, pressed forward at a somewhat less snail-like rate. Washington was so ill with fever that Braddock absolutely compelled him to stay with Dunbar's rear column, promising upon his honour to have him sent forward to the front in time for the fight. "I would not miss it for £500," wrote the ardent young soldier to his friends in Virginia. So Braddock, making the patient in his turn solemnly promise to take "Dr. James's powders, the best medicine in the world," pressed on with his reduced column. They had still 92 miles between them and Fort Duquesne, but now managed to achieve between five and six miles a day. Sometimes their

slow progress lay through open forests, where the giant stems of oak and poplar, chestnut and maple, rose from a clean carpet of fallen leaves, or spread their leafy roof over wide-stretching and luxuriant masses of rhododendrons and azaleas, just now in the very zenith of their bloom; at other times they were brushing between sombre walls of cypress and hemlock which hid the sunlight and the heat from dank deep soils where the moss-grown carcasses of fallen trees lay heaped together in all stages of decay. Now the long column was clinging precariously to a precipitous hillside, beneath which some pent-up torrent churned and roared. Now it was struggling—cattle, horses, wagons, and men—in some rocky channel, where a shrunken stream trickled amid the *débris* of its winter floods. Signs of French and Indians were plentiful, but as yet they kept their distance, filling the measure of their hostility with taunts and ribald verses smeared upon the trees. Admirable discipline was maintained, and every precaution that prudence required was observed by Braddock. Men were thrown out upon both flanks marching abreast through the trees, while beyond these again scouting parties ranged the woods. A careless straggler was occasionally killed and scalped, but no party of the enemy ventured an attack on the column, attenuated though it of necessity was. Christopher Gist, Washington's former guide, acted again in that capacity, while a handful of Indians and mounted Virginians cautiously probed the forest in advance.

On the 7th of July, after a month's march, the column arrived within a dozen miles of its destination, and its difficulties seemed almost over.

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE BATTLE [1755

Whatever reinforcements might have reached Fort Duquesne, the French and their allies could hardly be in great strength, or some sort of demonstration would surely have been made, particularly as the Indians had small liking for open spaces and artillery. "Men and officers," says Orme, "had now become so skilful in the woods that they were no longer in fear of an ambuscade." Nor did Braddock for that matter, as is often loosely stated, eventually run into one. The army was now within a few miles of the Monongahela, which rolled with broad and shallow current on the left and in a north-westerly direction to its junction with the Alleghany. These two rivers unite to form the Ohio, and in the angle of their junction, on a site now buried amid the smoke and din of Pittsburg, then stood the lonely fortress. The shortest route for Braddock was to continue his course parallel with that of the Monongahela, but the broken nature of the country made the risk too great. It was decided, therefore, to ford the river, and recross it at a spot some five miles lower down and eight from the French fortress. On the next day, July the 8th, the column moved down to within a couple of miles of the first ford, and there bivouacked for the night. It was to prove the last sleep from which one half, at any rate, of the poor fellows who there made their beds of leaves and pine brush were ever to awaken. Washington, in accordance with Braddock's promise, was brought up that evening, though still weak with fever, having left Dunbar and his 600 men at a spot called Rock Fort, some fifty miles in the rear. The troops were to cross the river twice in the course of the next day's

march, and if all was well would camp sufficiently near the fort to strike it on the following morning, for progress had now become much easier. At dawn Sir John Sinclair with the engineers and axemen went forward, as usual, to clear the road. At sunrise Gage, of later and less favourable notoriety in the Revolutionary war, but now a promising young brevet-colonel, with 300 men and two guns, marched out of camp to occupy the second ford, some five miles below the first. It was eight o'clock when the main body waded the Monongahela, and it had scarcely entered the oak forests which clothed the further bank, when a messenger from Gage arrived announcing that he held the further ford. It was past noon when the rest of the column arrived there, and the reunited force was drawn up by Braddock preparatory to making the passage of the river, at this spot about two hundred yards broad, with some pomp and circumstance.

Beyond the river the ground swelled up into low hills, clad with the inevitable forest. No enemy was visible, but from behind that vast screen of foliage many a pair of eager eyes, both French and Indian, were fastened on the broad sheen of sunlit waters which here broke for a space the forest and its illimitable canopy of leaves. Knowing this full well, and regarding with some justice the abandonment of both fords as a confession of weakness, Braddock determined to effect this last passage of the Monongahela in a fashion worthy the soldiers of a proud empire coming to enforce its outraged rights. So the troops were marched across by companies with much precision and with colours flying, while drum and fife and bugle woke the echoes of the woodland wilderness with stirring and familiar strains.

THE TERRIBLE WAR-WHOOP [1755

Reforming on the further bank, the column moved forward in much the same order and with apparently no less caution than before. Half a dozen Indians and some Virginia light horsemen felt the country in advance. Then came the road-makers with Gage, his two guns and 300 men, while as many yards behind followed the main column. It was now about eight miles to the fort, and the order was to march till three o'clock, when the last camp would be pitched before what was fondly looked for as the crowning triumph of the morrow.

In this order the troops had proceeded the better part of a mile, and had reached a spot where the underbrush grew thicker than usual beneath the trees. The vanguard under Gage had just crossed a shallow ravine, when the scouts and horsemen came rapidly in, and at the same moment Gordon, the engineer who was marking out the road, caught sight of a man, dressed as an Indian but wearing the gorget of an officer, running towards him. The latter, as soon as he saw the English, pulled up short and waved his hat over his head, when the woods in front became of a sudden alive with warriors, and the Indian war-whoop ringing from nearly a thousand throats shook the arches of the forest with its novel and appalling clamour. Forms innumerable, some in white uniforms, some in blue, still more in the weird feathered head-dress and garish pigments of the Indian, could be seen speeding to right and left among the trees. In a few moments a musketry fire, at first desultory but as each fresh enemy found cover quickening rapidly into a formidable fusillade, poured in upon Gage's men. For a short time many of the foe were

visible, and the small British vanguard wheeled into line and delivered two or three volleys with steadiness and precision. But the enemy, with a far greater superiority of aim than the modern Boer has over the modern redcoat, and with a bright-coloured exposed target such as was rarely offered to him in forest warfare, was already playing deadly havoc. The British bullets did little more than sliver the bark from trees and cut the saplings. Gage's two guns, however, were brought into action, and fired three volleys of grape and canister, which seem to have accounted for much of the slight mortality which the enemy experienced on this fatal day. Indeed, if the British, enveloped in that thickening canopy of smoke and leaves and already shaken by such a hail of lead from almost unseen foes, had only known it, the moment was a critical one for the enemy. De Beaujeu, their leader, whose waving hat had been the sign of battle, was lying dead in the bushes. Dumas, who succeeded to the command, has told us how his hundred and fifty Canadians, headed by their two young officers, had fled shamefully at the first discharge of grape, crying "*sauve qui peut*," how the main body of the British infantry were coming up behind the smoke with loud shouts of "God save the King!" and how the six hundred Indians, flinching as ever from artillery, were leaving their cover and showing signs of abandoning the field to himself and his officers and the seventy French regulars who held their ground. With infinite presence of mind and a gallantry that Dumas himself somewhat modestly attributes to despair, he and his lieutenants, conspicuously assisted by a famous half-breed leader, Langlade,

BATTLE OF THE MONONGAHELA [1755

rallied the Indians, and held them to the field for the few minutes that were required to show them what an easy job was theirs. Under cover of the smoke and brush, and aided by their knowledge of the ground and of the science of backwoods warfare, they threw out a long line of hidden skirmishers upon both flanks of the British. From this time forward the battle was mere sport for the one side and deadly slaughter for the other. Two shallow ravines greatly favoured the tactics of the enemy, while a low, densely wooded hill upon the British right front was crowded through the whole fight with howling sharpshooters.

Braddock, when the firing grew hot enough to show that his vanguard was seriously engaged, pressed rapidly up with the main column, leaving Sir Peter Halkett with 400 men, including most of the provincials, to guard the baggage. As the supports reached Gage's company, the latter seem even in so short a time to have received heavy punishment and fell back in some confusion on the new-comers, shaking their steadiness and mixing the men of the two regiments together. Never perhaps was a battle fought more difficult in one sense and in another more painfully simple to describe.

The doubtful moment with the Indians seems to have passed when the main body and the vanguard of the British melted into one. Henceforth it was an almost purely Indian fight and of a nature more astoundingly one-sided than had ever occurred in the annals of backwoods warfare. From right and left and front, and from an enemy that was practically invisible, a deadly fire that scarcely tested the well-known accuracy of the men behind the rifles

was poured for two hours into bewildered, huddling groups of redcoats. It was a butchery rather than a battle. Anglo-Saxon writers have followed one another in monotonous abuse of these two hapless battalions. The French victor, Dumas, is more generous when he tells us they remained to be shot at for two hours with obstinate firmness. Braddock was a helpless amateur at such work, and his men still more so. Hopelessly disorganized, they crowded together in groups firing wildly into the trees or into the air, or sometimes even into their own comrades.

Braddock proved himself a very lion in combat, but his reckless courage was of no avail. His officers exposed their lives with splendid valour, but the sacrifice was useless. To fight enemies they could not see, and who mowed them down like corn, was something terribly novel to the routine British soldier of that day, brave and staunch though he was amid more familiar dangers. In vain it was endeavoured, by planting the regimental standards in the ground, to disentangle the medley. It was in vain that officer after officer gathered together small groups of men and led them into the teeth of the storm. They were picked off with deadly accuracy, and their followers, bereft of leadership, thrown back upon the slaughter pen. Among others, Burton, whose name was the last spoken by Wolfe's dying lips four years later on the Plains of Abraham, led a hundred men against the fatal hill, but fell wounded in the attempt. One may ask, perhaps, whether bayonet charges, however well delivered, would have availed much against so widely scattered and so nimble a foe in the blind depths of

HALKETT AND THE REARGUARD [1755

the forest. Backwoods warfare against the most formidable savage warrior that the world has ever seen was an art in itself that only much backwoods training could acquire. The Red Indian knew no fear. He seldom threw his life away, like equally brave white men, to no purpose, as war with him was a game to be properly played, and this perhaps made him more dangerous. He was liable, too, to moods and tempers; but when he made war in earnest he was terrible, and was always at least equal to the same number of picked backwoodsmen in a stand-up fight. Braddock's men were not picked backwoodsmen, and war on the Ohio was very different from war in Flanders. On this dire occasion the only savages that could be seen were those whose lust of trophies outdid their caution and urged them to rush out and risk the random fire while tearing the scalp from the bleeding heads of dead or wounded soldiers.

British officers as well as colonials who were there have declared that no pen could describe the scene. One actor in it wrote that the dreadful clangour of the Indian war-whoop would ring in his ears till his dying day. One can imagine the pack-horses, stung to madness by bullet-wounds and fright, stumbling about among the dead and wounded, adding their dying shrieks to the general uproar, and the cattle, smitten by the fire of both sides, rushing terror-stricken through the woods. At the tail of the column towards the ford and in rear of the baggage Halkett's 400 men, pressed by the advanced points of the Indian flank fire, were faring somewhat better, though Sir Peter himself was killed, and his son, while trying to raise him, fell dead by his

side. Most of the hundred or so Virginia riflemen, about whose action in this fight a good deal of fable has gathered, were here. They did their duty, and fought gallantly behind trees according to backwoods custom. But the contemporary plan of the battle shows the attack on the rear guard to have been far weaker than where the mass of the demoralized redcoats drew the bulk of the fire.

The pandemonium had lasted over two hours. Only the wagoners and axemen so far had fled. Washington, in the thick of the fight, had nobly seconded his chief's endeavours. He was still unhurt, though several bullets had passed through his clothes and two horses had been killed under him. Braddock, hoarse, hot, smoke-grimed, and stung with the bitterness of defeat, at last gave the signal for retreat. He was riding his fifth horse, and at this moment fell from it with a ball in his lungs. Orme, though himself severely wounded, and Captain Stewart, a Virginian, ran to his assistance. He begged to be left to die where he was, but first in a tumbril, and then on a led horse, he was forced along amid the general flight that had now commenced.

Everything was abandoned to the enemy—wagons, guns, cattle, horses, baggage, and £25,000 in specie, while scores of helpless wounded were left victims to the tomahawk and scalping knife. The long strain once loosened, it became a race for life by every man who could drag his legs behind him. Regulars and provincials splashed in panic and in dire confusion through the ford they had crossed in such pomp but three hours before. Arms and accoutrements were flung away in the terror with which men fled from those ghastly shambles. A few Indians

followed the fugitives into the water, but none crossed it. There was no pursuit; with such a wealth of spoil and scalps on the battlefield, it would not have been Indian tactics.

Braddock, though suffering from a mortal wound, made an effort with his surviving officers to gather some men together and make a stand beyond the first ford. It was useless, however, and they soon found themselves alone. Beyond the second ford another attempt was made with no more success. From here Washington, Braddock's only uninjured aide-de-camp, was sent forward to Dunbar's camp, over sixty miles away, to hurry on help and provisions for the wounded. So fast did the foremost fugitives travel that they arrived there the following night, spreading dismay and consternation among the 600 men in camp, great numbers of whom being provincials, deserted and went home. The survivors of the tragedy came dropping in throughout the next two days, many of them hatless, coatless, and without arms. Wagons, medicines, and supplies were sent out along the trail, while Braddock, borne in a litter by two men, whom, Orme tells us, he had to bribe with a guinea and a bottle of wine, lay silent and suffering.

Even the dying hours of the gallant bulldog have been made the theme of much fanciful dialogue and garnished with fictitious utterances of grief at the disaster, and remorse for his supposed obstinacy and rashness. That he twice tried to arrest the stampede, and then took measures for the comfort of the wounded, is all that we know for certain of his last hours. He was unconscious at Rockfort, where it was decided to retire to Fort Cumberland,

1755] BRADDOCK BURIED IN FOREST

and as the wagons were required for the wounded, and the enemy were expected, the guns and stores that could not be moved were destroyed. At the Great Meadows, a stage beyond, Braddock died. He was buried there beneath the forest leaves, Washington reading the funeral service over his grave, while wagons were rolled over the fresh mould lest his remains should be found and desecrated. Twenty years later, when the wilderness had given way to civilization, his bones, recognised by the articles buried with him, were accidentally unearthed by a farmer's spade, and found a strange and discreditable resting-place in a glass case at a local museum.

Braddock, to be sure, was no great general. He was sent to carry out an undertaking, arduous and unprecedented in British experience, and did his best in the face of immense difficulties, human and physical. Both he and his people had perhaps grown a little too confident after crossing the second ford. Till then, however, he was entirely successful, and even so it was no ambush in the ordinary sense of the term. With his scouts farther forward he would have had, it is true, a little more notice; but under no circumstances were his regulars qualified to face even a lesser number of Indians in their native woods, while there were not 200 provincial combatants on the field of battle, and many of these had no backwoods experience whatever.

Out of 89 officers, 63 were killed or wounded. Of about 1,300 rank and file, actual combatants, not 500 came out unscathed, the greater number of the remainder being killed. Many were carried off to torture and death by the Indians, who are variously

estimated at from 600 to 800. The French, who stayed with or near them, numbered about 70, while the 150 Canadians, as we saw, fled early in the fight. The loss of the enemy in killed and wounded was under fifty. The effect of this battle, which neither before nor since has had any exact parallel in British history, was prodigious. Shame and humiliation was felt in England, unbounded exultation in France, while the American colonists' faith in the invincibility of British soldiers was permanently shaken.

The victorious French at Fort Duquesne were scarcely less astonished than elated. We have plenty of written evidence how precarious they considered their position, and with what doubtful hopes of success they left the fort on the morning of July 9th. The blow in itself was bad enough; but Dunbar, a most indifferent soldier, and excusably regarded at the time as something worse, now succeeded to the command of the shattered force, and behaved as if the terror of the tragedy had entered into the very souls of himself and his troops. The effect of it upon the Indians was this time not merely a moral but a physical one, for it left the entire frontier of four colonies at their mercy. Dunbar, however, was not happy till he reached Philadelphia, whence he soon afterwards embarked with his men and sailed away for the north.

There was now a tremendous outcry and a general panic. The Indians, hounded on by the French, and swarming in from the north and west, frequently led, too, by Canadian partisans, threw themselves upon the almost defenceless frontier of Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, and rolled it back amid an orgie

of blood and fire and tears; while Washington, in command of 1,000 ill-disciplined and badly-officered militiamen, was set the hopeless task of defending a line nearly 400 miles in length.

He was only three-and-twenty, but was regarded as the natural protector of the colonies now threatened, and his letters from the western settlements of Virginia throughout this autumn, winter, and spring give a harrowing picture of the Indian terror that he was endeavouring to combat. From the thrifty settlements of the Scotch Irishmen, and the more adventurous among the Germans which were thickly sprinkled along the eastern troughs of the Alleghanies, came flying in crowds, horse, foot, and wagons, through the mountain passes. "They come through by fifties at a time," writes Washington, "and talk of surrendering to the French if no help comes from below." Braddock's road from the Ohio he speaks of as being beaten hard with moccasin feet, as if an army had been over it, while all the Western forests were alive with Indians. In Maryland, a little later, he counted 300 wagons in three days hurrying from the wasted settlements. From North Carolina to Western New York men were scalped and murdered by hundreds, and women and children in still greater numbers either treated in like fashion or driven into captivity behind the Alleghanies. The tears and supplications of the refugees were a daily torment to this at once tender and brave-hearted young leader of men, who chafed at the impotence to which he was consigned by bad and inefficient soldiers, worse officers, and a lack of everything but scurrilous abuse.

Braddock himself probably never used in conversa-

tion much stronger language than Washington has left in writing of the criminal indifference at this moment of his fellow-colonists who pulled the wires or held the purse-strings. A feeble line of block-houses was built along the frontier from the Hudson to the James, but the young Virginian commander notes with fine scorn that their militia garrisons take good care to stay inside them, though a bold forward policy was the only hope of successfully combating invasion. Landon Carter, head of the most famous and wealthy family in the colony, is equally trenchant, and swears that if there was an active king upon the throne of France he could conquer the whole country up to the Atlantic with ease. The Indian terror lasted for nearly two years, during which the destruction of life and property was awful, and the accompanying details ghastly. It was complicated, moreover, in the south by a continual dread of a servile rebellion. In Virginia alone were 120,000 negroes whose minds were insidiously poisoned with the notion that a French triumph would ensure their freedom. When the French influence was dead, and the Western Indians in after years were left face to face with the sons and grandsons, and even husbands and brothers, of the victims of 1755-56, a deadly reckoning was taken.¹ As the Scotch-Irish vanguard of American civilization slowly pushed their way across the Alleghanies towards the fertile plains of Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee, it would be ill guessing how much of fierce revenge for some unforgotten tragedy nerved the arms of the sinewy half-Puritan, half-lawless borderers who "won the West."

¹ Mr. Theodore Roosevelt's book *The Winning of the West*, treats of this later period in an exhaustive and fascinating manner.

CHAPTER IV

BRADDOCK'S crushing defeat near Fort Duquesne resounded throughout North America to its uttermost limits. Nor was the effect produced on the Northern colonies by any means only a moral one. On the contrary, it contributed very materially to the failure of both those expeditions to the northward which were designed to support Braddock; namely, the one undertaken by Shirley against Niagara, and the other, led by Johnson, against Crown Point, on Lake Champlain. In the first place, the news of the catastrophe on the Monongahela arrived in the north before either corps was ready to deliver its attack, and greatly disheartened the militia who composed them; and secondly, the capture of Braddock's papers revealed to the French the secret plans of their enemies, and enabled them to take measures for their frustration.

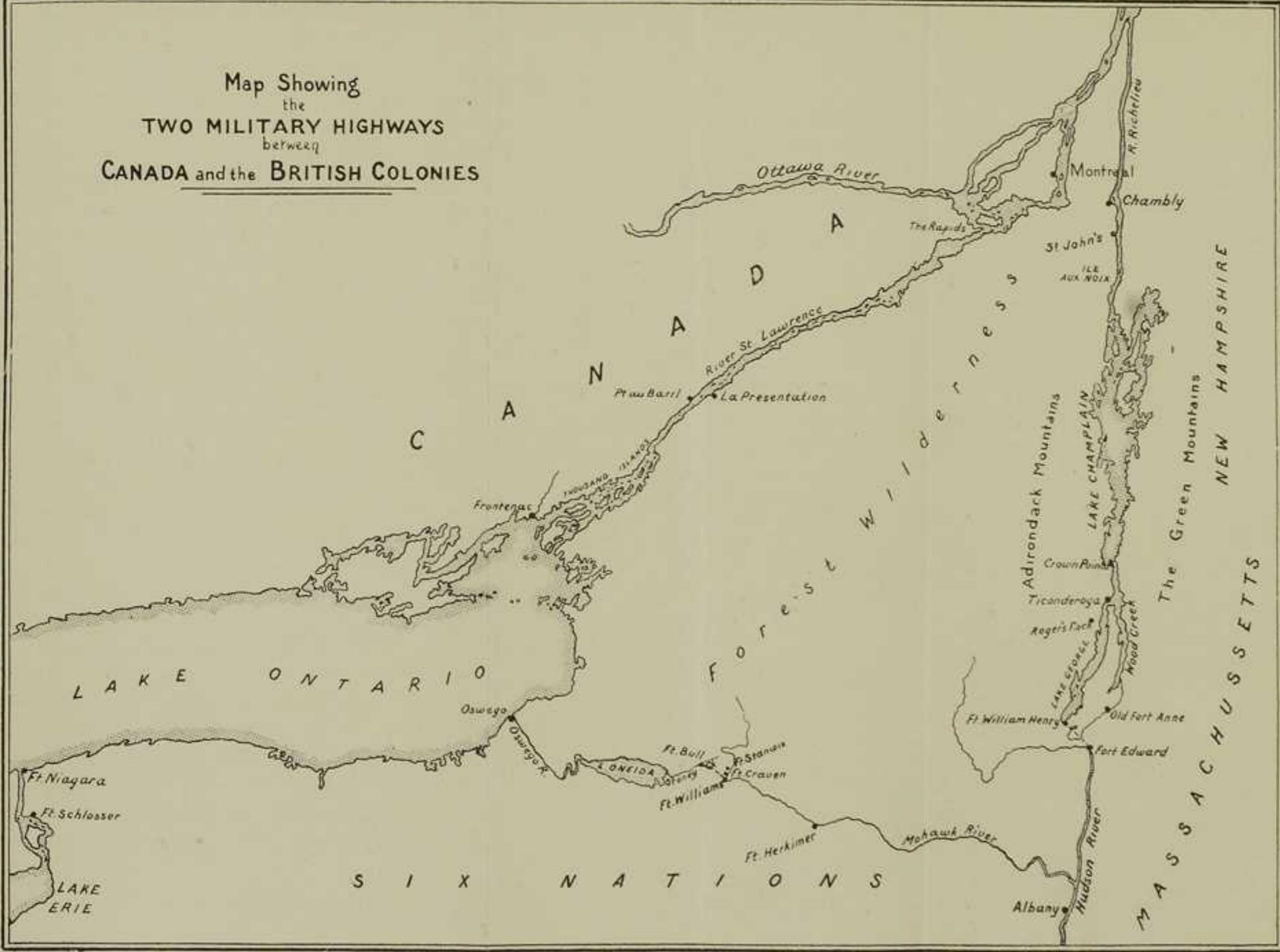
Shirley, the spirited Governor of Massachusetts, though but an amateur soldier, had been commissioned a general, greatly to his delight, and was now by Braddock's death Commander-in-Chief in North America. The Marquis de Vaudreuil, the new Governor of Canada, had in the meantime arrived from France, with 3,000 regulars, including the regiments of Bearne, La Reine, Guienne, and Languedoc, who were to earn much well-deserved

renown in the coming war. Of Vaudreuil we shall hear a good deal, seeing that he remained in office till the closing scene, and signed the capitulation of the colony to Great Britain. It will be enough for the present to say that he was fifty-seven years of age, the son of a former governor, and in consequence a Canadian by birth—a fact which gave him a strong colonial bias in all matters of jealous contention, and they were many, between the sons of old and new France. For the rest he was a man of second-rate ability and of no military capacity, though he aspired to much. He was of a jealous, vain, and somewhat petty nature, but patriotic and hardworking to a fault, and had previously been Governor of Louisiana. The commander of the forces was Dieskau, a German baron, who had long served in the French service, a good, sound, capable soldier, but of no striking talent, and his career in America was destined to be brief.

Of the subsidiary expeditions of the British in this year, 1755, I shall not speak at such length as the schemes involved and the number of troops collected for them might seem to warrant. Partly from the inexperience of all concerned, and partly from their premature discovery by the French, both undertakings were practically fruitless. I purpose, moreover, having in view the limits of this little book, to dwell chiefly on the more luminous and decisive conflicts of the war, and not to attempt the elaboration of fruitless campaigns that would weary the reader with an unavoidable monotony of detail, though some brief notice of them is essential to the story.

Shirley's thwarted undertaking against Niagara

Map Showing
the
TWO MILITARY HIGHWAYS
between
CANADA and the BRITISH COLONIES



had gone by way of the more westerly of the two great routes which led to Canada. Both of these started from Albany, on the Hudson River. This frontier town may be described as lying in the apex of a right-angled triangle, one side of which ran due north to the St. Lawrence and the heart of Canada, while the other ran nearly due west to Lake Ontario, tapping French territory behind its civilization, but in the path of its chief trading highway to the West. The base of this triangle is roughly represented by the course of the St. Lawrence. Both these routes — the northern some two hundred miles in length, the western somewhat less—lay through a rugged, forest-clad, and almost unpeopled wilderness. They were, in fact, natural arteries formed by lakes and streams, with only a narrow watershed here and there to break their continuity. There were numerous rapids, too, and shallows to be *portaged*;¹ but, in the backwoods sense, they were navigable routes. With all their obstacles, which at this early stage were many and great, they were, nevertheless, the only possible channels by which French or English armies could conduct serious operations against each other.

Between Canada and the frontier settlements of New York and New England there were innumerable "trails," quite adequate for war bands of rangers or Indians; but for the proper understanding of the situation in North America throughout this whole period the reader cannot keep too clearly before his eyes these two great military waterways:

¹ "*Portage*," a convenient colloquialism still universally used, either as a noun or verb, both in English and French Canada.

the one running north, the other west, with the old Dutch frontier town of Albany standing in the angle—the base of supply for both.

The extremity of the western route was Oswego, where the flourishing town of that name now looks out upon Lake Ontario. In those days it was a remote trading station, rudely fortified, and occupied for the past thirty years by the British, to the constant vexation of their rivals, who regarded the western lakes as wholly within their sphere. The way to Oswego led up the Mohawk River, which joined the Hudson near Albany, and for *batteaux* and canoes was more or less navigable to the headwaters, whence a four-mile *portage* over the watershed led to Lake Oneida. From this beautiful sheet of water the Oswego River rolled down to Lake Ontario. Shirley now really opened this route for the first time. At the head of 1,500 men, collected, supplied, and organized with difficulty, he pushed his slow way to Oswego, which was to be his base for an attack upon Niagara, the most important station the French held in the West. His force consisted of two battalions of raw recruits raised in the colonies, but paid by the Crown, afterwards the 50th and 51st regiments of the line, and some artillery. The delays for obvious reasons had exceeded all calculation, and it was late in August before Shirley was ready to leave Oswego. But he then found that the French, having got warning of the British plans from Braddock's captured correspondence, had thrown large reinforcements into Fort Frontenac, which confronted him not fifty miles away upon the northern shore of the lake. Frontenac was a fortified trading post of much

the same type as Oswego and the original of the old and important Ontario town of Kingston. Shirley dared not now move. To have abandoned Oswego for an attack on Niagara would have left the former at the mercy of thirteen hundred efficient and well-provided French soldiers, who had gathered at Fort Frontenac. So there was nothing for it but to work out the rest of the season upon the poor fortifications of his present position, and as the winter approached to return to Albany. Seven hundred men were left at Oswego as a garrison under Colonel Mercer, of whose fate we shall hear later, and in the meantime a little more space must be given to Johnson's operations against Lake Champlain, though they were equally futile. Just a word, however, must be said of the man himself, since he was a famous character in his day and played a unique and somewhat romantic part. He was now about forty years old, was a native of County Meath, and acted as agent for his uncle, Sir Peter Warren, who had made a speculative purchase of an immense tract of wild forest land in the Mohawk Valley. Here Johnson dwelt in a large rambling mansion among the woods known as Mount Johnson, with an Indian wife, the sister of a famous chief. He acquired an extraordinary ascendancy over the Indians, here represented by the warlike Six Nations, the scourge alike in former days both of French and English, but now this long time, as we have said, allies of the latter, though strictly passive ones and much shaken by the growing prestige of France. He spoke the Mohawk language and entertained their people in lavish fashion. "This singular man," says Mrs. Grant, of Laggan, who was

JOHNSON APPOINTED TO A COMMAND [1755

brought up at Albany, and remembered him, "lived like a little sovereign, kept an excellent table for strangers and officers, and by confiding entirely in the Indians and treating them with unvaried truth and justice, taught them to repose entire confidence in him."

The Albany traders who formerly represented the colonies in all official dealings with the Indians, had by bad faith brought them to the verge of a rupture. The latter hailed with delight the appointment of their favourite as Indian Commissioner, and Johnson himself, thoroughly appreciating the grievances which had almost driven them into the arms of the French, soon had them under a control that remained unshaken throughout the war. He was a versatile kind of genius, a big, breezy man abounding in energy and common-sense. He could hold his own in a grave council of colonial Governors, or, if need be, could drink and shout and paint his face and dance the war-dance with the wildest of Mohawk warriors.

In the dearth of skilled commanders, Johnson, who, with all his ready capacity, had no military experience whatever, was now made a general, and given the command of 6,000 provincial troops. His instructions were to drive the French from Lake Champlain, and to occupy Crown Point, a promontory of strategic importance on its south-western shore. As a preliminary to the campaign, Johnson collected a thousand of the Iroquois warriors at his manor, feasted them with oxen roasted whole, and indulged them with an orgie of eloquence extending over three days, at the end of which period he flung down the war belt. So honeycombed, however,

had even the Six Nations been with French intrigue, that only a third of Johnson's guests responded to his appeal. The rest were deterred by having relatives employed on the French side.

The troops for the Northern expedition, like those of Shirley's, assembled at Albany. Of the 6,000 voted, 4,500 came from the ever-martial colony of Massachusetts. These raw New England militiamen, whatever their spirit, must not be regarded as very formidable troops. They were mostly recruits, and all amateurs in regular warfare. Nor were most of them efficient in a system of their own like the South African Boers. A few only were experienced bush fighters, the greater part being hard-working farmers, mechanics, or fishermen. They had no discipline and only a few had uniforms. Each soldier brought a gun with him, which he knew how to use with ordinary skill, also a tomahawk to serve in lieu of a bayonet, at close quarters. The men were impatient under control, and were imbued with a constant longing for home, where the plough stood idle in the furrow or the hammer silent in the forge. They had no military science, no elementary knowledge of camp sanitation, and as a premium on indiscipline they elected their own officers, who with rare exceptions knew little more than the men they commanded. The French Canadians held them in a contempt that was exaggerated by the vanity of their race, and moreover hated them heartily as heretics. But with all this they were tough and hardy, and, one need scarcely say, possessed of the inherent bravery of their stock. From their ranks, too, could always be gathered small bands of men who combined superior marksmanship and a practised knowledge of bush fighting,

—of *la petite guerre*, as the French term went—with a resolute and incomparable daring that makes some of their enterprises throw fiction into the shade.

Dieskau, whose first intention had been to proceed up the St. Lawrence to Lake Ontario and seize Oswego before Shirley could entrench himself there, now hurried back, and ascending the Richelieu River to Lake Champlain, occupied Crown Point with a force of 3,500 men, of whom 700 were regulars, 1,600 Canadians, and the rest Indians. Johnson's force at Albany was far short of the estimates, but it was not lack of numbers that was his serious difficulty. For a raw general with a raw army and a wilderness to face, unsustained by any organization worth mentioning, the difficulties of transport and commissariat were immense. His route, which became from this time forward so memorable a one, began by following the course of the Hudson due north from Albany for some forty miles. This much of it was comparatively simple, being by water, with but few *portages*. Then, however, where the great river turns sharp to the west, the line of march left its banks, and continuing northward, crossed the twelve miles or so of densely timbered upland that separated it from the headwaters of Lake George. Once launched upon the bosom of the most romantic sheet of water in North America, canoe or sloop might float onward towards Canada beneath the mighty shadows of the Adirondack Mountains, without let or hindrance but a gale of wind, for over thirty miles. At the foot of the lake a river, broken at places with rapids and shallows, pursued a short but tortuous course till Lake Champlain opened out its shining bosom and presented a clear

sailing stretch of some sixty miles. Thence from its foot the Richelieu or Sorel River in another stage of about equal distance led to the St. Lawrence and the heart of Canada. The whole of this natural route is so curiously direct that a ruler laid due north upon the map from Albany, or indeed from New York to Montreal would indicate with sufficient accuracy this famous military highway of bygone America.

But it is only with Lake George, "the Silvery Lake," the "Horican" of the Indians and Fenimore Cooper, that we have now to do, and even in such case only with the head of it. Johnson had probably no more than 3,000 men actually with him, and these gave his inexperienced wits enough to do in the handling, feeding, and pushing them forward through so rough a country. His main difficulties of course began when he left the Hudson, and had to carry cannon, stores, and boats over the shaggy ridges which led towards Lake George. The landing-place at once became a point of the utmost strategic importance, and here the general left Colonel Lyman with 500 men to build a fort, named at first after that doughty New England warrior himself, but shortly re-christened by the loyal Johnson after a prince of the blood, and known to future generations as Fort Edward. Johnson himself, with the rest of his rustic army and 300 Mohawk Indians, cut their way painfully through the woods and deposited their boats, stores, and guns on the banks of the uppermost bay of Lake George. Here they proceeded to throw up fresh intrenchments, which developed later into Fort William Henry of sinister memory.

Dieskau in the meantime, learning from his

scouts that Johnson was fortifying both ends of the carrying place, laid his plans. Crown Point, the fortified post on a promontory of Lake Champlain which he occupied with his army, was fifty miles to the north. It had worried the frontiers of the New England colonies which lay to the east of it for twenty years, and was Johnson's point of attack, as already indicated. Dieskau, however, was not likely to act on the defensive with a force equal in numbers and individually superior. Selecting a body, therefore, of 200 regulars, 680 Canadians, and 600 Indians, he served them with rations for ten days, and led them rapidly forward to meet Johnson. A glance at the map will show how Lake Champlain throws out a long narrow tail southward, known as Wood Creek, and running parallel with Lake George for almost its entire length. It was up this waterway in canoes and boats that Dieskau led his force. Landing near its head, they proceeded to march through the woods till they struck, about at its centre, Johnson's new road from the Hudson to the lake, where they intercepted British messengers and learned the state of affairs. It was now a question of which encampment they should attack. Being informed, though falsely, that there were no cannon at the lake fort, they decided for this reason on attacking it. Johnson, in the meantime, had heard of the French movements, and despatched a thousand men under Colonel Williams into the woods to find and oppose them. Hendricks, a famous Mohawk chief with Johnson, protested at the inadequate size of the force—"too few," he said, "to be successful, and too many to be killed." He nevertheless consented to face the dangers his British allies were so rashly courting, with 200 of his

warriors. Too old and too fat to walk, the brave Indian rode with the rest, mounted on a pony, and was one of the first to fall. Williams, "colonial" though he was, seems to have marched his force through that blind and tangled country with a contempt for ordinary precautions, such as the much-abused Braddock never dreamt of. Dieskau, on the other hand, feeling the way carefully with his scouts, had ample warning of the British approach, and received them in a well-laid ambush with a success that was only saved from being complete by some of his Indians opening fire a little prematurely. It is said that they saw some of their Mohawk relatives in the van of the advancing British, and took this method of warning them. However that may be, the New England soldiers were taken even more by surprise than Braddock's vanguard, and like them, though still more rapidly, the front ranks were driven back in confusion upon their supports by a withering fire from an almost invisible enemy. In Dieskau's own words, "the column was crumpled up like a pack of cards." They did not remain huddled helplessly together to be shot at as did Braddock's men, but after a sharp brief struggle, in which Williams and Hendricks both fell, they turned and ran for the fort, the French and Indians hotly pursuing. But Johnson, hearing the sound of battle drifting rapidly his way, sent out 300 men to stem what was evidently a hot retreat. This they accomplished with sufficient success for the British to bring in their wounded. There was but just time to raise hasty barricades of inverted batteaux and trunks of trees. The forest unfortunately still grew close to the lines of the embryo

fort, and there was now no chance to do any clearing. Could Dieskau have pressed on at once, his men would have carried the camp. But neither Indians nor Canadians were fond of storming positions, and, like the Boers of to-day, threw themselves into cover at once, though in their case trees took the place of rocks. The white-coated French infantry, however, went bravely on till the unexpected fire of artillery, well served by Captain Eyre, drove them also into the shelter of the woods. A hot musketry engagement now ensued. Johnson's militiamen recovered from their panic, and, partially protected by rude breastworks, fought well and stoutly. In time the rifle fire, supported by the artillery, began to tell so unmistakably upon the enemy, that the New England men, taking heart of grace, leaped over their barricades and swept down upon the foe with tomahawks and clubbed muskets, driving them ultimately from the field. Johnson was wounded; Dieskau was not only wounded, but captured, and as he was sitting helplessly against a tree, with three bullets already in his legs, a soldier seeing him levelled his piece, and in spite of his victim's protests, deliberately shot him through both thighs. Fortunately for the credit of the New Englanders, the rascal turned out to be a French deserter. The unfortunate general was carried to Johnson's tent, who, though in a bad plight himself, behaved with a generosity that Dieskau never forgot.

There was a prodigious clamour among Johnson's Indians for the French commander's life in atonement for that of their chief Hendricks, who had been bayoneted in the fight of the morning. It was all their popular and powerful leader could do to

save his wounded prisoner and guest from their direful clutches. "What do they want?" inquired Dieskau of Johnson, with a *naïveté* not yet rubbed off by North American warfare. "Want," replied Johnson, "to burn you, by God! eat you, and put you in their pipes and smoke you; but, never fear, you shall be safe with me, else they shall kill us both." When able to travel, Dieskau was sent with a strong armed escort to the Hudson, and in due course to England as a prisoner, where he remained till the peace, a wreck more or less from his wounds, but always cheerful and full of gratitude for the kindness shown him in America. He died in 1767.

While the fight around the crude beginnings of Fort William Henry was in progress, several hundred of Dieskau's Indians and Canadians had fallen back on the scene of their morning's victory, intent on the scalps and plunder that in the hurry of the forward movement they had been compelled to forego. While thus engaged, a party of 500 British from the new fort on the Hudson caught them unawares, and after a sharp fight utterly routed them, though the leader of the victorious party, Captain M'Ginnis, was killed.

This repulse of the French, coming so soon after the terrible disaster at Fort Duquesne, was made the most of both in the colonies and in Britain. It was forgotten that the real object of the campaign was to seize and occupy the fortress which commanded Lake Champlain and the road to Canada; whereas Johnson's victory, though highly creditable to a militia who had never been under fire, merely repulsed the French in their attack on British territory. The capture of their general beyond a doubt gave the

success much *éclat*. At any rate Johnson was made a baronet, presented with £5,000, and enjoyed whatever distinction there may have been in the title of "Our only hero," bestowed on him by Horace Walpole. The loss of the British in the day's fighting was about 250, of whom the greater part were killed, the third Massachusetts regiment alone losing no less than 70 men, including the colonel and eight officers. The French loss was 120 killed and 123 wounded.

The new backwoods baronet, however, was regarded by many colonists as too much inclined just now to rest upon his laurels. His recent success, they thought, might well have justified a dash forward on Crown Point, and Colonel Lyman, chief of the New England troops, was eager for it. Johnson, however, declared that his men were not fit for any such adventure, that they were ill clad, discontented, and shaken in morale by the vigour of the late attack, Shirley himself urged it, but Johnson's honours had created a quite pardonable jealousy in the breast of that eager though unsuccessful amateur. Johnson, moreover, was wounded, and would probably have had to depute the command to his rival Lyman, and Sir William, as we now must call him, like Shirley, was undoubtedly very human. He decided, therefore, to utilize what energies his men, in their somewhat miserable condition, still possessed, in building Fort William Henry. When the close of November put an end to the work, three thousand men in a state of semi-mutiny and half frozen for want of warm clothing in that rigorous northern clime turned their backs for the winter on the leafless snow-powdered forests and ruffled waters of Lake George

and scattered each man to his shop or homestead to tell his tale of war and hardship and glory.

Seven hundred men were left to garrison and strengthen the new fort, while at Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain, forty miles to the north, the French were equally busy with axe and saw. Here, amid the hush of the Northern winter, amid ice-bound lakes and mighty mountains wrapped in their mantle of snow, we will leave the outposts of the two rival nations to face each other, and to prepare as best they may for coming fights that were to prove bloodier and fiercer than any yet dreamt of either by the Canadian habitant or the Massachusetts farmer.

But there was yet a fourth enterprise undertaken by the British in this notable year, 1755, which, though far removed from the scene of the others, and in itself neither bloody nor glorious, had at least the merit of being decisive.

I have already spoken somewhat fully of the troubles with the Acadians, and made brief allusion to the crowning scene of their forcible removal, which occurred this year. The unquenchable yearning of the French to recover their long-lost province was by no means lessened by their successes elsewhere. The strong fort of Beauséjour, that they had erected on the neck of the isthmus, in doubtful territory, but commanding the most troubled part of the English dominion of Nova Scotia, became a busy scene of intrigue and action. Nearly 2,000 men, French regulars and insurgent or outlawed Acadians, besides large bands of Indians, were gathered either inside or within hail of it; while at the far end of the province the great naval and military post of

Louisbourg boded mischief no less dangerous. The recent English settlement of Halifax, now the capital of the province, and a few isolated forts containing each their handful of men, represented all the power available for resisting a French attack, and protecting the scanty English settlers from the constant raiding of Acadians and Micmacs, hounded on by blatant priests and crafty politicians. Shirley, before starting on his luckless expedition to Niagara, had arranged with Colonel Laurence, Governor of Nova Scotia, to take the bull by the horns and sweep Beauséjour and its whole nest of hornets out of existence. The English Government gave their assent, but Laurence had no troops to speak of, and once again the resourceful colony of Massachusetts was appealed to, and, as usual, not in vain. Colonel Monckton, second in command to Laurence, and whom we shall meet again on the Plains of Abraham, was sent to Boston, with a commission to raise two regiments of 1,000 men each. The recruiting was entrusted to Colonel Winslow, a provincial officer of good sense, position, and some experience, who in a short time paraded 2,000 hardy rustics before the admiring eyes of their fellow-colonists upon the wharfs of the Puritan city. The muskets, however, which were due from England, were much less punctual than the men, and it was near the end of May before the transports cleared Boston Harbour, amid the cheers of a populace who only ten years previously had in the same hearty fashion sent out the victors of Louisbourg. On the last of the month the fleet was forging up the Bay of Fundy, and on the 1st of June, to the dismay of the French,

dropped anchor off the mouth of the Missaquash, which divided their chief stronghold from its English rival, Fort Laurence.

Beauséjour was a well-planned fort of five bastions, and mounted with 32 guns and mortars. The nucleus of its garrison was some 150 regulars of the colonial marine, commanded by De Vergor, a captain in the same corps—a person of indifferent principles and no compensating capacity. The fort was an outpost not merely of French strength, but also of French weakness in the shape of financial corruption. It ranked high in the list of good things doled out at Quebec to those who by personal services—sometimes creditable, sometimes unmentionable—to the governing clique, earned their due reward. De Vergor seems to have come under the latter category. None the less, however, did the all-powerful Bigot, Intendant of Canada, at once his debtor and his patron, urge him in a delightfully candid letter, still extant, to make hay while the sun shone, and out of his plunder purchase an estate in France near him, his loving correspondent. The usual method of enrichment seems to have been the familiar one of charging the King of France for supplies that only existed on paper, and selling a considerable portion of such as were actually forwarded for free distribution.

De Vergor, however, did not develop into a proprietor of French vineyards and forests. On the contrary, he was arraigned for misconduct in the affair I am about to describe, though we shall find him figuring again and at a critical moment before Quebec, with scarcely more credit. The first intimation that on this occasion De Vergor had of an

impending attack was the appearance of an English fleet off the fort. The infamous priest Le Loutre, spoken of in a former chapter, was now with him, and supplied all the energy that De Vergor might be lacking in, and a great deal to spare. Hundreds of Acadians, driven from their homesteads on British soil by the coercion of this savage fanatic rather than by any action of the English, were now wretched outcasts dependent on the none too liberal charity of the fort, and from their very despair useful tools for French aggression. With these and the regular garrison, and as many more from the settlements on the French side, some 1,200 men were mustered. Numbers of the wretched Acadians, seeing an English victory only too probable, begged De Vergor to go through the form of forcing them by threats to fight, so that they might excuse themselves, in the event of defeat, for being in arms against their lawful king. De Vergor grimly replied that he would not only threaten but shoot them if they failed him.

The New England troops in the meantime were landed, and in conjunction with the small garrison of regulars from Fort Laurence laid formal siege to the French fortress, approaching it by parallels and with heavy cannon. They were attacked by Indians and Acadians from without the fort, and much less vigorously by the garrison from within; but Winslow and his sturdy militiamen pressed the siege so strenuously that De Vergor, on hearing from Louisbourg that help was impossible, surrendered in a fortnight. The capitulation was accompanied with some discreditable scenes of drunkenness and stealthy pillage on the part of the French officers, and much open but more venial plunder on that of the