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AN OLD FRONTIER OF FRANCE

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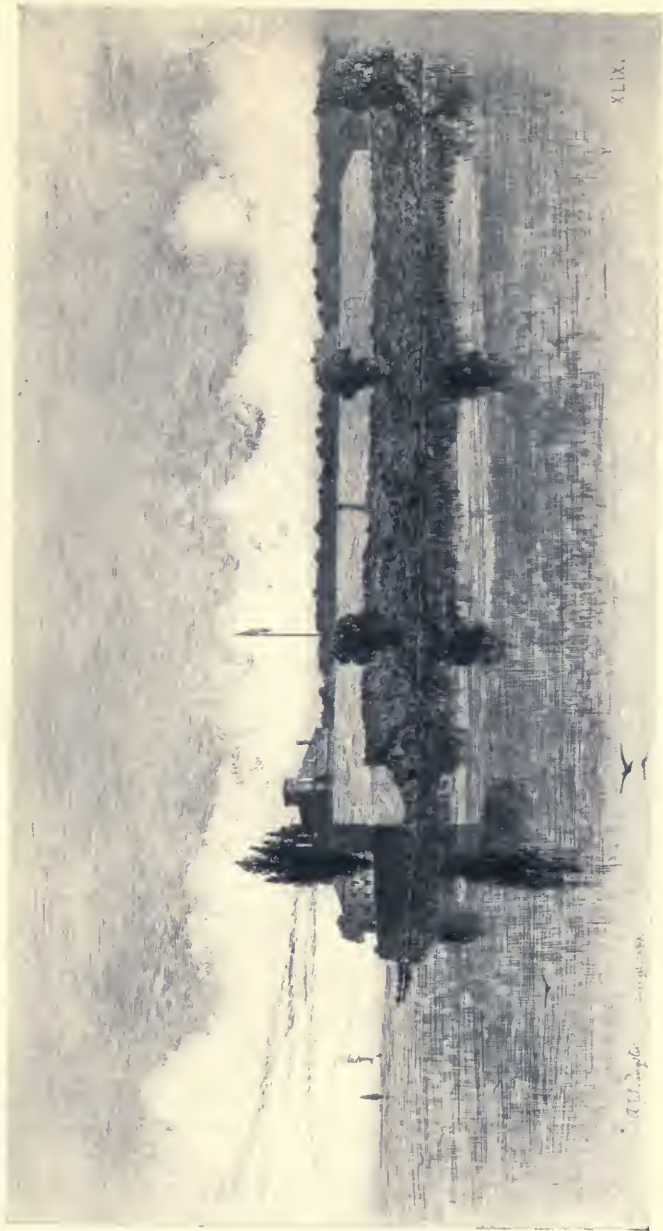
VOLUME II



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Fort Niagara, from the West Side of the River

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# AN OLD FRONTIER OF FRANCE

*The Niagara Region and Adjacent  
Lakes under French Control*

BY

FRANK H. SEVERANCE

Author of "Old Trails on the Niagara Frontier,"  
"Studies of the Niagara Frontier," "The  
Story of Joncaire," etc.

*ILLUSTRATED*



IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

NEW YORK  
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY

1917

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AN OLD FRONTIER OF FRANCE

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VOLUME II





# Lake Ontario



# AN OLD FRONTIER OF FRANCE

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE GREAT ATTEMPT OF 1753

EXPLOITS OF PÉAN AND HIS COMPANIONS — FIRST CHAPTER IN THE  
STORY OF ERIE — DEATH OF MARIN — NARRATIVE OF BON-  
NEFONS — ENGLISH SPIES AND FRENCH DESERTERS.

SUCH was the situation when in the summer of 1752 the Marquis Duquesne arrived from France to assume the unhappy task of governing Canada. At once his attention was turned to the defense and occupation of the Lakes and Ohio Valley. With the sanction of the King to "build on the Ohio such forts as are absolutely necessary, but no more," he planned an expedition for the ensuing year, placing in command the Chevalier Pierre Paul Marin,<sup>1</sup> a veteran captain of infantry, most of whose 63 years had been spent in wilderness service. The engineer of the expedition was the Chevalier Le Mercier, who was also entrusted with the distribution of provisions. Duquesne speaks of him as "an officer possessing the rarest talent." These two, with an advance guard of 250 men, made their way to Niagara before the ice was out of the river, in the early spring of 1753. A much larger detachment followed later, under command of Michel Jean Hughes Péan, who was second in command. To his letters and reports we are indebted for many particulars of the campaign.

In an era of favoritism and fraud, when flourished a system of dealings which we to-day call "graft," this expedition offered vast opportunities. If we may believe their contemporaries, Duquesne and his Intendant, Bigot, were in corrupt connivance for profit, power and pleasure. Captain Pouchot, contemporary with all the principals concerned, made in his memoirs certain accusations which, whether true or not, have

<sup>1</sup> In most of the English reports of the time the name is corrupted into Morin, Morang, Mairrain and even Murray.

been seized upon by every subsequent writer on the subject. It is to Pouchot that we trace the charge that Péan was promoted to second in command and sent into the Lake Erie wilderness because Bigot, the powerful official of Quebec, was enamored of Péan's wife, and wished to have the young husband out of the way. The greater the dangers to which Péan was sent, the more secure was Bigot in his devotion to the fair and perhaps frail Angélique. Seven years before, this daughter of the Quebec family Desmeloizes had become Mme. Péan. She was handsome, clever, and an influence in society. Whether or not she deserves the reputation which history accords her, there is no question as to the character of Bigot, whose friendship for Péan was much like that of David for Uriah. One difference is that Péan survived the perils and hardships of the wilderness, and returned, only to fall into the clutches of Government, where he may have found some solace in the knowledge that Bigot, in far greater measure than he, was paying the penalty to outraged justice.

The purpose of the expedition was to cross from Lake Erie to the head-waters of the Ohio, build forts and storehouses, gain the friendship of native tribes and warn off or arrest any English traders who might be encountered. The legitimate outfit of a body of troops for such service was costly and burdensome. According to Pouchot, whenever the Canadian troops made a campaign, each soldier was supplied with an overcoat, two shirts, a cap, mittens, a blanket, and a pair of sealskin shoes each month. "They gave to the officers, a bottle of wine daily, two kegs of brandy a month, a ham or a sheep, and powder and lead for hunting."

The advance party, under Marin, provided only with what was absolutely necessary, for some weeks made Fort Niagara its base; but when the detachment under Péan came, it brought an array of goods that was the scandal of the colony. Says Pouchot: "Several colonial officers were first stationed at the Niagara portage, and in the spring, provisions, munitions of war, implements, and merchandise, were sent in abundance. They took into that region goods of every kind, even to velvets, damask, shoes for women, silk hose, etc., and a plenty of



Spanish wines." In the sale of these goods, and their purchase on the King's account, Bigot, and it is intimated, Péan as well, was interested. "We presume," is the caustic observation of Pouchot, "there was no difficulty in agreeing to the price asked." It was a simple but effective way to cheat the Government, much practiced from this time on to the end of the story. Nowhere was the opportunity for chicanery greater than on the Niagara, where the irregularities ultimately involved Péan, Chabert, and several others prominent in our narrative.

Péan at this time was one of the richest men in Canada. He had been a military officer since 1735, and had served in New England, in Acadia, and elsewhere. While yet a young man his father had given him 15,000 francs which he invested in maritime trade, with profit. In 1747, on the death of his father, he inherited a fortune counted great in those days; his house, after those of the Governor and Intendant, was the best in the colony. He had been favored by several Governors — Beauharnois, and after him Galissonière, who entrusted him with important work, and made him a captain. In 1749 La Jonquière had similarly trusted and favored him. Now, when Duquesne needed not merely the leader that he found in Marin, but a man equal to the detail of commissariat, transport and trade, he readily yielded to the suggestion of Bigot and chose Péan.

It was April when his detachment set out from Montreal; it was the last of June before the difficulties of La Chine were overcome. Péan's orders were to reach Fort Frontenac as soon as possible, but to stay there himself until all the supplies and provisions had been forwarded to Niagara; then he was to join Marin, wherever he could overtake him. Duquesne had proposed that a fort be built at the Chautauqua portage, but the King held this to be unnecessary. The Governor's instructions of June 26, 1753, outlined for Péan a long campaign; he was to make his way from the Ohio through the Illinois country, thence to Detroit, then build a fort at Sandusky, returning to Montreal by way of Niagara. He was to oust any English he found, and if he took many prisoners was to bring back only

the most distinguished officers, sending all others to the Sieur Macarty, commandant of the Illinois. He was charged with many duties, most of which he was never to perform.

June 26th, when he left La Chine, he had 40 regular soldiers, 480 militia and 45 Indians, in 25 bateaux and 26 canoes. At the Cedars, De Villiers met him with a band of Miamis, to whom Péan gave provisions. July 7th, at La Galette (Ogdensburg) a horde of hungry savages beset him — and he wrote to Duquesne, begging for more provisions. After hearing the war-song, and witnessing a game of lacrosse, he continued with his force to Frontenac, July 13th, many of his men having become sick. Here he found that the advance detachment had left him only damaged supplies, or so he chose to report: “All the flour that M. Repentigny had left, was entirely spoiled; the sacks being rotten have tainted it. The trading goods are also unfit for use.” The pork had disappeared from the barrels and the brandy from the casks; they had been broken open but so cleverly closed that the storekeeper at Frontenac noticed nothing. The thefts, he thought, might have been committed as the canoes passed up the St. Lawrence — at Pointe Claire, Ste. Anne, Isle Perrault and the Cedars, by employees who stole for their families. The shortage of flour gave him greatest concern, and its condition was such that the bakers could not use it. Péan requisitioned all the kettles of the troops, and of Fort Frontenac, and set a hundred men to washing Indian corn in lye, which after being spread out and dried was put up in rations. “By this means,” he wrote, July 3rd, “I expect to send off tomorrow 24 canoes, with three quarters of their supplies in corn, the rest in biscuit, and I shall cut out three days’ provisions from each canoe.” He had to stay on some days longer at Frontenac, to prepare more corn, which took a long while to dry. “I have endless anxieties,” he writes. “Every day I discover new expenditure and serious losses. At Niagara they have found barrels filled with stones instead of pork — that must have been done by the *bateaux du cent*, who are nearly all rascals. The casks of brandy and wine have nearly all been opened, they are but half full. . . . I fear since all our victualing has been so badly managed that we will come to

want,"—and he begs that more supplies be sent. Distressed as he was, or professed to be, yet when Indians came in force at Frontenac, begging food, and making their allegiance depend on his bounty, Péan dared not refuse them.

After ten days' detention at Frontenac, Péan came on with the last of the flotilla to Niagara. Here he soon heard from Duquesne, who warned him that but little more flour could be sent. The Governor did his utmost, even resorting to a compulsory levy on the people, meanwhile ordering the garrisons at Niagara and the forts beyond reduced by half. The Governor lamented the situation, "the grievous consequences of which may be the grave of the colony."

In April an advance force of some 250 men had proceeded as far as Barcelona, on the south shore of Lake Erie, from which point Céloron four years before had cut a road to Chautauqua Lake. Under command of an officer whose name has not been noted in the French reports, but who appears in a dubious English narrative<sup>2</sup> as Babeer, they began at this point to build a fort; but Marin arriving, after "a warm debate," the engineer Le Mercier was sent further along the shore in quest of a better place. In three days he returned, reporting the discovery of what Duquesne later called "the finest spot in nature," the harbor of Presqu' Isle, present site of the city of Erie. To this little known French engineer is due from that thriving community the honorable recognition which we love to accord not only to the explorer and discoverer, but to the founder of a city; for such, in a sense, Le Mercier was. He appears not only as the first white man clearly known to have entered Presqu' Isle Bay, but under him the first construction work was begun on its shores. On the high bank overlooking the water, between the foot of the present Parade Street and the outlet of a stream some rods to the eastward, was built a fort of chestnut logs, which, by the authority above cited, was 15 feet high, "about 120 feet square, a log house in each square [*i.e.* at each angle], a gate to the southward and another to the N.ward."<sup>3</sup> This stronghold, by some accounts, was to have

<sup>2</sup> Deposition of Stephen Coffen, N. Y. Col. Docs., VI, 835.

<sup>3</sup> Coffen's deposition.

been named Fort Duquesne, but from the first, in the official reports, it was termed Presqu' Isle. Its first commandant was Captain Repentigny. Before it was finished, Le Mercier had explored the shortest route to a navigable source of the Ohio, which he believed he had found on Le Bœuf Creek, at the present town of Waterford. Here, 15 miles inland from Lake Erie, a second log fort was promptly begun, while work was in progress at many points on the difficult road between the two forts. Little however could be accomplished until the arrival of the rear detachment which was bringing not only tools for the work and arms for protection, but the principal store of supplies. We have already noted the difficulties and disasters which marked the setting out of this detachment.

Down at old Venango, John Fraser, the bold pioneer of the region, had word in May that 150 Indians at "the carrying place which leads from the Niagara to the heads of the Ohio" were building canoes and coming "with the French and eight pieces of brass cannon" to occupy the region. He promptly reported all he learned to the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania.

To Péan, as second in command, fell the personal conduct of the force. It was no light undertaking; no one, unless endowed with judgment, patience, tireless energy and boundless resource in hours of emergency, might undertake it. To the difficulties of transportation were added those of commissariat. July 17, Duquesne notified Péan that he was sending to Frontenac by bateaux, 310 measures<sup>4</sup> of flour, 16 of pork, and all the corn there was in Montreal. He added that news had just come of the arrival at Quebec of a vessel from Louisbourg, bringing 452 measures of flour and 354 bushels of corn, which would be sent on for the expedition as soon as the wind permitted. "This expectation," cautioned the Marquis, "must not, however, check the arrangements which I have ordered you to make with Messieurs Marin and Le Mercier, in order that you may rid yourself of people who waste the provisions for the campaign."

Péan had been for some days at Fort Niagara when the letter of the Marquis reached him. He kept a daily journal of

<sup>4</sup>"Quarts" in the original, probably quarter-barrels.

events, which from time to time he sent down to the Governor. From this <sup>5</sup> we learn that the crossing of Lake Ontario had been made "with the greatest diligence." Péan had formed his little squadron in line, and had so arranged his 36 canoes and bateaux that they appeared as 60. This was for the especial benefit of the English at Oswego, who, Péan thought, were so dismayed at the apparent strength of his flotilla as it passed that fort, that they did not venture out, but were content to observe it "from the top of their cavalier" or lake-side bastion. Near Oswego he had found a number of Indians who had gone there to trade, but were drinking themselves to death. "Six men of these same tribes who were leaving the fort were seized with such fear at sight of our bateaux that, arms and all, they jumped into the lake to escape."

Even Péan, enterprising as he was, was well-nigh discouraged at the difficulties of the Niagara portage. He carefully went over the ground, then made an estimate of the quantity of goods to be moved. He found there were more than 12,000 pieces, which would require until September 15th for transport above the Falls. So long a delay would utterly ruin the expedition; for he realized that if the detachment did not reach the Ohio until the beginning of winter, the men would perish of cold and starvation.

A suggestion of the severity of the service in this expedition is found in the number of deserters. Many a fagged, half-starved soldier preferred the hazards of a hostile wilderness to the tasks of military duty. Most to be feared was recapture. Of one party of six men of Marin's force, who ran away with arms and supplies, but were caught, four were condemned to the galleys and sent over seas, and the other two appear to have been tomahawked — an amazing execution if under military orders.<sup>6</sup> So many deserters were sent to France from the frontier posts that bands of them in irons and under guard were a familiar sight on the Niagara. The dungeon in the old mess-house at Fort Niagara did not lack occupants. Péan shared

<sup>5</sup> Letter of Péan, Niagara, July 29, 1753.

<sup>6</sup> "*La tête cassé*," is the phrase used in Duquesne's report, Oct. 2, 1753.

his fears regarding the slowness of the portage with the Marquis:

The effects to be transported form a total of at least 10,000 to 12,000 pieces, which will oblige me to stay here until September 15, and consequently will bring about the failure of the entire project. I swear to you, Monsieur, I am in a quandary difficult to express. There are almost no Indians. The horses are worn out. The French carry [on the portage] but little, and pretend all sorts of indispositions. It is necessary always to have the officers after them. They lie down to sleep on the portage, and they cry that they are sick. The irons are always filled with them.<sup>7</sup>

The "irons" were shackles or fetters by which recalcitrant soldiers or boatmen were restrained, in lack of available guard-houses. This is perhaps the first allusion to what was obviously a usual and necessary provision for discipline in all military expeditions of the time.

To extricate himself from his difficulties, Péan hit on the expedient of employing the militia on the portage, paying them by the piece. This was an innovation, for heretofore the profit of the portage had gone to the Indians, who had come to look upon it as their own; but they were relatively few, independent to a fault, and utterly unable to cope with the present situation. Péan estimated that his plan of employing the militia would cost 5000 or 6000 francs, but it would "infinitely accelerate the portage"; and he reasoned that in refusing to make the sacrifice, "one would risk losing the fruit of all the expense already made for the execution of a project without which all the upper countries will be entirely lost."

The crisis was too urgent to admit of delay until Quebec could be heard from. Péan promptly put the militia — sturdy Canadians, used to the wilderness — at work, carrying sacks of flour, kegs of pork, bales of clothing, brandy, tools, arms and ammunition — all the supplies and freight of an army — up the Lewiston Heights and through the forest to the margin of the river above the upper rapids; to which point, as well, the canoes were carried and the heavy bateaux were dragged, with

<sup>7</sup> Letter of Péan, Niagara, July 29.

whatever labor-saving devices the portage may have had; and as the steady stream of toilers diminished the great piles of supplies accumulated at Fort Niagara and the foot of the portage, Péan wrote again, to elucidate the situation. He felt the need of explanation, for he was plunging into heavy and un-sanctioned expense. Unless he could quickly get the army past the portage and on its way, the expedition were a failure and French influence in the Ohio Valley and the West forever lost:

This is why, Monsieur, I flatter myself that you will admit the force of my reasons, and consent that the pieces that remain [to be portaged] may be paid for. I see the necessity for it so clearly that I have said to M. de Contrecœur that I will take it on myself, and if you cannot approve, I will pay out of my own pocket for this transport. That is my intention. I would rather it cost me 6000 or 7000 francs than be dishonored. That is my way of thinking, and I would sacrifice all my interests for the good of the service, especially in a matter in the outcome of which I know the General is so interested. . . . I can assure you that I shall succeed or perish in the attempt. . . . I am going to station myself on the portage, and I myself will attend to our men, and will put heart in them,<sup>8</sup> so that the business will go ahead at a good rate [*ira grand train*].

These were noble utterances and indicated a devotion to the service somewhat rare in a period of self-seeking. Péan's professions, which were made ample use of later on, were at least sincere in pledging his personal efforts; no soldier or bateaux-man labored harder than he on the Niagara. After dispatching the letter above quoted from, he received orders to confer with Marin and Le Mercier with a view to the possible reduction of the force. He responded: "I will regulate my detachment, when I am setting out from Le Bœuf River, according to the provisions I then have and will send back the rest [of the men]; I think you will approve this plan, for I can do as much with 1000 men as with 1300."

In another letter to the Marquis Duquesne he explained certain alarming reports. It had been told in Quebec that 48 canoes, commanded by the Sieur de Carqueville, loaded with flour and salt pork, had been wholly lost; and that the troops

<sup>8</sup> "Et leur mettrai le cœur au ventre."

of the advance guard had committed great theft of supplies at Niagara. Péan assured the Marquis that these reports were false: Carqueville's canoes were not lost; there had only been some tobacco wet, and they had since dried it. In any case it would have been little loss, as it was not an essential article. As for the thefts, Péan was assured by both Joncaire-Chabert and de Contreœur, "officers of distinguished merit," that the thieves at the portage had taken but little of consequence — brandy, tobacco, and some provisions. "But," Péan continues, "it is not the portage which gives me the greatest concern as to losses — I thought in fact that there would be more of them — it is the consumption of provisions at Fort Frontenac, which was so great it amounted to a third of what we had. I beg you, Monsieur, bountifully to provision Fort Niagara, because, according to information already gained, I think there will be no time when we will not be able to draw on this post in pressing need, even as far as Fort Duquesne, and I shall leave provisions for only 15 or 20 days in the forts of the portage," *i.e.*, Le Bœuf and Venango. The long letter closes with renewed observations on the necessity of paying the Canadian militia for carrying goods around Niagara Falls. In part, he added:

I tremble lest you do not approve what I have done, but, Monsieur, I cannot see fail a project which interests you and the entire Colony so greatly, and which would inevitably fail if I had not taken the course of paying our Canadians. . . . I cannot revoke the promise which I have made to them, of paying them out of my own pocket, if you did not decide to do so for the King; that I pledge with all my heart, rather than displease you, striving to work for the contrary, and to see all the pains and mischance which I have undergone, as pure loss, and the nation dishonored.

The Indians are discouraged, they have nearly all taken themselves off. M. de Saint-Blin's horses are absolutely worked out and can do almost nothing; more than 12,000 pieces to carry up; a frightful consumption of provisions which we make at this fort: All these reflections determine me to sacrifice everything I possess. You have put me, Monsieur, in the way of gaining something by the opportunity which you have been so good to give me in the posts of



the Western sea,<sup>9</sup> but I will cheerfully sacrifice it for your satisfaction and for mine.

Péan made good his boasts. He was equal to every difficulty; and under his personal supervision the Niagara portage became the scene of a brisker and heavier traffic than had ever before passed that way. Several hundred Canadians and many Indians incessantly tramped up and down, bowed under prodigious burdens. "Some of them carried as many as three pieces [or packages] of 80 pounds each." "I very much wish," wrote Péan,<sup>10</sup> "that the General could see my arrangements. Everything goes ahead, day and night; one shift works while the other sleeps and eats, and there is no interruption. Some bring the bateaux to the shore; others carry them up; one part makes the portage, another fills the sacks, still others sew them." The flour which was brought across the lake, presumably in barrels, was, for convenient handling, put in sacks for carriage over the portage. "I have made 40 seamstresses as nimble as our girls of Montreal, and who sew infinitely better, to judge by the sacks which they have sent us. I give you this detail, Monsieur, since I foresee that it will please you."

Stimulated by the example of their chief, the soldiers exerted themselves, forgot their complaints and ailments and "sustained even with a sort of pleasure the severest fatigues." Marvels of quickness, prodigies of strength, were exhibited, and the weaker emulated their more herculean comrades. Gaiety reigned. So did Péan picture the scene to the Marquis; nor did he fail to praise four of his officers, whose names do not appear in this connection, but who were stationed along the portage road, to check irregularities and urge on the work. Meanwhile Péan himself passed incessantly up and down the Heights, bearing the heavy burden, responsibility.

"I begin," he wrote a little later,<sup>11</sup> "to have hope, and have good reason to be greatly satisfied with my detachment. . . ."

<sup>9</sup> "*La Mer du Ouest*," i. e., the head of Lake Superior, or, generally, the Western Lakes. Sometimes designated "*Mer de l'O.*"

<sup>10</sup> Letter of Aug. 4, 1753.

<sup>11</sup> Letter dated merely: Aug. 1753.

The officers have put themselves into it. . . . Gaiety reigns. If that continues, as I hope, I shall pass quickly anywhere; but," he adds, "this portage must be paid." He was never far from the thought of the cost of it all.

While still making Fort Niagara his base, in August, Péan received letters from Duquesne dated July 16. They were delivered to him at two o'clock in the morning. Duquesne had become alarmed at the situation on the Niagara, foresaw a shortage of supplies, and ordered a council of war and a reduction of the troops. At eight o'clock the post canoe departed, bearing to the Governor Péan's assurance that he was setting out at once for Presqu' Isle, where he would confer with Marin. "All will go well," he assured the Governor; adding a request for more provisions to be sent to Niagara.

The conference was held by Marin, Péan and Le Mercier in the fort at Presqu' Isle, August 14. Péan, delayed by hard winds by day, had accomplished the journey in two nights, and had traveled some 12 or 15 miles<sup>12</sup> on foot through the woods "by frightful roads." He told Marin, that having at present nothing to do at Niagara, where they were awaiting the arrival of the barques, he had not been able to overcome the desire of seeing him! These officers counseled together for two days, took stock of the provisions and condition of the men, and decided to reduce the force to 1350, including Indians; to leave 30 men as garrison at Forts Presqu' Isle and Anjou,<sup>13</sup> 20 at Le Bœuf, 130 at Fort Duquesne, and 100 on the Scioto. The rest of the detachment, including the sick, who were many, were to be sent back to Montreal, except 50, to be kept for service between Forts Niagara and Presqu' Isle. However, when Marin set out over the portage to Le Bœuf, he left at Presqu' Isle, in addition to the garrison, 60 men, "to be employed until autumn in 10 bateaux, going and coming on Lake Erie." To the Marquis Duquesne the officers wrote: "Have no anxiety; we are prepared for any emergency. If it is necessary to fast, we will do so without sorrow, and the retrenchment will be made

<sup>12</sup> "Six lieues."

<sup>13</sup> Evidently Venango is meant, but "Anjou" is repeatedly used in the papers relating to Péan's trial, Paris, 1763.

as soon as necessary. All goes well, and our zeal will furnish means for overcoming everything, having nothing more at heart than the success of the General's project."<sup>14</sup>

Two days later Péan set out at four in the morning for the Niagara, but being wind-bound at "Sand river"<sup>15</sup> he employed the delay by writing still another letter to Duquesne, in which he restated the result of the conference at Presqu' Isle, and assured the General that all the officers were in perfect agreement with his (Duquesne's) ideas as to the reduction of the force. "Be assured, Monsieur," Péan continued, "that this reduction will do no injury to our operations, and that all will go on just the same. . . . As to the secret, Monsieur, which you have entrusted to me, I do not think it can spread, having too many reasons for not divulging what we know about the shortage of provisions. That would inevitably make the whole thing fail." He wrote at length of the precautions they were taking, of the harmony among the officers, and even in eulogy of Marin:

The Sieur Marin joins in everything, does not stop an instant, assists M. Le Mercier, not as a commandant but as a subordinate, anticipating him every where; he is perpetually in the work, in the storehouses and on the portage. Nothing has pleased me more than the management of provisions and stores; I have been much surprised at it, and I can assure the General that there is not a King's storehouse in any country in the world which is better ordered and arranged. As soon as the stores arrive, they break open the barrels of pork, put it in new brine, and stow them in marked places; they mend the flour sacks and repair other goods which have got damaged. The storehouses are superb and are well managed. The fort is a jewel; our wish is that the General could see it; I am sure he would be unable to give enough praise to Messieurs Marin and Le Mercier.

Write as enthusiastically as he could, Péan could not dissemble the difficulties of the portages of Niagara, and from Presqu' Isle to Le Bœuf. Even as he wrote, the men, under

<sup>14</sup> Dated "Fort de Presqu' Isle, Aug. 14, 1753," and signed by Marin, Péan and Le Mercier.

<sup>15</sup> He says "Rivière au Sable"—apparently Silver Creek.

the engineering direction of Le Mercier, wore themselves out, sickened and died at an appalling rate. "It is terrible work," Péan wrote to the Marquis. "Conceive, Monsieur, that all the carts which you see pass under your windows pass over the bodies of men already half dead." He adds however that they were employing many Indians for the burden-bearing on the portages.

The wind subsiding, Péan set out at midnight from Sand River, reaching Fort Niagara at 10 the next morning. A medical examination was made of the sick, and 242 of them were sent down to Montreal, on two barques. Here too Péan's mind was relieved as to the unauthorized expense of the portage. "I very willingly consent," wrote Duquesne, "that you shall be paid as you propose, not only for the portage of goods at Niagara, but also at Presqu' Isle. If the desired celerity depends only on this expense, I shall readily find means to make it good by the execution of my project. . . . I am satisfied with your way of thinking, that if you can not take with you 1400 men, 1000 will suffice."<sup>16</sup>

The Jesuit, Father Bonnecamps, had reported to the Governor "the discovery he had made of certain passages which would shorten the progress of troops to Niagara," though whether this refers to the course taken by boats on the lake, or to some portion of the Niagara portage, is not specified. The Marquis wrote in courteous acknowledgment, thanking the priest for his information, and added:

"I know so perfectly the zeal and activity of the Sieur Péan that I have been less disturbed than he by the unforeseen delays he has met in his route up to Fort Frontenac, and if he has any place in my confidence, it is because he justly merits it. Observe well, reverend Father, in every place you pass, and send me your views often. You could not give me greater pleasure."<sup>17</sup>

The same day — August 5th — the Governor wrote to Péan that if the Cross of St. Louis, which he had asked for "my little Major," as he calls him, were granted, a canoe would be at

<sup>16</sup> Letter of Duquesne, Aug. 7, 1753.

<sup>17</sup> Duquesne to R. P. Bonnécamps, Aug. 5, 1753.

once dispatched to him, with the news. In the same letter he was urged to check, as soon as possible, the misbehavior of the "Peanguichias" [Piankashas], who had recently killed a Frenchman. Péan assured the Governor that he would pursue the murderers and get satisfaction, but added that they were a roving band and could not be reached at present.

Another phase of this eventful time on the Niagara is seen in Péan's dealings with the Indians. The roving bands or hunters who had seen the advancing army on lake and land, spread throughout the region wild reports of it. The French were so numerous, they said, they were holding each other by the hand from Lake Erie to Montreal. In Péan's troop they counted 20,000 men!<sup>18</sup>

Numbers of Indians, Iroquois of the region now Western New York, and Miamis from Detroit, labored in the transport of goods around the falls, but the unaccustomed toil was not a labor of love. Various instances as related by Péan are illustrative of conditions.

A war party of 60 Iroquois came to Péan and told him they were starving. He replied that he had no right to dispose of the provisions at Niagara; they should go to the commandant at the fort; besides, he added, the Governor of the Colony had forbidden that provisions should be taken from the forts and distributed among passing Indians. The Iroquois answered they were dying of hunger and that their father (so they designated the Governor) would be angry with *Sieur Péan*. This officer assured them he was keenly sensible of their want, but that he had only what he needed; but if they were willing to carry packages over the portage, thus helping him the sooner to go on, he could then give them a part of his supplies. The savages were delighted; and however laborious the drudgery, the conditions were accepted as a favor.

Still another band, from the Detroit, had been without food for five days when they reached Fort Niagara. They declared to Péan that they came "to throw themselves in his arms, and that their wives and children would die if he did not take pity on them. Péan having sent them to the commandant, Contre-

<sup>18</sup> Letter of Péan, Niagara, Aug. 22nd.

cœur, that officer told them the Government had abundantly supplied them, and that he was forbidden to reduce the stores of the fort by such distributions. It was expected the Indians would make some reproachful retort, or even commit some act of violence, but the extremity of their misery had taken away their natural ferocity; they had really reached their limit (*aux abois*); they dejectedly acknowledged "that their father had supplied them well at the outset, that they had been told they could be given nothing in the forts, and that the bad times [poor hunting] were the only cause of the long continuance of their journey and the consumption of their provisions." They added, "their father would be very sorry to learn his children had starved to death while returning, after having made a journey solely to assure him of their fidelity."

Contrecoeur apparently being unmoved by their appeal, they betook themselves again to Péan's tent and presented to him their feeble and emaciated children, while one of the warriors, holding out a belt of wampum, spoke with a natural eloquence made pathetic by want. "You see, my father," said the savage to Péan, "all Onontio's children come to throw themselves at your feet. Look at our faces, they are all fleshless; our wives and children are dying. Is it possible you are not touched, and that Onontio will not ask why we were allowed to perish? What will our people say when only a few of us return? That the French no longer regard us as their children, since they leave us to perish? Have pity on us, we beg, that you may not have the sorrow of seeing our wives and children, and most of our men, close their eyes in death."

To this moving appeal Péan replied that "their father had never intended they should perish, and that he himself would go without food, to help them. "You see," he said, "the vast number of the French who are, as you say, as numerous as the leaves of the forest; they must be fed; they toil for your tranquility, it is only for that reason that Onontio sends them. . . . I see but one way: I have a vast number of pieces to carry over the portage, which delays me and exhausts my supplies. If you will carry them over, thus hastening my departure, you

will make it possible for me to help you, and if necessary I will starve that you may eat."

The savages responded to this discourse "with cries of joy and promised to give themselves with ardor to the work of the portage." Péan sent them a quantity of corn, in return for which they gave him good service.

Not all the Indians were so tractable. A band of Hurons, on whom some reliance had been placed, abandoned Péan when he most needed them; he says they were led off by their chief who was well known to be a rascal; he not only made his own tribesmen quit work but he induced others to do so, among them numerous Algonquins, who had just sworn fidelity to Péan, and who had promised to follow him everywhere "an instant before they deserted." The Lake Indians<sup>19</sup> also ran off, but Péan did not much regret them: "These wretches, always drunk, had caused a great deal of waste on the portage."<sup>20</sup>

Péan's letters during August report, among other things, that Fort Niagara was now amply provisioned; that Marin and he had decided to send back only the sick, who now numbered 300; and that on the 24th August some English traders had been brought prisoners to Fort Niagara; later he mentions the arrest of an English trader and his servant (*engagé*); they were at once sent down to Montreal under guard.

In his replies the Marquis Duquesne expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the campaign, and commended Péan in sundry phrases which afterwards were cited in his behalf: "As I know my Major perfectly, I know that when he is alarmed I ought also to be frightened, for he is so fertile in resource that he will live where another would die"—this in allusion to Péan's oft-expressed fears of shortage of provisions. And more of like purport. From Montreal, August 27, Duquesne wrote to Péan at Niagara, expressing satisfaction with the report he had received from Presqu' Isle. "It must be admitted," said he, "that if you know how to alarm, you know better how to reassure, proof of which I have by the particulars in your letters of your progress to Presqu' Isle,

<sup>19</sup> *I. e.*, from the Lake of the Two Mountains, near Montreal.

<sup>20</sup> Letter of Péan, Niagara, Aug. 3.

which, by means of three heads under one bonnet, has produced a result that fills me with satisfaction, because I can count on your carrying out my plan, no matter what obstacles you encounter. . . . I rejoice in the arrest of the English trader and his man, especially if his goods were taken, for distribution among the savages." Being obliged to leave Montreal for Quebec, he says he will send off 60 or 80 bateaux, which will fill the storehouses at Niagara; a first brigade will set out September 4th, the second September 6th. The long letter concludes with some striking reflections on the work of the portages: "All the portages you have to make are as so many monsters to me; but you make me hope that all the carts which I have seen pass under my windows are cleared away by your expedients. . . . Indeed, when I am reminded that the roads were covered with the sweat of our militia bearing loads, I inwardly lament on account of the inevitable destruction of the man who undergoes such a task." He adds that he "will make it a point of honor to procure that which you so justly merit," *i.e.*, the coveted decoration and preferment.

The transport of goods at Niagara was practically accomplished early in September, when Péan advanced with 120 canoes to Presqu' Isle. He found the fort at that place finished and learned that the works at Le Bœuf were well advanced. His next task was to transport the supplies between the two places, the distance being stated as eight leagues. In modern measurement it is 15 miles. To lessen the labor of portage, he made a large number of handcarts<sup>21</sup> and in the vicinity of Le Bœuf Lake had made 200 pirogues or dug-out canoes, though he complains that this was a great task, as they had to range far and wide to find suitable trees. Heavy and continued rains turned the road into bottomless mire, so that a new one, ten feet wide, had to be broken out at the side of the old one. The latter (*l'ancienne*) was probably, in part at least, the Indian trail, somewhat improved and worn by the advance troops.

<sup>21</sup> His phrase is *charettes à hommes*, though if it means wheeled vehicles one is at a loss to know how he accomplished it. Something to be dragged, sledge-like, is more probable, but the only allusion to them in the French hardly warrants such a rendering.



A vivid picture is given of the difficulties of the Presqu' Isle portage: "The labor of our troops was excessive. The soldiers, sunk half-leg deep in the mud, and weakened by the recent fatigues of the first portage, succumbed under their burdens. It was impossible to use the few horses that remained. It was an afflicting spectacle to behold these debilitated men, struggling at the same time against the bad season and the difficulties of the road, broken down by the weight of their weapons and of the loads which they had to carry. As the greatest possible expedition was necessary, officers were posted along the route to urge on each train of bearers. Péan himself was night and day on the road; he encouraged the men, shared their toil, gave his own funds for their relief and reward, and sacrificed both his repose and his health for the good of the service in this most critical conjunction." A plea in his behalf says that since leaving Montreal he had not slept two hours a night!

It was now the time of the autumnal rains. Péan's task seemed daily to be beyond human power to accomplish. The Indians, appalled at the immensity of the undertaking, and wearying of employment, silently vanished. More and more the soldiers broke down under the work; many were maimed, many more fell sick. To make it worse, they had always to be on guard, fearing attack; bodies of troops served alternately as bearers on the portage and as armed escort. Duquesne sent word to Péan<sup>22</sup> that word reached him from the Indians of the Sault that a force of 2000 English were making ready to attack the expedition. He hoped the report was false, but directed Péan to be prepared, "as if every day you expected to meet an enemy of very superior force." Péan did all that man could do, but it was a mockery of military prowess. As September drew to a close, deaths in the ranks were so numerous that the soldiers were buried, not singly, but by twos or more, in shallow trenches in the forest loam. By October 1st, when the transport to Le Bœuf was finished, there remained of the 2300 men who had set out from Montreal, only 800 fit for service, and the main purpose of the expedition was as yet untouched.

<sup>22</sup> Letter of the Marquis Duquesne, Quebec, Sept. 10, 1753.

At Fort Le Bœuf, Péan found Marin weak, fevered and emaciated by dysentery. So ill was he, that Péan, alarmed, wrote at once<sup>23</sup> to the Governor, to learn his wishes in case of the general's death. The wasted troops were discouraged and terrified at the reported imminence of attack. Still, Péan proposed to go on with such force as was available and winter among the Illinois. The great difficulty now was that notwithstanding the heavy rains, Le Bœuf River remained too low for their boats, although he had been repeatedly told that its passage was easy. Foreseeing that he could not set out before the first of October, he addressed himself in the meantime to easing the condition of the soldiers. His tent, and those of his brother-in-law, Desmeloizes, of Le Mercier and several other officers, were turned into hospitals for some of the wretched sick who but for this asylum would have been obliged to lie on the ground, soaked by chill and never-ceasing rains.

Duquesne sent post haste (*en toute diligence*),<sup>24</sup> directing Péan to assume Marin's command, should that officer die. In the same letter he authorized the elimination of the proposed Fort Anjou, and also of a "Fort de Sonioto," fearing lest these establishments would delay the entrance of the troops into the Ohio. "In a single campaign," he adds, "I do not require that you attempt the impossible a second time. To your honor and glory, you have achieved at the two portages what the future will scarce be able to believe. The task of finding the Péanguéchias, who are scattered in the forest, will still be of the greatest value if you are able to stay for them with an exhausted force. Consequently you must consider only the reaching of a place for wintering where you can rest your troops. . . . I approve all that you have done and all that you will do."

Marin's health improving, he undertook with Péan to carry forward the plan of operations, but they were halted by an insurmountable obstacle: there was not water enough in Le Bœuf River to float their laden canoes. Marin sent the Sieur Drouillon to inspect the route; who, returning, made an offi-

<sup>23</sup> Letter of Sept. 29, 1753.

<sup>24</sup> Letter dated Quebec, Oct. 14, 1753.



Portion of Lewis Evans' Map, 1755  
 Showing the Niagara, Chautauqua and Presqu' Isle Portages



cial report that the stream was impassable. Not willing to let so important an issue rest on one man's word, Marin sent two other experienced officers, Carqueville and Portneuf, to examine the state of the river, but their report confirmed that of Drouillon: the river Le Bœuf could not serve as waterway for the expedition until the flood stage of the next spring.

Chagrin and disappointment bore heavily on officers and men. Marin set in train measures for wintering his men at Le Bœuf, Presqu' Isle and Niagara. He wrote for Duquesne a full report of the situation, appended a signed statement by Messrs. Drouillon, Carqueville and Portneuf, and ordered Péan to return to Montreal with all the sick, then to proceed on to Quebec. Marin's report concluded as follows: "M. Péan, who will be in the way of seeing what can be taken from Forts Niagara and Frontenac, will be on hand to acquaint the General with all his observations, possessing perfectly all the details of the project. This is why I order him to report at Quebec."

Péan saw that the storehouse at Le Bœuf was well supplied with food and munitions, then set out on his mission. In Lake Erie, on his way to Niagara, a sudden storm swamped several of his canoes, among them that in which he sat, with all his papers, reports and orders. They made the shore, but the canoe with the chest of papers was submerged. Several men plunged into the lake to raise it; one of them was drowned, another went down on both sides of the boat, all were on the point of giving up when Péan plunged in with them and so helped, or directed, that they got the precious trunk to land; but the violent efforts which he made "strained the nerves of the left arm which became so swollen he could not use it, and the surgeons of Canada were unable to give him any relief."

In Péan's troop was one Stephen Coffen, a New Englander who had been taken prisoner by the French in 1747, and who being in Quebec in January, 1753, had been accepted (or impressed) as a soldier in Marin's expedition. He came to the Niagara with the advance force, had served at all the points reached by the army as far as Le Bœuf, and was now returning under Péan. Later, when they were in Lake Ontario near Oswego, he deserted, first to the English garrison at Oswego

and later to Colonel William Johnson on the Mohawk; to whom, January 10, 1754, he related his adventures, and, as he could not write, signed the record of them with his mark. This deposition of Coffen<sup>25</sup> has been much drawn on by writers, not always with discretion, for it is a marvel of error, especially as to names of French officers in the expedition, some of which, as set down according to Coffen's pronunciation cannot be identified. Duquesne appears as "Le Cain"; Marin becomes "Morang"; Péan is "Peon"; Le Mercier is "Mercie"; Dumas is "Deman." Several others, "Babeer," "Le Crake," "Bite," give opportunity for conjecture. Presqu' Isle appears as "La Briske Isle," and the southern end of the portage as "O Bœff." The illiterate deserter was however a good observer, and in many ways his report admirably supplements the letters of the officers from which most of our details are drawn. According to him, the return from Presqu' Isle began October 28, when 22 bateaux, with 20 men in each bateau, set off under command of Captain Deman. In a few days they were followed by 760 more, which would make the returning force 1200, probably an excessive figure, as considerable garrisons were left at all the posts. Coffen is our source for the statement that the army, or part of it, stayed four days at Chautauqua — present Barcelona harbor — while Péan with 200 men cut a wagon road over the carrying-place to Lake Chautauqua. As we have seen, a road had previously been opened here; Péan may have improved it. It is singular, however, that in the French documents setting forth Péan's services, no allusion to this work is found.

Fort Niagara, which Coffen reached November 6th, he thought "a very rotten old wooden fort," but he heard "they talked of rebuilding it next summer." The garrison numbered but 25 men, so 50 others were left to build a storehouse, and bateaux for the use of the army next spring. A few days later, when "all hands being fatigued with rowing all night," had rather boldly been "ordered ashore for breakfast within a mile of Oswego garrison," Coffen "with a Frenchman slip't

<sup>25</sup> It is printed in N. Y. Col. Docs., VI, 835-837; Penna. Arch., 2d ser., VI, 184-187.

off, and got to the Fort, where they both were concealed until the Army passed."

After a short stay in Montreal Péan went down to Quebec, where on December 17th he received a letter from Duquesne at Montreal, with news of the death of Marin. A long service in the American wilderness had worn out his body, but his strenuous spirit and extraordinary temper remained to the last. Stephen Coffen pictures him, the preceding autumn, as overcome by the failure of the expedition:

Morang, a Man of very peevish Cholorick disposition, . . . finding the season of the year too far advanced to build the Third fort, called all his officers together, and told them, that as he had engaged, and firmly promised the Govr. to finish the three Forts that season, and not being able to fulfil the same, was both afraid and ashamed to return to Canada, being sensible he had now forfeited the Gouverneur's favour for ever; wherefore, rather than live in disgrace, he begged they would take him (as he then sat in a carriage made for him, being very sick some time) and seat him in the middle of the Fort, and then set fire to it, and let him perish in the flames; which was rejected by the Officers, who, the Deponent says, had not the least regard for him, as he had behaved very ill to them all in general.

Authentic record of Marin's death is found in the register of Fort Duquesne,<sup>26</sup> wherein occurs the following entry:

In the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty three, on the twenty-ninth of October at half past four in the evening, died in the fort of the *Rivière aux bœufs*, under the title of St. Peter, Monsieur Peter Paul, Esquire, Sieur de Marin, Chevalier of the royal military order of St. Louis, Captain of Infantry and Commander-in-Chief of the army of the Beautiful River, aged sixty-three years, after having received the sacraments of Penance, Extreme Unction and the Viaticum. His remains were interred in the cemetery of the same fort and during the campaign of the Beautiful River. There were

<sup>26</sup> *Registres des baptêmes et sépultures qui se sont faits au Fort Duquesne pendant les années 1753, 1754, 1755 & 1756.* Only a few leaves of the original register are known to exist, probably in archives at Montreal. A translation was printed in the *Pittsburg Daily Gazette* in July, 1858. It has also been published by Dr. John Gilmary Shea, and at Pittsburg in 1885, the French and English text on opposite pages, with an introduction and notes by Rev. A. A. Lambing, A. M.

present at his interment Monsieur Repentigny, commander of the above-mentioned army and captain of infantry; Messieurs du Muys, lieutenant of infantry; Benois, lieutenant of infantry; de Simblim, major at the above mentioned fort; [and] Laforce, keeper of stores, who have signed with us.

LE GARDEUR DE REPENTIGNY,  
LAFORCE, BENOIS, DU MUYS,  
J. DEPRÉ SIMBLIM.

*Ft. DENYS BARON, P.R., Chaplain.*

The phrase in the foregoing entry, "under the title of St. Peter," refers to the chapel which, as Washington mentions in his Journal, stood inside the fort. The signatures show that Le Gardeur had arrived at Le Bœuf before the death — or at any rate before the burial — of Marin. Father Baron, the Recollect priest who administered the last rites to the dying Marin, was Charles Baron, who on entering the Recollect branch of the Order of St. Francis, had taken "Denys" as a given name. He undoubtedly officiated at Niagara and wherever else the force he accompanied had rested. He was subsequently chaplain at Fort Duquesne.

The register from which these facts are drawn contains record of a few deaths at Fort Presqu' Isle: Jean Baptiste Texier of Montreal, died July 11, 1753, attended by Friar Gabriel Anheuser, a Recollect who signed himself "Chaplain of the detachment." He was, plausibly, the first to hold Christian service where the city of Erie now stands. July 31st, died at Presqu' Isle Jean François Aubert, a soldier in the company of Dumas; the attestation of his death is signed by both Chaplains Baron and Anheuser, who specify that the remains "were interred with the customary ceremonies in that portion of the camp of Presqu' Isle set apart for a cemetery." Both priests also officiated at many burials at Le Bœuf, among others being Etienne, called La Franchise, a corporal in the company of Fouville.

Of the officers who witnessed the burial of Marin, some special interest attaches to Laforce — or, as usually given, La Force. He was taken prisoner, near Great Meadows, where Jumonville was killed, in May, 1754. Being, as Washington



said, "a bold, enterprising man, and a person of great subtlety and cunning," he was detained and sent to the Governor of Virginia. After some two years he escaped from prison, but was captured and taken to Williamsburg, where "he was cast into a dungeon and put in heavy irons." He was afterwards released and returned to Canada. At the time of the fall of Fort Niagara he was cruising on Lake Ontario and so escaped being captured by Johnson.<sup>27</sup>

Marin was many months dead before Paris learned of it. In May the next year the President of the Navy Board expressed to Duquesne his regret that the expedition had fared so badly. The King, who had consented to the expedition with great reluctance, was much impressed by what he heard, and asked leading questions about Marin: "What can one think of him, that he should all at once find himself stopped by the impossibility of navigating the River aux Bœufs? Could he not foresee that it would lack water at this season? How did he neglect so simple and natural a precaution as to take soundings?"<sup>28</sup>

Could his Majesty have been transported to the banks of the Le Bœuf, he would have been edified, perhaps surprised, to find it little more than a broad, shallow brook, with many dancing riffles and a bed full of stones, ready to rip any canoe that drew half a dozen inches; yet could a few days of rain have fallen the expedition would have floated swiftly and safely to the larger river below.

The English were by no means in ignorance of these movements by the French. The passage of their boats in the early spring was promptly reported from Oswego to Colonel Johnson on the Mohawk, who passed the news on to New York May 15th. Captain Benjamin Stoddart, commanding at Oswego,

<sup>27</sup> Entick, whose "General History of the Late War," was published 1763, has the astonishing statement that "Du Quesne . . . detached the Sieur de St. Pierre early in the year 1753 with a sufficient force to make a lodgment and to maintain his ground on the river Beuf, or Beef River, till reinforced; which St. Pierre performed," thus wholly ignoring the work of Marin and his force. Entick further says that the fort at Le Bœuf was built by St. Pierre "in honour to M. du Quesne"! (I, 96.)

<sup>28</sup> Pres. of the Navy Board, transmitting Royal Orders and despatches to Duquesne, May 31, 1754.

reported having observed the passage of "30 odd French Canoes," part of an army of 6,000, on their way to take possession of the Ohio. Lieutenant Hitchen Holland, also at Oswego, wrote on the same day to Governor Clinton, to like effect.<sup>29</sup> Not content with merely reporting the matter, Lieutenant Holland sent an officer and five men to follow the French and spy on them. It was a bold and hazardous mission for it was necessary to avoid not only the Indian villages, but roving bands or hunters who would not fail, should they once set eyes on the Englishmen, to report their presence to the French.

The little band followed the Lake Ontario shore to the mouth of the Genesee, then turned into the forest and struck across country for the east end of Lake Erie, but somewhat mistook their way, so that their first glimpse of this lake was from the high land south of it. When near Cattaraugus Creek they descried the French flotilla making its way westward. This was the advance force under Marin. They were seen to encamp on the banks of a stream a few miles west of the site of Dunkirk, readily identified as the Canadaway. The next day the French went on to Chautauqua Creek; the English spies, cautiously following through the forest, saw the French land and begin felling trees. Presently a larger force arrived, the work was stopped, and three or four days later the whole force reëmbarked and paddled off to the westward. They were followed by the little band of Englishmen, who for four months watched the building of the fort at Presqu' Isle and the portage road to Le Bœuf, without being discovered, though there were numerous narrow escapes from roving Indians. During all this time they dared not use their firearms, but relied on traps and snares to procure game. One man was sent back to Oswego, in July, the rest returned in September, reported what they had seen, and late in October were dispatched again to continue their watch of the French. One of the spies — the only one in fact, whose name we know — was Samuel Shattuck. When an aged man, in 1826, he told the story of this adventure; his narrative concludes as follows:

<sup>29</sup> Both letters are printed in N. Y. Col. Docs., VI, 779-781.

We took a course further south and after reaching the highlands south of Lake Erie continued along their crest, keeping the lake in sight. On the seventh day out, or October 30th, as near as I remember, in the afternoon we came upon a party of nearly or quite a hundred Frenchmen rolling logs into a ravine in the bottom of a deep gulf, and digging into the steep sides of the gulf for a road, apparently at a point that I now [1826] know to have been on the south border of the village of Westfield. They had apparently returned from Erie and were completing the work they began in April. We came upon this party very suddenly and unexpectedly, for we had supposed that the whole matter of a carrying-place had been transferred to Erie; in fact so sudden was it that had it not been for some adroit movements on our part and sharp running up the east branch of Chautauqua Creek, as I now know it, we would have been seen, overtaken, and of course gone into captivity. As it was we escaped and witnessed the completion of the road from Lake Erie to Lake Chautauqua. On the third or fourth day the whole party embarked in their boats and moved eastward. We at once retraced our steps and about the 10th of November reached Oswego.<sup>30</sup>

At least one other officer who shared the toil and dangers of this expedition, merits our notice. This was Charles Deschamps de Boishebert, whose father, of the same name, had been Major of Quebec, and commandant at Detroit, 1728 to 1734; and whose grandfather, Charles Deschamps, Sieur de Boishebert, of an old Normandy family, came out to Canada when Talon was Intendant. The young Boishebert who came to the Niagara with Péan had entered military service in 1742, at the age of 13. In 1748 he had served under Céloron in the detachment sent from Montreal to Detroit — or, as an old

<sup>30</sup> Shattuck's story is contained in Dr. H. C. Taylor's account of "The Old Portage Road," first printed in the *Censor* of Fredonia, N. Y., Jan., 1891, later issued in pamphlet form. The expedition led by Marin is erroneously stated to have been fitted out in "the fall and early winter of 1753-54," but there is no question that the exploit of the English spies was in the summer of 1753. Shattuck's birth is given as of 1741; if correct, his scouting experience, calling for endurance, discretion and knowledge of woodcraft and Indian wiles, was had at the youthful age of 12. He afterwards served in the Revolution, settled in Western New York, at Portland, Chautauqua Co., where he died in 1827 and was buried amid scenes of his youthful exploits. See also "The Old Portage Road," by D. A. A. Nichols, in "Centennial History of Chautauqua Co.," vol. I.

record has it, "to the strait situated between Lake Grié [Erie] and Huron. The route was 300 leagues, and they did not sustain any attack, but near Detroit engaged the Indians, killed 10 and captured 15."

In the expedition of 1753 Boishebert led an advance guard of 500 men. The document above quoted relates that he was charged with establishing a storehouse in the Bay of Quinté, which got him into trouble, "for he found himself on the road, without provisions, in the midst of a country flooded by the overflow of neighboring rivers. The activity and zeal of the sieur Joncaire-Chabert, who brought over bateaux and supplies for him, extricated him from this plight. They finally reached Presqu' Isle, the fort was built, a garrison established, and they returned to Québec." His subsequent service was in Acadia and elsewhere remote from the Great Lakes.

In the advance party which came to the Niagara in the spring of 1753 was a young man who, coming out to Canada two years before, was now one of 18 gunners appointed to serve under Le Mercier, whom he accompanied to Niagara and Presqu' Isle. He kept a journal of this and other experiences in Canada, 1751 to 1761, the manuscript of which, coming to light not many years ago, was edited by the capable hand of the Abbé Casgrain, and published at Quebec in 1887. The original,<sup>31</sup> in the possession of the Marquis de Bassano, in Paris, was signed simply with the initials "J. C. B.," which the Abbé Casgrain ascertained, with probable accuracy, to stand for J. C. Bonnefons, who held various posts in the French military service in America, and became secretary to Captain Pouchot, the last French defender of Fort Niagara.

This journal of the expedition of 1753, is a narrative of some worth. The writer saw things from the viewpoint of the common soldier, but wrote with spirit and intelligence.

Setting out March 25th, from Fort Frontenac, he noted "the two small vessels of two masts," which were kept going and coming in transport service to Niagara. They crossed to the south shore, camping at the mouth of Salmon River, within 18 miles of the English fort at Oswego, which they passed next

<sup>31</sup> There is also a MS. copy in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris.

day, keeping three leagues off shore. Niagara was reached April 11th: "We find it built in part of stone, in part of wood, well fortified on the land side and surrounded with ditches, with bastions supplied with 18 pieces of cannon, a drawbridge and 80 men in the garrison."

He notes many things in the neighborhood, and under date of April 12th describes his ascent of what we know as Lewiston Heights:

From Fort Niagara we ascended the three mountains which are at the west [south] of the fort, and on the top of each of which we found a level space formed of flat rock, very even, which makes a resting place for travelers who pass there. It is about two leagues from the bottom to the top of the mountains. When we had reached the top we had to rest, after which we continued to march. At a quarter of a league to the north of the last mountain is the famous fall of Niagara.

A long description of Niagara follows, which we here pass over.<sup>32</sup> He learned from "common report" that the cataract was 180 feet high. At risk of life or limb, he clambered down into the gorge, spent hours in exploring it, and regained the upper earth thoroughly drenched and temporarily deaf. He lodged at Chabert's portage fort, which he calls "a little station, newly established," and with the rest of his troop passed on into Lake Eric. "This lake," he wrote, "is very fine, readily navigated," but "the gusts are frequent and something to fear." Crossing to the south shore they made Presqu' Isle on April 24th. Bonnefons' description of it should have place here:

It is quite a deep bay, within which we enter, where has been laid out the plan of a fort, after having made an abattis of trees. This fort was built of squared timber with four bastions furnished with 12 cannon which we brought with us. They have given this fort the name of the place where it stands, that is, Presqu' Isle. The unhealthiness of the air which prevailed here during the felling of the trees, the clearing of the ground and the building of the fort, added to a diet of salt meat and sea biscuit — only food of the de-

<sup>32</sup> A translation of it may be found in Vol. XV, Publications, Buffalo Historical Society.

tachment, which moreover had nothing to drink but water — all this brought on the scurvy, which attacked 200 people. -This made necessary a hospital where they could be secluded, to prevent the disease from spreading among the rest of the troops.

Bonnefons was made storekeeper's clerk, charged with the delivery of food and trading-goods. It was for this reason, he says, that he was better nourished than his brother soldiers: "I lived at the storekeeper's table, where we were served, like the officers, with bread, fresh meat [game], wine and brandy." The storekeeper was not permitted to give out bread, wine or brandy to any one except officers and the surgeon; but Bonnefons was so moved by the suffering of the soldiers, that he systematically pilfered supplies for them. He could not help all, so he "adopted" 22 poor fellows, to whom daily he secretly brought bread, wine, venison [*viande fraîche de chasse*], and brandy, pretending that the distribution was to Indians who hunted for the garrison. Under this nursing he had the satisfaction of seeing his sick comrades recover in some 15 days; but their convalescence was followed with a proof of human ingratitude. Two of the soldiers to whom he had ministered, as soon as well enough, got drunk, and one of them demanded more brandy. Bonnefons told him to go off and go to sleep; instead, the ungrateful roisterer made after his benefactor with a tomahawk. To protect himself, this worthy ran, seized another tomahawk and let fly at the drunkard, cutting him so seriously in the thigh that he was in the surgeon's hands for two months, and crippled for two months more. Bonnefons was exonerated, but confided to his journal that ingratitude "is a misfortune generally attached to the human species."

Some of his experiences at Presqu' Isle were pleasanter. The environs of the fort were full of game: "deer, roe-bucks, fallow deer, bears, swans, bustards, ducks, geese, turkeys, herons, red-legged partridge and turtle-doves." One may accept this list except perhaps the bustards, for which no doubt Bonnefons mistook the great fish-hawks and eagles which still nest in that delightful bit of Government-owned wilderness between the bay and Lake Erie, known as the Peninsula.

The annals of sport — of sportsmen's life and the diversions of hunting — at Erie, begin with Bonnefons. We submit his description of a wild-turkey hunt near old Fort Presqu' Isle:

The most frequent and most curious hunting that I have seen here, is of the wild turkey, which is as amusing as it is abundant. It is usually hunted by moonlight, by at least two or three persons; for these creatures have the habit of always perching in flocks in the tree-tops, in order the better to take flight in a long *trajet*, if surprised. Ordinarily they come down to drink, only at nightfall. They perch high up in the thick-branching trees, side by side on a branch, as much as it will bear, sometimes as many as 150 on the same tree.

When one has located them, he goes noiselessly as close as he can to the tree where they perch. Without speaking or stirring, the hunter fires, bringing down four or five turkeys at least. Those that remain, being roused by the noise, scream out, but hearing no more noise, settle again to sleep. Then another shot is fired and so on until all are killed or the hunter has enough. If several turkeys have fallen wounded, and would run away, the hunter must let them go, at the chance of losing them, lest those in the tree take fright and fly away, and the hunter lose the more.

At length, when enough are taken, those that are killed are piled up, the canoe is brought near, since they could not be carried without it, some of them weighing as much as 35 pounds.

It is only by surprise that one can shoot these animals in day time. If they are surprised or pursued on the ground, where they cannot take wing because of their weight, and lack of space, they have recourse to their legs to climb to an elevation with such speed that a dog can scarcely overtake them; then, from the eminence, they take wing and are soon far away.

Such were a soldier's diversions amid the ponds and sand dunes of the Peninsula, or on the beautiful wooded shores of Presqu' Isle bay, in the summer of 1753.

By the 20th of July construction work at the fort was well advanced. Leaving Captain Saint Pierre with 150 men for garrison, a force of 300, including Bonnefons, went westward by canoe, and in due course, by way of the Detroit, reached Michillimackinac, where Indian councils were held. The return was by the Ottawa, Quebec being regained October 3d.

An account of Presqu' Isle, of about 1755, says it was a square fort of squared timber, at the entrance to a bay one and a half leagues long and half a league wide; it was not a trading post, but a depot for communication between Niagara and Duquesne. The portage is given as seven leagues long. "During the winters, which are mild, rainy, and little subject to snow, transports are impracticable, likewise in spring and autumn. Summer is the only season in which carts can be used. Horses go at all times, and Indian help is always necessary because of the haste needed to profit by flood in Le Bœuf River. If the road were easy, the savages could be dispensed with, but they prevent other ill-disposed Indians from troubling our transports. Without this employ they would go to the English, who would treat them better than we do, and it is necessary that they don't discover the difference." <sup>33</sup>

The same writer continues, that it would be easy to attract Indians to Presqu' Isle, to reside, as the soil is good, hunting and fishing abundant. The Mississagas, he says, who are wanderers in Lake Erie, have settled there voluntarily, assured of finding near the fort supplies which they lack elsewhere. Some Iroquois had been drawn thither from Conewango; "but to succeed in forming a settlement, a store is needed at Presqu' Isle, well supplied with goods for trade. He thought the portage privilege should be given exclusively to the Indians, although they were paid six livres for carrying a sack, for which labor the French received only three livres. The two chiefs who were devoted to the French and who made their home at Presqu' Isle, were Cacité, an Iroquois, and Mauramite, a Mississaga.

Jean Baptiste Pidon, a French deserter, who found his way or was taken to Philadelphia, in March, 1754, on examination before Chief Justice William Allen in that town, made a sworn statement that he was one of 1600 men, regulars and Canadians, who in the spring of 1753 were sent on an expedition to "la Belle rivière." He said "they went in bateaus through the Lake Ontario and the streight of Niagara, and sailed six or seven days in Lake Erie, after which they landed and be-

<sup>33</sup> Unsigned report on the Posts; copy in Can. Arch.



gan to build a fort on an eminence about 100 yards from the bank of the lake, which they called Duquisne, the name of their general, the Marquis Duquisne. Here the 600 men, who had left Canada in the winter, came to them. The army cut a way through the woods, eight French leagues at least, if not more, to the Rivière aux Bœufs, and there they began another fort. That he, among many others, was employed in falling and haling timber, and were compelled to do very laborious service; that there were victuals enough at the upper fort, but not always enough at the second fort. That numbers deserted, and Mr. Joncaire, the interpreter, who had the care of matters, did not mind it, but swore at the rest and bid them be gone to the English, where they could get bread."

Pidon added that when he deserted, in August, there were 1200 men in garrison in the upper fort, and 500 in the second fort; and that 800 had returned to Canada. These figures are exaggerated.

Seven English traders, David Hendricks, Jacob Evans, Jabez Evans, Alexander McGinty, James Powell, Thomas Hyde and William Lowry, were taken captive, January 26, 1753, somewhere on the Allegheny, by a band of 70 Indians from Niagara. Lowry escaped, "and being almost naked, 'tis imagined he perished in the woods." The others were brought to Fort Niagara. "They often solicited the French to be released from the Indians, who as often refused, saying they were not theirs, but the Indians' prisoners." In April they were carried to Montreal, where McGinty wrote to the mayor of Albany, begging his assistance; this official sent a letter and belt of wampum to the Indians; later £20 in money and goods, were sent as ransom. McGinty was released; Jacob Evans and Powell were sent to Quebec, "in order to be transferred to Old France"; the fate of the others is not known.<sup>34</sup>

It was an incident typical of the times. Many like it could no doubt be traced out during the years in which the Niagara was the great highway, not only for the French into the Ohio Valley, but for many an ill-fated English trader brought out of that region, captive.

<sup>34</sup> *Boston Gazette*, Oct. 2, 1753.

## CHAPTER XXII

### CAMPAIGN OF 1754

MEETING OF CAPTAIN JONCAIRE AND WASHINGTON — OSWEGO AS AN OUTLOOK — THE ALBANY CONFERENCE, FORERUNNER OF AMERICAN FEDERATION — FRANKLIN'S "JOIN OR DIE" — PÉAN AND THE EXPEDITION OF 1754 — CHAUTAUQUA AND PRESQU' ISLE.

CAPTAIN JONCAIRE, as well as his brother Chabert, had borne an active part in this abortive campaign. It was well into November before the last of the dwindled force got its boats down the Niagara portage and paddled off for Montreal. From the fevered activity of the summer, life at Chabert's fort at the head of the portage passed to a stage of stagnation, stirred only by the trifling trade of random Indian bands. But there was great concern as to the security of the garrisons in the new posts to the southward. Late in November Chabert left the Niagara, and went down to the junction of the Le Bœuf and the Allegheny. He records in his memoir that in his absence, during the winter of 1753-54, the command of his fort at the Portage was joined to that of Fort Niagara. Provision being thus made for his absence, he was sent, he says, "to the Five Nations to notify them, in the Governor's name, that he was going to the Ohio to take possession of it, and to build forts on its banks, adding to this announcement the most terrible menaces for any one who would have the audacity to oppose him in this matter." His own account of this — that the savages received this message with "bitter and insulting laughter," telling him that no one but a child of the nation could have thus spoken with impunity — has already been noted. The Indians, even more than the English, had reason to resent French intrusion into the region of the Ohio. He continues: "I next went to the Ohio river, returning thence to Montreal, after which I was ordered to the Little Fort Niagara,

to do everything possible for quickening the dispatch of business at the portage."

In this brief record is comprehended one of the most interesting episodes in the varied career of the brothers Joncaire, and, as will appear, one of the most significant in the Colonial history of America.

Marin had proposed to build a fort at the junction of the Le Bœuf and Allegheny, but had not accomplished it before he died at Fort Le Bœuf. If the French were to accomplish anything in the valley of the Ohio, this point must be held. The English had already found the place and recognized its value; and here John Fraser, licensed by Pennsylvania to trade with the Indians, had made his way and built a house as early as 1749. Save for the ancient Indian settlements in the vicinity, this was the beginning of the pleasant city of Franklin. The entry of the French into the valley had caused Fraser to withdraw to the safer region of the Monongahela, but his house at old Venango still stood, when, about the 1st of December, 1753, Captain Joncaire arrived from Niagara. He and two other officers who accompanied him took up their quarters in it and hoisted the French flag; and here they were on Tuesday, December 5th, when a little band of travelers, white men and Indians, came out of the woods and presented themselves at the French headquarters, where, afterwards wrote the veteran woodsman who guided the company, "we were kindly and complaisantly received by Monsieur Joncaire, the French interpreter for the Six Nations."

The strangers' party was curiously mixed as to nationality. Of the four Indians, the most important was Scarrooyady or the Half King, well known to Joncaire. The white men were four frontiersmen acting as servants; a Colonial named Davison, who could speak French; Vanbraam, a Dutchman; Christopher Gist, pioneer and guide, from whose journal the above quotation is taken; and finally the head of the expedition, a stalwart youth some six feet two in stature, known in his own colony of Virginia as an adjutant-general of militia and now presented to Joncaire as Major George Washington.

This youth, for whom Fame waited, was in his 22nd year;

Captain Joncaire was 47, a past master in wilderness diplomacy and Indian management — fine arts in which the young Washington, apt though he was, could not match him. Neither knew the language of the other, so that their intercourse was wholly through interpreters. It may be observed, that of the two men, at this time Joncaire was much the more famous. Washington, though a youth of promise, had little reputation outside Virginia colony, and there chiefly through the social prominence of his family; but Joncaire was known wherever the forces of France were known in America, as an active and adroit agent of his Government.

Their meeting at old Venango was more than an episode of lively interest. It was the first face-to-face encounter of authorized representatives of the two great Powers which presently were to contend for supremacy in America. Chabert's memoirs do not mention the meeting; it was but one of many incidents which he summarized; but both Christopher Gist and Washington wrote of his brother the captain, in their journals; and Washington's graphic account has been quoted with relish by many chroniclers. Joncaire and the two subaltern officers who were with him, invited the Virginia major and his white companions to take supper with them; of which occasion Washington later wrote in his journal:

The wine, as they dosed themselves pretty plentifully with it, soon banished the restraint which at first appeared in their conversation, and gave a license to their tongues to reveal their sentiments more freely. They told me that it was their absolute design to take possession of the Ohio, and, by G—, they would do it; for that although they were sensible the English could raise two men for their one, yet they knew their motions were too slow and dilatory to prevent any undertaking of theirs.<sup>1</sup>

Captain Joncaire referred Washington to St. Pierre, the commandant at Le Bœuf. When the English embassy reached that fort, they were again civilly received. The old soldier summoned to the council the commandant at Presqu' Isle, and

<sup>1</sup> Washington's journal, as printed at Williamsburg, Va., soon after his return. It has been much reprinted since.

took three days to consider Governor Dinwiddie's demand, that the French withdraw from the region; he then informed Major Washington that the communication would be laid before the Marquis Duquesne, and that until that supreme official ordered him to retire, he should remain at his post — a proper, soldierly reply, and the only one that could be made by an officer worthy his trust. With this message to carry back to Virginia, Washington, with great hazards and fatigue, retraced his way to the English settlements. Fort Le Bœuf marked his nearest approach to the region of Niagara and the Lakes.

Captain Joncaire had exercised all his arts of persuasion, to entice away the Indians from Washington's escort, and did succeed in greatly embarrassing and delaying that officer. The Half King, too fixed in allegiance to the English to be seduced, remained staunch to Washington in spite of Joncaire's cordiality and unstinted liquor; but a young warrior, Guyasuta (or Kiasutha), appears to have lent a willing ear to the French. Not long after he had accompanied Washington to Venango, he came to Niagara and with Chabert and some score of Senecas, went down to Montreal, where the Marquis de Vaudreuil and his council received them with impressive ceremony and listened to their protestations of friendship. Guyasuta is much heard of in the next few years. After Braddock's defeat many of the native leaders conceived a sudden attachment for the French, just as, after the fall of Niagara, they again sought English favor; none more ardently than the Seneca chief and orator, Guyasuta.<sup>2</sup>

This journey through the wilderness to Fort Le Bœuf was Washington's nearest approach to the Great Lakes or the Niagara. Fifteen miles more would have brought him to the site of the present city of Erie; but it was the enemy's country, and had he ventured farther, he might have been given a journey to Niagara and Quebec under French escort. What he learned

<sup>2</sup>This attendant of Washington, and in his youth, associate of Chabert Joncaire, continued for many years a leading spirit on the upper Ohio. Washington met and conversed with him in 1770, at the mouth of the Great Hockhocking. The annals of the region in the Revolution contain many references to him. There is even preserved a speech he made in extreme old age, in 1790, to the Friends of Philadelphia.

of the region, from Joncaire and other French officers, he put into the report quoted from. He learned that the greater part of the French stores intended for the Ohio were kept at Presqu' Isle on Lake Erie; and that from there "it is 120 miles to the carrying-place at the Falls of Lake Erie, where there is a small fort at which they lodge their goods in bringing them from Montreal, the place from which all their stores are brought." This refers to Chabert's post above the Falls, which Washington alone, of all writers so far as noted, calls "the Falls of Lake Erie." Evidently neither the name nor fame of Niagara had made great impress on his mind. "The next fort," he continues, "lies about 20 miles from this on Ontario lake"—designating Fort Niagara. "Between this fort and Montreal there are three others, the first of which is nearly opposite to the English fort at Oswego. From the fort on Lake Erie to Montreal is about 600 miles, which they say requires no more (if good weather) than four weeks' voyage if they go in barks or large vessels so that they may cross the lake, but if they come in canoes it will require five or six weeks, for they are obliged to keep under the shore."

The eagerness with which Washington gathered facts like these from Captain Joncaire is a reminder of the paucity of knowledge, regarding details of French movements on the Lakes, which the English colonies, save perhaps New York, possessed at this time.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In the quaint old novel, "The Wilderness, or Braddock's Times," by Dr. James McHenry (New York, 1823; Pittsburgh, 1848), Washington's visit to Le Bœuf forms an episode, and Braddock's defeat another. Among the characters are Joncaire, who is killed by a captain of the Ohio Company; Mme. Joncaire, a "gay French lady," who meets Washington at Fraser's house on the Monongahela and bandies compliments with him, until Joncaire charges Washington with having been "hit" by her sharp glances. Washington, who is really in love with the daughter of the prophet Tonnaleuka, rescues her from a villain "with a dagger plunged to the hilt by the whole of Washington's tremendous force in his heart"; and after all the lady weds another. De Villiers, the distinguished French officer, also in love with the same "fair female," meets an awful death, chiefly at the hand of the author; and Tonnaleuka the Indian prophet, turns out to be a Scotch laird, McIntosh by name, who had been colonel of a French regiment "stationed for a number of years at a fort near the falls of Niagara." It is a delightful example of that paradoxical creation, the "historical novel." Josiah

It was La Force who escorted Washington from Venango to Le Bœuf; and the officer who was summoned to Le Bœuf from Presqu' Isle, to meet Washington, whom the latter calls "Monsieur Reparti," was Captain Repentigny. While the French officers were considering Governor Dinwiddie's letter, Washington says he improved his opportunity to take the dimensions of Fort Le Bœuf. His account of it is quite as detailed as any we have from French sources, and should have place here:

It is situated on the south or west fork of French [Le Bœuf] creek, near the water, and is almost surrounded by the creek and a small branch of it, which forms a kind of island. Four houses compose the sides. The bastions are made of piles driven in the ground, standing more than 12 feet above it and sharp at top with port holes for the small arms to fire through. There are eight 6-pound pieces mounted in each bastion and one piece of 4-pound before the gate. In the bastions are a guard-house, chapel, doctor's lodging, and the commander's private store, round which are laid platforms for the cannon and men to stand on. There are several barracks without the fort for the soldiers' dwellings, covered, some with bark and some with boards, made chiefly of logs. There are also several other houses, such as stables, smith's shop, etc.<sup>4</sup>

Washington's unfamiliarity with earlier French operations in the region is seen in his statement that the French "pretend to have an undoubted right to the river from a discovery made by one La Salle sixty years ago"—that is, in 1693; which is as inaccurate as many other statements in regard to La Salle on the Ohio; but the report as a whole was important, and the journey served to hasten the time of a decisive conflict. It also gave to Washington, for the first time, a renown and a public

Priest apparently got hold of it, and appropriated it, for many of the characters and incidents appear in his "History of the early Adventures of Washington among the Indians of the West," published at Albany, 1841.

<sup>4</sup> The writer has long been familiar with Le Bœuf, now Waterford, Pa., and the site of its old fort. With Washington's description in hand, its location may be readily traced. A spring, formerly within the palisades, still flows; and across the stream, on a slight elevation, still stands an ancient hemlock, which, according to a cherished local tradition, Washington climbed in December, 1753, that he might look into the fort—obviously, a needless exertion on his part, since he was escorted to and into the fort by the French themselves.

confidence that fairly ushered him upon his career of greatness.

In December, 1753, when Captain Joncaire and Washington met at old Venango, no fort had been built there. Marin had been charged with it, but died without seeing it accomplished. The Indians opposed it; but in the spring of 1754 Chabert went down from Niagara, and employed such arguments that the opposition ceased, and a fort was built under his superintendence. He had a sawmill sent from Montreal, by the Niagara-Presqu' Isle route. It was set up on a little stream just above the site to be fortified; oaks and chestnuts of the surrounding forest were felled and sawn, and by the end of April quarters for soldiers and a fortified enclosure were built and named Fort Machault, in honor of a French financier. The French documents, both before and after the building of the fort, speak of the place — the vicinity — as Venango, but of the fortification invariably as Fort Machault. This was rarely used by the English, who called it Fort Venango. It was a stockaded enclosure with bastions; not very capable of defense, but it served as a useful garrison and depot of supplies until the French disappeared from the valley in 1759. We do not here go minutely into its history; but it is essential to note that it was built by Chabert Joncaire, and was one of the principal scenes of his activities.<sup>5</sup>

These movements of the French were by no means unobserved or unreported to the English. Oswego was ever a lookout, and from there British spies, white man or Indian, coasted the lake or threaded the forest, making constant report on the foe. Often the foe reported on themselves. Many a flotilla of French canoes, bound up to Niagara, audaciously crossed to the south shore and passed Oswego within sight of its impotent fort, with reckless challenges and exultation in their own security. There was enmity, no doubt; but there was more often shown, in these years preceding the war, a hearty spirit of bravado, as though these men of the wilderness, and the soldiers

<sup>5</sup> See, for Fort Machault, the "Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania," II, 585 *et seq.* It is on the authority of Chabert's own memoir, that I give him credit for this fort-building; but the two brothers evidently worked together in these Ohio operations.



of France they were conducting, were playing a game, for the possession of this or that point on the great chess-board, and were doing it all quite as much in a spirit of bold sport as of deadly fighting.

Indian spies, both in French and British interests, were always active, but their reports were not conspicuous for accuracy or trustworthiness. The Indian exaggerated like a child, and there was so little reliance to be placed on him that Governor De Lancey, down at New York, arranged for more reliable reports. Thus we find that from Oswego, in 1754, Hitchen Holland was repeatedly sending word to the Governor of the passing of French canoes and troops to the westward. May 13, he reported: "This morning past three French canoes towards Niagara, but can't tell where bound as nobody here spoke to them." Two days later he wrote: "Yesterday past here 27 French canoes, with colors flying and drums beating, which seemed to be well manned and were bound towards Niagara," etc. A week later he writes:

"Sir: The same day after my last report to your honour of the 15th instant arrived here a Frenchman drummer to the party I then reported, who deserted from them the same evening and reports that that detachment consisted of 250 men, all of the militia, excepting 13 soldiers of the regular troops and also that 400 more were to follow, chiefly soldiers, besides 200 Indians, that were to set out in a little time after, all bound to the river Ohio & that the place of rendezvous was to be at Niagara, till they all got in a body & from thence to the place of there destination; which report I believe to be true as yesterday past this toward Niagara 15 French canoes and this day 25 more." A postscript of the next day adds:

"Since writing the above to your honour has this day past another French fleet consisting of 15 canoes."

From these details, let us turn for a moment to a broader view of the situation.

The feasibility of English defenses on the Niagara was considered by the American colonies many years before the final break with France. The project for fortifying Niagara was a part of the "plan for a general Union of the British Colonies

in North America," which was formulated in 1754; but schemes for union — at least for general defense — had been agitated intermittently since February, 1745. Agreement for concerted action was not reached, however, until July 10, 1754, when a plan was reported by Benjamin Franklin, one of the commissioners from Pennsylvania to the Albany Conference — a meeting of vast significance and influence in developing the spirit of union which ultimately was to weld the colonies into a nation.

Twenty-three commissioners, representing the colonies of New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and Maryland, met in the Court House at Albany, June 19, 1754 and continued in almost daily session until July 11th. Among several plans of action that were suggested one or two only call for notice here.

It was proposed by Richard Peters that each colony should raise a company of 100 men; that the 13 companies should form the Union regiment, the officers to be appointed by the King; and that this body of soldiery should "subsist until the French desist from their encroachments, and there be established on the Lakes a free navigation for English vessels, and proper forts built — to bridle the present forts built by the French, and till a fort be built on the Strait of Niagara in particular," to secure the navigation of the Lakes. Besides a fort "on or near the Straits of Niagara," one was to be built on Lake Erie, one on the Ohio, one on Onondaga Lake, and others elsewhere, eight in all. One vessel was to be built for the navigation of the Lakes, but it was not specified whether she should be on Lake Ontario or Erie. The little standing army of 1300 men was to be the principal means for achieving these works; was to build roads and make itself otherwise useful.

Worthier of adoption was Benjamin Franklin's plan of union, submitted at this conference, and by the commissioners later submitted to their respective constituencies. It was better matured than Peters' scheme for a standing army. It placed the power of raising troops and building forts in the hands of a central body called the Grand Council, and presented other practical and wise features, not necessary to detail here. Franklin was by no means oblivious to the encroachments of

the French at the back of the English colonies. No man of his time saw the situation more clearly, or was more practical in suggestions for meeting it. He had proposed the settling of "two strong colonies of English between the Ohio and Lake Erie"; arguing the great advantage that would come from such a course, "provided only that the Crown would be at the expense of removing the little forts the French have erected in their encroachments on his Majesty's territories and supporting a strong one near the Falls of Niagara, with a few small armed vessels, or half galleys to cruise on the Lakes. . . . The fort and armed vessels at the Strait of Niagara would be a vast security to the frontiers of these new colonies against any attempts of the French from Canada." He thought every fort should have a small settlement around it, "as the fort would protect the settlers, and the settlers defend the fort and supply it with provisions." Franklin also approved the strengthening of the fort at Oswego, and the building of small vessels for Lake Ontario.

The columns of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, in the years preceding the war, abundantly testify to Franklin's watchful interest in all that pertained to the French on the Frontiers. Here was printed Peter Kalm's famous account of Niagara; and here, when the French advances of 1753 were known in the colonies, Franklin printed a part of Charlevoix's letter, dated at Niagara, May 26, 1721, regarding British and French claims to the Niagara region. No other paper in America paid so much attention to this region, or discussed its problems with more thorough understanding. Frontier news which first appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, was printed afterwards — sometimes long afterwards — in the newspapers of New York and New England.

Here appeared, apparently, the first published report which the English colonies received, of C loron's expedition of 1749. In the *Gazette*, under date of August 31st of that year, George Croghan, lately come to town from the Ohio river, told of his expedition. He had been received kindly by the Indians, who told him the French had lately been there, and had given them a belt of wampum from the Governor of Canada, requesting

that they would not trade with the English. The Indians averred they had treated the French with much contempt, declaring "that as long as there was one of them left, they would continue to trade with their brethren the English." The next year, Governor James Hamilton, in a message to the Pennsylvania Assembly, reviewing these events on the Ohio, took the view that the English traders were needlessly alarmed, "as if the French were approaching in a military manner; but as nothing hostile has hitherto been attempted, I am in hopes," he feebly concluded, "this may blow over and the French from the caution and unanimity of the Indians in our alliance, be obliged to alter their measures."

Franklin was better able to read the signs of the times. It was the Niagara expedition of 1753, and concurrent events on the Ohio, that prompted his famous "Join or Die" device, which appeared in the *Gazette* of May 9, 1754. Here was printed the supremely important news (but wholly without the modern news editor's "display" methods, then undreamed of) that Ward, ensign of Captain Trent's company, had surrendered the fort at the Forks of the Ohio, April 17th, to the French who had come down from Niagara, led by Contrecoeur, a thousand men with 360 bateaux and canoes, and 18 pieces of artillery. Here in truth was the commencement of this war in America. At crucial times like this, wild rumors fly fast; nor is it to be accounted against him that Franklin gave credence and publication to a report that 400 French were coming up the Ohio "and that 600 French Indians of the Chippewas and Ottaways are coming down Scioto river from the lake to join them, and many more French are expected from Canada," to seize all the frontiers.

"Hence," continued our philosopher-editor, "and from the great distance of Britain, they presume that they may with impunity violate the most solemn treaties, subsisting between the two Crowns, kill, seize and imprison our traders, and confiscate their effects at pleasure (as they have done for several years past), murder and scalp our farmers, with their wives and children, and take an easy possession of such parts of the British territory as they find most convenient for them; which, if

they are permitted to do, must end in the destruction of the British interest, trade and Plantations in America."

Then followed a crude woodcut of a snake in eight sections, one for each colony, and the legend, "Join or Die." Popular histories and school text-books long since made this device familiar; but they have not always brought out clearly, as Franklin did, the character of events which had suggested it.

Whoever would seek the origins of the American Republic must carry his quest well back through the years. Ample seed-planting there was, and long years of germination, before the wild ringing of the Liberty Bell proclaimed even the smallest measure of fruition. Many causes there were, to bring the Colonies together; but none more potent than this occupancy of the Niagara and the Lakes, this invasion of the trans-Allegheny Valley by the French. Here, more than any where else, from 1749 to 1753, occurred those provocations which excited the thought of the English in America, and gave it a new ideal. Early Colonial thought had been tethered to Europe. Gradually, the urgency of American conditions begot new concepts of existence. The feeble press began to speak, as yet scarcely recognizing the forces that impelled it. The pulpit, perhaps then relatively the strongest influence over public thought, scarcely as yet knowing the new text, found more and more sanction of divine authority for protective measures in the Colonies, independent of England. Nothing but great earnestness of purpose, and a depth of popular feeling which was rooted in the very life and faith of the people, could have inspired those old bell-founders of Philadelphia to write in bronze on their masterpiece the stirring injunction from the Scriptures: "Proclaim Liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof."<sup>6</sup> Liberty indeed was sought in America from the first coming of many a company, often with high ideals; sought sometimes under false concepts; but now, by the stress of petty strife in this far wilderness, it no longer

<sup>6</sup> "Last week was rais'd and fix'd in the Statehouse steeple the new great bell, cast here by Pass & Stow, weighing 2080 lbs., with this motto: 'Proclaim Liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof. Lev. XXV, 10.'"—*Phila. corr. Boston Gazette*, June 19, 1753.

was to be groped for — the way to it was seen to lie through Union, strength in Union. In ever stronger tones this illusive thing styled Liberty, at first a feeble voice in the wilderness, sounded clearer and truer as the decades passed, until all the world heard it proclaimed as never before, in the clangor of the Liberty Bell in 1776.

While France was seeking to make new establishments in the wilderness, she somewhat neglected those already made, even Niagara, most essential of all. In 1754 this place had fallen into so poor a condition that the Chevalier Le Mercier, on arriving there, wrote to Quebec that the palisades could be pushed over, that it was not safe to follow the road under them, and that in banking them with earth on the outside, there had only been made an easy way of scaling them. He added that the garrison did not dare fire their cannon for fear the concussion would crumble down the earthworks on which they were mounted. He urged Duquesne to have it rebuilt of stone, and the Governor hoped he could accomplish it soon. "This fort," he wrote to Paris, "is the support of the posts to the south; in case of war or reprisal it will be easy to seize it."<sup>7</sup> But the Niagara was a long ways from Paris, and the urgency of the situation was never realized by a preoccupied and indifferent Ministry.

Le Mercier had set out from La Chine in January with 360 men. In the severest of winter weather they made a rapid march through the snowy forests and over the ice-bound lake, to Fort Niagara, thence by Presqu' Isle to Fort Le Bœuf, where he joined Contrecoeur. This officer was at Niagara in January, when he received orders to advance into the Ohio country. He afterwards complained vigorously of the execrable roads — but, for him, they led to victory and some measure of fame. The garrisons at the several Ohio posts were thus strengthened, but no aggressive operations were begun until the arrival of a larger force under Péan. That officer was at Quebec when a

<sup>7</sup> Duquesne's report to the Ministry, Oct. 10, 1754. A return of Fort Niagara in 1754 shows that the garrison consisted of five officers, one of whom was detached to Fort Little Niagara; two sergeants, one drummer, 24 soldiers, a chaplain, a surgeon and a storekeeper. Ten trading canoes were sent up during the year.

letter from Duquesne <sup>8</sup> informed him of Marin's death and summoned him to Montreal, where he conferred with the Governor, then hastened back to Quebec to prepare for another campaign. It was planned on a less ambitious scale than that of the year before — practically the only result of which had been, to teach them how to do better. The shortage of provisions also figured in their plan-making, although the Governor called it "prudence." Péan's instructions, dated May 9 and 10, 1754, said, in part:

In case the *Sieur Péan*, on reaching Niagara, learns that the *Sieur de Contrecoeur* has met superior forces which obliged him to fall back, he will hasten to join that officer, if in his judgment an increase of forces will enable him to drive out the English from places where they have established themselves. At such times, make the most determined attempt to repel force by force; but if the *Sieur de Contrecoeur* foresees that even with the united force it is impossible to drive the English from the Ohio, he will notify the *Sieur Péan* who will then continue his route to Detroit. . . . If the *Sieur de Contrecoeur* meets no opposition in establishing himself at Chiningué [Shenango, afterwards Logstown, still later Harmony] the *Sieur Péan* will go by way of Chatacoïn [Chautauqua]. . . . When the *Sieur Péan* shall have arrived at Chiningué, if the *Sieur de Contrecoeur* thinks advisable, he shall employ his troops in strengthening Fort de Chiningué and even enlarging it, if necessary in order to quarter there a garrison of 200 men.

Péan was further ordered, when this fort had been strengthened, to continue down the Ohio to the Big Miami, ordering off any English traders he should meet, and directing the Indians to seize their goods. After holding a council with the Miamis he was to proceed to Detroit, and thence, with 700 or 800 men, to go on to Maekinac, sending the rest of his force back to Niagara. From Maekinac, after resting there six days, he was to return to Montreal by the Ottawa river.

Such were the orders under which Péan set out, May 9th, as above noted; but he had scarcely got under way, when at the Cedars rapids in the St. Lawrence, he received a letter from

<sup>8</sup> Duquesne to Péan, Montreal, Dec. 17, 1753.

Contrecœur with word that he had seized a fort built by the English, near Chiningué. Elated, Péan turned back to Montreal to inform the Governor; then, convinced that the campaign "was to procure great advantages for the colony," he resumed his way westward, Duquesne admonishing him by letter to exercise great caution in whatever he undertook.

Before the end of the month he was once more at Niagara with his entire force. He at once put 100 men at work repairing the portage road, much damaged by rains, and employed all the Indians possible for the carrying. Hastening up the Lake Erie shore, he put another force at work on the Chautauqua portage. No small part of the labor at this time was the finding and bringing in of trees from which pirogues could be made.

"Take care of your health," Duquesne had written him; but now, as a result of exposures and too strenuous efforts, he was stricken with a violent fever. It is not specified, in the documents, whether he lay sick at Fort Niagara, or at Chabert's fort above the falls. It is stated that he did not reach Chautauqua until after his illness, and that in the lack of medicines they fed him with venison broth and left the rest to nature. As soon as he was able he wrote<sup>9</sup> to Duquesne: "My greatest grief is to see your plans so much upset. It is that which affects me more than the loss of my life, of which I have made a sacrifice to God." The fever must indeed have been severe.

His brother-in-law, Desmeloizes, took down from his lips, while still they thought him in great danger, full instructions for what was to be done, which were sent express to the Sieur de Carqueville, who was with Contrecœur, as were Le Mercier and the other leaders. Cheering news came back. They told him that Fort Duquesne was completed, June 15th, and that the Indians of the Ohio Valley "appeared to view with a great deal of satisfaction" the establishment of the French in the country. The "Ohio" in this connection especially meant the Allegheny and its sources to the northward.

As soon as strength permitted, Péan passed over the portage to Chautauqua. He had planned to rest there only a few days,

<sup>9</sup> Letter dated "6 June, 1754," no place being mentioned.



and on leaving that camp to take 20 days' rations for his detachment of 1200 men; but the necessity of looking after the provisioning of Fort Duquesne and the other forts, and of making a large number of pirogues, detained him. He sent to Fort Duquesne all the provisions he had intended for his own expedition, meanwhile drawing on Niagara for new supplies. While in camp at Chautauqua the fever seized him again. His right arm, injured the year before, broke out in tumors, could not be used, and kept him in sleepless torture. The faithful Desmeloizes received his orders and with great ability pushed on the work.

One day the camp at Chautauqua was thrown into excitement by news that an English force was near, bent on destroying the newly built forts of the French; but the foe was not seen nor any move against the forts made at this time. Meanwhile Péan, restive under his disabilities, was having letters written for him, protesting to the Governor that all was going on well: "Although stricken with sickness, I am able, even on my bed, to cause to be done all that you have appointed."<sup>10</sup>

The following incident is related, of his sojourn at Chautauqua. One night, a sentinel thinking he heard a force of the enemy approaching, fired his gun and cried: "To arms!" Péan being extremely ill, the officers agreed not to disturb him, or tell him of the alarm, until they knew the gravity of the case. All the soldiers armed themselves, but when they searched the vicinity of the camp they found the alarm was occasioned by the noise of many wild animals. The major of the detachment thought to tell the incident to Péan, but on approaching that officer's tent found lurking there an Onondaga chief, who had lately joined the camp. Demanding what he did there, the Indian answered that he liked to see how the French protected themselves, and how at the first alarm, the soldiers had turned out. "But," he added, "you thought only of fighting, and there was no one to care for our father [Péan], whose head might be broken by some bad man. When you went to fight, I came to guard him."

Entering Péan's tent, the major told him of the false alarm,

<sup>10</sup> Péan to Duquesne, letter dated "Rivière à l'Ail," 13 June, 1754.

and of his strange sentinel. Péan sent for the savage, gave him presents, and urged him to forswear the English and attach himself to the French. "My father," replied the Onondaga, "I am overcome by your gifts. I had a great desire to see you. This it was that made me set out from my village, with some of our young men. I have observed to-night that the French take good care of themselves, but when I saw there was no one with you, I realized that some wicked one might come to take your scalp, so I came to protect you. It was the Good Spirit that led me here. I beg the favor of protecting you myself, and of sleeping at night at the foot of your mat, and I will be responsible for you."

It was a suspicious proposal from an Onondaga, a nation not then friendly to the French; but Péan thought he should respond with a show of confidence, and accepted the offer of the Indian, who at once brought his *appechimou* — the skin which served him as bed — and every night he lay at the feet of Péan, who was also watched over by his servant. The Onondaga proved useful; he carried messages through the wilderness to Contrecoeur and he hunted in his behalf, roaming as far as ten leagues to find game from which good broth could be made for the sick officer.

This paragon, whose name does not appear, is said to have been a nephew of Tanahinson "who accompanied the English when the Sieur de Jumonville was killed, and who even gave the last blows to that officer" — this in allusion to the affair of Great Meadows, July 3d. Péan's guardian one day promised to bring him the head of Tanahinson, but, we are assured, "did not carry out this enterprise."

While yet at Chautauqua, Péan received a letter from the Governor which had been sent to Niagara, expressing great confidence in his conduct of affairs. "I consider," he wrote, "that you will soon be relieved from your cares and fatigues when you shall rest on the mats of Paris. . . . I am not only satisfied with all that you have done, but even satisfied in advance with what you will do; guard your health, that is all I require of you and the thing of most interest to me."<sup>11</sup> These

<sup>11</sup> Duquesne to Péan, June 24, 1754.

and like cordial expressions, both to Péan and his wife, were used in evidence when in 1763 Péan was on trial for his conduct of affairs in the campaign of 1753 and '54. Of that trial, note will be duly made in our narrative.

Péan's health being restored, he went in July to Presqu' Isle, where he was for a time occupied in receiving and apportioning provisions for the various posts to the south; July 15th, he wrote from Presqu' Isle to Duquesne: "It is a great sorrow to me, although you are so good as to try to console me, not to find myself at the head of the detachment; sickness and my duty have prevented, but it is none the less a grief to me." Finally, with a force much smaller than first proposed, a rapid passage was made down the Ohio to the Big Miami, thence to Detroit, Mackinac and back to Montreal; but this part of Péan's adventures lies beyond our special field, and may not be here followed in detail. His service on the Niagara and the Lakes was ended.

The foregoing account of Péan's activities in the Niagara and lake region is drawn from his own correspondence and from the plea in his behalf. While it is partisan testimony, it is also the only known source for the details as set forth. If one seeks to judge fairly as to his motives and integrity, other witnesses beside Péan himself should be heard. A well-informed one, though by no means clear of prejudice, was Pouchot. Capable himself, he despised incapacity in others. He probably knew personally Péan and the other officers of the Ohio expeditions of '53 and '54; yet he wrote of those campaigns as though they were prompted by venality; and pictured Péan and some of his associates not merely as rascals, but as though their misdeeds were matter of common knowledge and beyond discussion. Of Péan's services in the region we here study, Pouchot wrote:

These goods [in Péan's charge] were a long time in passing from the portage of Niagara, and from Presqu' Isle to the Ohio, from want of horses and equipage, which caused the loss of nearly 400 men, from scurvy or the fatigue of carrying the goods upon their backs. During this interval the officers drank Spanish wines, and each one supplied himself as he pleased from the stores of velvets,

etc., which were certainly not merchandise for the Indians. Thus the provisions that reached the post of Duquesne were in small quantities, and still more reduced by pilfering and exposure to damage on the way. The officers and soldiers returning to Canada were therefore well equipped, and a verbal report of things used made everything right. Upon these expeditions, the Chevalier Péan, whom the Intendant was quite willing to send away from his wife, was charged with making a journey with 400 militia to Detroit and neighboring regions, well supplied with all sorts of provisions and goods for presents to the Indians, under the pretext of attaching them to our cause. Such a mission was useless, since this part had long been inhabited by the French, who had formed intimate relations with the Indians of that country; and besides, there were French officers at all the posts, to secure this object—but it got rid of a husband, and a nice lot of goods for the company. Péan returned in triumph to Canada after this fine exploit.

The officer most closely identified with Fort Le Bœuf was Duverger de Saint-Blin, whose military service in America extended through nearly a quarter-century, most of it in the region we here study. In 1740–42 he was garrisoned at Fort St. Frédéric; in 1746 was at Fort Ste. Thérèse; and in 1747 we find him at Fort Frontenac, under de Vassan. He served in the expeditions of 1753–54, and in 1755 and a part of 1756 had command of Fort Le Bœuf. In the latter year, he says,<sup>12</sup> he “set out from there to go to war,” but the service is not specified. Toward the close of that year, De Vaudreuil recalled him to Le Bœuf where he continued to command until in the summer of 1759 he joined De Lignery in the relief of Niagara.

Much might be told of the services of this officer, whose name variously appears as Saint-Blin, St. Blein, and — especially in English reports — as Simblin. While commandant at Le Bœuf, he led numerous parties, largely made up of savages, to scalp and destroy on the Pennsylvania and Virginia frontiers. Of one such foray he himself wrote: “The same year that Niagara was taken, I attacked at the head of 40 Indians, a convoy escorted by 200 English. I beat them, forced them to abandon their wagons and provisions. The distance which I

<sup>12</sup> *Mémoire de Saint-Blin*, 1763.

was from every French fort prevented me from profiting by my prize, so I burned it. This is what foiled the project of the English, to take the three French forts [Machault, Le Bœuf and Presqu' Isle] dependent on La Belle Rivière. I was wounded in this action."

He speaks of evacuating Fort Le Bœuf "in consequence of the capture of Niagara." It is not clear that he shared in the battle above Fort Niagara, July 24th, though he probably did so, and was among the prisoners sent east by Johnson. In 1760 he rejoined the French force in the last defense of Montreal.

In Paris, after the war, Lieutenant de Saint-Blin, like Daniel Chabert de Joncaire and many others who had served in America, was called to account for alleged frauds against the King. He was charged with having given money to Saint-Aubin, the keeper of stores at his own fort on the Le Bœuf, as a bribe, so that he should falsely certify as to the stocks of provisions, supplies and trading goods which were supposed to have been delivered to the soldiers and the Indians. A sample transaction is the following:

M. de Lignery once ordered me to send M. de Moncour,<sup>13</sup> an officer, to stir up the Indian warriors. He had to buy provisions, such as Indian corn, grease, oil, meat, to feed the old people, women and children of the savages. He paid for these provisions with the goods which had just come from Montreal. The account of this purchase was sent to Saint-Aubin, who made me bills of payment for the sum which I showed.

He intimates in this and other matters in which he was accused, that Saint-Aubin falsified the accounts. Saint-Blin was also accused of taking money from one Sênil, a clerk sent by Cadet to regulate statements of provisions at Fort Le Bœuf; he was accused with making improper disposition of quantities of cloths. He denied all these charges: "Not only was there no money given, but not the least offer of that kind — it would have been too badly received."

<sup>13</sup> Probably the "Moncour" who was killed by his Indian friend at the surrender of Niagara, as related by Pouchot.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### CAMPAIGN OF 1754 (CONTINUED)

DE LÉRY'S GRAPHIC CHRONICLE — PÉAN IN EXTREMITY — DETAILS OF THE PORTAGE ROUTES — THE JOURNALS OF BONNEFONS AND FORBES — A ROMANCE OF THE WILDERNESS.

EARLY in March De Léry was ordered to Detroit to serve as second in command under Céloron. April 22d he left Quebec with 120 militia in eight bateaux, accompanied by the priest Duverger, who was on his way to a mission in the Illinois country. At Montreal, April 27th, De Léry was assigned to the Third brigade. When he set out, May 2d, his force consisted of 24 soldiers, a sergeant and 60 militia, in 12 bark canoes of eight paddles each. They carried 360 packages of freight, and were to receive orders at Niagara, regarding their course further on.

Some of the canoes lost their way among the Thousand Islands, and when De Léry and his advance left Frontenac, May 16th, to cross the lake, the stragglers were not all accounted for. In the eastern end of Ontario, De Léry fell in with Péan's brigade, and because of heavy weather they camped near the Niaouré bay; and while they lay there Saint-Blin arrived from Niagara, hastening to inform Duquesne that the posts on the Ohio were short of provisions.

On the 19th, De Léry's force continued westward, but the young officer was hard put to it to keep up, and complains that Péan "had 12 men in every canoe, while I had only seven." The two brigades traveled two or three arpents apart, with arms loaded so as not to be surprised by the English. On the 20th they "passed before the English fort of Choueguen [Oswego] with drums beating and flag flying. The fort hoisted its flag as soon as it perceived us." De Léry's journal continues:

I noticed no other change in the fort of Choueguen than a wooden

roof on chevrons that had been placed on a small wall erected in the place of the projecting wooden gallery which was there then and which had no doubt become rotten, owing to its not being covered; the house being decked like a vessel and the gallery laid on the deck. I counted nine small embrasures in the new wall on the side toward the river.

A northeast wind serving, the flotilla spread its sails as it speeded past Oswego — for these great bark canoes were rigged with small canvas; a light, fragile, eggshell craft, the like of which has not been seen since on the Lakes for many generations, but at the time of which we write they shared with the cumbrous bateaux the burden of lake transport and traffic, and in expert hands were both serviceable and speedy; but rough weather quickly drove them to shelter, and greatly delayed operations.

We omit the detail of De Léry's progress day by day. They kept not far from the south shore, passed the river Au Chicot [Beaver creek] the great and little rivers Au Bœuf [the first is Oak Orchard creek], and the Great Swamp [12-mile creek]; on the 23d, when near the Little Swamp [Four-mile creek], "M. Péan made his men paddle hard to catch up to M. de Montigny's brigade that was ahead of him. I was unable," says De Léry, "to follow him, because my canoes were not so strongly manned as his. He saluted the fort and arrived at Niagara at 8:45 p. m., while I arrived at 9. His salute was returned with a discharge of rockets. For my part, as I arrived while the salute was being returned, I did not make my brigade salute. I was right in this, because our salute would not have been returned, as the people of the fort thought I belong to M. Péan's brigade."

He gave to the commandant a letter, which proved to be the orders for De Léry to continue over the Niagara portage, and to Chautauqua.

May 24th found the officers busy with the work of the Niagara portage. Montigny's brigade was hurried forward; De Léry assisted Péan at Niagara; St. Ours and Dubuisson were stationed with a force at Fort Little Niagara. But Péan fell ill, and De Léry was burdened with work and care. On

the 26th he left Fort Niagara with 11 canoes, 60 men of Péan's brigade "and a like number of that brought by M. Du Muy, who was going to take the place of Céloron at Detroit." They paddled up stream seven miles till the mouth of the Niagara gorge forbade further progress. Then came the arduous ascent of Lewiston Heights. "I slept at the upper end of the hills," writes De Léry, "with the cargo and all my canoes. I had the cargo of one carried to the other end [of the portage] by men because M. de Montigny was using the carts." This officer still monopolizing the carts next day, De Léry sent 140 men with packages to the Platon "because I did not wish my goods to get mixed with those of the Little Fort." The journal of the next few days offers numerous glimpses of interest. The following is somewhat condensed:

28 [May]. Sent on my 11 canoes. Left with M. Joncaire 148 packages which he was to send on next day. Slept at the Platon.

29. Went to the Little Fort and loaded five bateaux with 100 packages each. Slept there. An Englishman was brought in who had been captured at the Belle River. He told us that 5000 English were coming with cannon to drive the French away.

30. Early in the morning I sent the carpenters to the woods to cut oars for the five bateaux, as there was not one in the storehouse — I had only 84 men to man 11 bateaux, nevertheless I took 500 packages in the bateaux and 615 in the canoes, making 1115 in all.

De Léry gives a curious detail of his course in sailing up the Niagara from the Little Fort to Lake Erie. It is the only minute description known of the route which probably was followed by the expeditions and convoys of that period.<sup>1</sup> It corresponds for the most part with a track for bateaux marked on a map a few years later.<sup>2</sup> According to this, boats as-

<sup>1</sup> In condensed form, it here follows: Sailed along shore  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour, then crossed diagonally s. e. Set sail 1.38 m.; at 3.21, little river; at 4.45, to avoid reef of rocks extending out a distance of 2 arpents, returned to s. e.; at 5.52, an islet; at 6.05, far from land, s. e. by e.; at 6.18, took in sail, crossed over to get to the north shore s. e.; at 6.27 finished the crossing, e.; at 6.57, river; at 7.38, landed; 8, reëmbarked, s. by s. e.; at 9, "landed and camped below the Little Rapid, which I could not see."

<sup>2</sup> Undated drawing in the British Museum, marked: "Plan of Niagara



ending the river skirted the shore above Fort Little Niagara until somewhat above the lower end of Charlotte, now Buckhorn Island; then crossed over, rounded that island, passed between Navy and Grand Islands, keeping close to the latter and followed its westerly shore to the head of the island; then made a wide detour where the river is widest to the northerly end of Strawberry Island, then crossed to the west shore a short distance below Frenchman's Creek, and followed the west shore around to the old landing at Fort Erie. De Léry appears to have followed this course up to the point of his camp "below the Little Rapid," on the Canadian shore not far below present Bridgeburg.

Captain De Léry explains that on hearing the news from the Ohio which the Englishman had brought, he had told Péan that if he was to go on an expedition to drive out the English he would leave his trunk at Niagara, as it contained only unnecessary articles; but Péan, discounting the English prisoner's report, replied that the news came only from savages, and that De Léry would be needed at Chautauqua.

Rain held him in his riverside camp, but on Sunday, June 2d, despite a stiff west wind, he essayed to go on. "When I was at the crossing of the Rivière aux Chevaux [Buffalo River], the wind increased and compelled me to encamp at nine o'clock in the morning; here a canoe swamped, six bags of biscuit got wet," but, he adds, "I had time to get them dried."

Crossing the east end of the lake, De Léry made slow progress along the south shore, a part of the time in company with Captain De Muy, who overtook him with three canoes, bound for Detroit. On June 3d, going very slowly "on account of the rocks at the bottom of the water," he stopped at 9 in the morning at Rivière à la Barbu, and soon after two camped at Rivière aux Sables,<sup>3</sup> where, he says, there were savages in the woods with horses. The next day (4th) they met a young officer coming from Presqu' Isle "in charge of two English River and Fort, &c., for John Stedman of that place in the Province of New York."

<sup>3</sup> These streams, "Catfish" and "Sandy," were, apparently, Cattaraugus and Silver Creeks.

traders captured as they were coming from the Shawanese, not knowing the English had been sent away from the Ohio." De Léry's servant got lost in the woods, not being found till the 5th; and a messenger overtook them, hurrying to one of the Ohio posts for a surgeon to relieve Péan.

The Chautauqua portage was reached June 8th. De Léry's journal for the next few days contains many details, of which we here note only such as seem essential to the history of the region.

On the day named, St. Ours "handed over the command" of Tchatacoïn, that is, of the camp on Lake Erie's shore (Barcelona harbor), where the Chautauqua portage began. Du Buisson commanded at Lake Chautauqua (Mayville), and De Carqueville "at the hills on the other side of the little river that cuts the portage," i.e., on the divide beyond Chautauqua Creek, some five miles inland from Lake Erie. "M. de Montigny Cournoyer was at Chautauqua; M. Saint-Blin was engaged in getting carts over the portage; M. Godefroi was at the little lake, M. Corbiere at the hills." Old Barcelona harbor, or as we may designate it, Chautauqua-on-Lake-Erie, was a busy place in those days. On the 9th, De Rigauville arrived with 12 canoes of Du Muy's brigade; and on the 10th another fleet of Péan's boats under M. St. Martin, to whom De Léry handed over the command of the port. De Léry employed his men in discharging boats, and carrying packages up the portage, sending 150 men's loads "to the hills" in one day. In the storehouse six barrels of pork were found which so infected the air that they were thrown into the lake.

The orders were to transport 3000 men's loads over the portage. On the 11th Chabert arrived, by land, with eleven horses, having left three on the road, two of which were brought in a little later by an Indian. There had been horses in use on the Chautauqua portage, but De Léry says they were in such poor condition they could carry loads only on their backs. A day or two later a man was drowned while bringing horses from Presqu' Isle. De Léry makes the following entry on the 11th:

A courier who had started the previous day for Presqu' Isle was

sent to give notice that M. de Carqueville was to pass there with 300 men, and that provisions were to be kept in readiness for his journey by land to Fort Duquesne. That journey by land would not have been to my liking because Fort Duquesne had not sufficient supply of provisions to give any to 300 men arriving there famished, as is the case when people traveling by land take as light loads of provisions as they can, and as a rule have to fast on the last days of the journey. I should have liked to embark those people in pirogues made at Lake Chautauqua, and, even if each man had loaded himself with only two months' provisions it would have been a relief for Fort Duquesne, and have enabled it to hold out longer and await the succor that might have been sent to it.

As if to endorse De Léry's private opinion, orders came from Péan, June 14th, not to send the detachment by land, but by pirogue from Lake Chautauqua. That day also brought many arrivals: Captain Louis Coulon de Villiers, at the head of a wild band of Algonquins and Nipissings; Captain de Longueuil, with a troop of Iroquois; Ensign de Longueuil with a company of Hurons of Lorette; and Lieutenant de Montesson with several Abenakis — these last not frequent visitors in our region; all told, 130 savages of divers tribes, rallied to help the French drive English traders out of the Ohio Valley.

Péan himself arrived June 15th, fever-ridden, traveling with difficulty, and bringing the first word which had reached the camp of the killing of Jumonville, May 27th — "the treachery," De Léry calls it. Here at last was an overt act of hostility, which might be repaid in kind. All this difficult mobilization of troops had been undertaken while still there was nominal peace between the Powers; now on the Niagara, the Lakes and over the divide into the Ohio watershed, there was no further thought or plan for peace, but all for war, long before word came of any formal declaration.

To none, in that camp on the Lake Erie shore, did the news of Jumonville's death in the Pennsylvania wilderness strike so close home as to his brother Louis, the Captain de Villiers who now, at the head of his savage warriors, had joined the expedition. Of all the sons of the veteran Nicolas Antoine Coulon de Villiers, Louis had perhaps the most notable career, so that

he is spoken of as "*le grand Villiers*," in distinction from his brother François, styled "*le Chevalier*," whose services were also notable. Louis was no stranger on the Niagara and Lake Erie. In July, 1750, he had come hither on his way to his post of the Miamis. We find him again at Fort Niagara in the autumn of 1753, returning to Montreal, where, in December, he was married. Now, in the early season of 1754 he is dispatched again to this frontier. Did the news of his younger brother's death, received at the old Chautauqua camps — news represented then, as ever since in French versions, as a base assassination at the hand of some follower of Washington — did this arouse in the breast of Louis a desire and determination for revenge? At any rate, a notable service awaited him. De Villiers hastened to Fort Duquesne, which he reached June 26th, and on July 3d he signed, with Colonel George Washington, the terms of capitulation by which Fort Necessity, Washington's artillery, heavy baggage and stores, fell to the French. It was the most notable stroke the French had made in the developing conflict; and three years later the Cross of St. Louis was to be given to De Villiers. One may conceive with what *éclat* he returned to the Niagara, in the same month of his victory, on his way to Montreal. If he looked upon himself as the avenger of his brother Jumonville, he had the satisfaction that his achievement was none the less substantial for his country in that he had taken the surrender and not the life of Washington.

June 16th, Lieutenant Douville set off for Presqu' Isle to relieve De Courtemanche, who was ordered to Montreal. De Villiers and other officers started for Lake Chautauqua in bark canoes, bound for Fort Duquesne. Saint-Blin was sent to the fort "at the foot of the river Au Bœuff," in place of La Borgne.

The camp at the Lake Erie end of the portage was set in order. The officers pitched their tents in the first line; M. Péan's brigade formed the second line; that of De Léry the third; St. Ours, fourth; De Montigny, fifth. Provisions were stored in the shed. De Léry says he "laid out the lines of a powder magazine at the foot of the hill," 12 feet square; fatigue parties worked at it, revetting the sides with earth. A

smith's forge was brought from Presqu' Isle, a cabin built for it, and the trees around the camp cut down.

In a pine grove below Lake Chautauqua, M. Portneuf was hurrying a force of 63 men who cut and hollowed the trees into pirogues; but good timber for that purpose was scarce; also, on the 17th, 24 bateaux were put into Chautauqua Outlet "where there was one foot of water." At this boat-yard Portneuf built three huts, one for the officers, one for the guard, the third a hospital.

Over the portage, June 18th, came from Fort Duquesne the Sieur Mauvide, surgeon, to care for Péan and other sick. A priest, name not given, stopped on his way east from Presqu' Isle, and lay sick of a fever. De Léry, reporting affairs in a letter to Montreal,<sup>4</sup> noted that Surgeon Vigé, who had attended Péan at Fort Niagara, diagnosed the case as intermittent fever. According to another judgment, it was "putrid fever." Doctor Mauvide concluded that the trouble was inflammation of the liver; and De Léry gathered from yet other sources that it was "tertian fever, a kind of jaundice."

The activities of the next few days involve much repetition of detail which need not be here recorded. To make Péan more comfortable, trees were cut and a house, probably of poles or small logs, was built for him, 20 feet square; it was finished June 26th, and Péan lodged there until July 13th, when he felt strong enough to travel over the portage. Meanwhile the work of transporting the supplies went busily on. There was bad management somewhere, for on July 22d "50 men were sent to the hills to get the rolls of tobacco and bales of shoes sent there more than were needed." Some of the supplies which came up from Niagara were sent over the Chautauqua route, others were passed on to Presqu' Isle. At the boat-yard at the Outlet<sup>5</sup> Portneuf made, up to July 9th, 79 pirogues. De Léry also speaks of 30 board bateaux for reserve use, the boards cut either at Niagara or Presqu' Isle, where sawmills had been set up.

<sup>4</sup> Dated, "Camp Chatakoïn on the shore of Lake Erie, 21st June, 1754."

<sup>5</sup> It is variously located in De Léry's journal as in "the level country," "in the flat country below Kanaouagon," and "three leagues below the outlet of Lake Chautauqua at the foot of the flat country."

Three kinds of craft were used in this wilderness transportation: The pirogue, or hollowed log canoe, which the French had learned to make from the Indians, or by their help, but for which, in many places, suitable trees could not be found; second, the bateau, of plank, a serviceable light-draught freight boat, but cumbersome and slow and — on the lakes — liable to swamp; and third, the elm-bark or birch-bark canoe, the last-named a wonderful construction, the finest thing the American aborigine ever made, and in skillful hands the most efficient means of transport in this part of the world at the period we are studying.

June 28th, four bateaux with 395 packages of pork and flour left the harbor (Barcelona) for Presqu' Isle, followed on the 30th by three more; but these shipments were small compared with what went up the hills to Chautauqua. An inventory of June 30th showed 3949 packages in storehouses at Lake Chautauqua and Presqu' Isle, practically all of it intended for the same terminus; and on that day De Carqueville set out from Lake Chautauqua for Duquesne with 229 packages in his pirogues; De Villiers with 50, Du Buisson with 1453, in 30 canoes and one bateau; and when he left, 1060 packages remained in the storehouse at Lake Chautauqua.

Chabert was going back and forth between the Chautauqua portage and Niagara, directing the forwarding of supplies; and with his brother, whom De Léry calls "Mons. de Jonquière," tried to induce the Indians to go to Niagara to work on the portage.

De Léry gives precise data regarding the portage road at this time. He was at Lake Chautauqua July 12th, but on the 5th noted in his journal: "The route used this year is about the same as the old one — three leagues, four arpents, four perches, counting a league as 84 arpents, an arpent as 10 perches, and a perch as 18 feet." Elsewhere he notes: "Length of the Tchatakoin portage, 2564 perches of 18 feet." This reduces to 8.74 miles. He gives the length of the Presqu' Isle portage as "4841 perches, 8 feet, or  $5\frac{3}{4}$  leagues." As usual, the league of that time proves considerably shorter than three statute miles. De Léry's 4841 perches equal  $16\frac{1}{2}$  Eng-

lish miles, which is little in excess of the Erie-Waterford road (approximately the Presqu' Isle-Le Bœuf portage) of to-day.

To return to the Chautauqua portage. Horses were kept for transport, this season of 1754, but are not mentioned as in use there earlier. On July 1st, 20 men were detailed to repair bridges on the portage. De Léry went over to Chautauqua Lake, early in July, with a detachment of 492 men, and with them the priests Bonnacamps and Forget Duverger, four surgeons, one storekeeper and an interpreter. On July 2d four strange men were seen at the little lake, as he sometimes designates Chautauqua, who ran away when approached; De Léry calls them spies; and no doubt rightly. There was another alarm on the night of the 5th:

At a quarter past eleven at night, the sentry on the portage road saw a man approaching the camp. After challenging him three times he fired his gun and called out, falling back on the guard house where I was. I turned out the guard and sent the corporal to the sentry who reported that he had seen a man. . . . I went to the spot but was unable to discover anything. We thought it was some scouts sent by the English.

The guard was doubled, but the camp was not disturbed, although the Indians brought in much news, some of it far from accurate, of the operations of the English. There were at this time in the Ohio country, not including Péan's detachment nor the garrisons of Presqu' Isle, Le Bœuf and Venango, 1150 men of the French troops and Canadian militia.

On July 12th, at the camp at the head of Lake Chautauqua De Léry witnessed the departure of 70 pirogues, carrying 215 men and 1945 packages of supplies: "The general and special statements of the cargoes were made out, and the equipment of the camp at the Little Lake was loaded in carts. I wrote to monsieur the commandant at Fort Duquesne, to whom I sent the invoices of the goods loaded in the pirogues. I wished a pleasant journey to M. Le Borgne, who started at 2 o'clock." De Léry continues:

I found the portage road good and that it could be greatly improved at slight expense. Deviations will have to be made in some

places. The hills are in good order; they will need to be widened and the grades to be lowered, which could easily be done.

A savage told me that a shorter road could be made from Lake Erie to Lake Tchatakoïn by taking it about *l'anse aux feuilles* and cutting straight to the latter lake. It is true that I noticed that our camp was situate only about a quarter of a league from the head of the lake; this, with the depth of the cove where the portage to Lake Erie might begin, would make the portage a league and a half shorter as I was given to understand by the savage who gave me the idea. I was sorry my approaching departure did not allow of my visiting the land [on this route] between Lake Erie and Chautauqua. It is true that a short distance from the latter one can see the great lake, which does not seem far off.

A sketch in the original manuscript at this point is entitled: "Where our camp was in 1739, and at present"; thus establishing the fact that a French expedition had passed this way ten years before C eloron.

P ean set out down the lake, July 14th, with 131 men and 530 packages of freight, loaded in 18 bark canoes. De L ery remained in command at Lake Chautauqua, under orders "to have all provisions, carts, canoes and bateaux that were in our camp, removed." Lieutenant St. Ours and Ensign Cournoyer remained to take charge of the brigade to go down later. Father Duverger also stayed, to minister to the needs of 20 sick men.

By the Chautauqua route, from June 16th, when De Carqueville started with the first convoy, to July 12th, when Le Borgne left with the last, 3677 packages of supplies were forwarded for Fort Duquesne and the smaller posts on that route.

For the next few days, De L ery and other officers were busy sending men and supplies to Presqu' Isle; there were many arrivals from Niagara, with stores and munitions to go south by the Presqu' Isle route; and on July 16th Ensign Du Sabl e arrived at Chautauqua from Fort Duquesne, with particulars of the battle of Fort Necessity. Three days later Camp Tchatakoïn on Lake Erie was evacuated, De L ery proceeding with the remaining force, in 21 bark canoes and seven bateaux, to Presqu' Isle. His journal holds many details of the coming



and going over the portage to Le Bœuf; and on the 22d he wrote to General Duquesne explaining that he had not gone to the Ohio because Péan had detained him at Chautauqua, with orders to go to Presqu' Isle, and thence to Detroit. He passed over the road to Fort Le Bœuf, July 24th, and made the following record in his journal:

Mons. Péan recommended me to see to the work being done on the road. This I did both going and returning. Four soldiers followed me with a pole 18 feet long with which they measured the portage road. I found the fort at Rivière aux Bœuf very small, and that it could have been built  $4\frac{1}{2}$  arpents nearer, as may be seen from the annexed figure of the river.<sup>6</sup>

He gives numerous measurements of distances, some of which follow: Presqu' Isle fort to the first bridge, 280 perches; length of said bridge, 3 perches; to a second bridge, 53 perches; to a hill, 1204 perches; height of said hill, 9 feet; length, 3 perches; to the great hill of the Rivière aux Gravois, 108 perches; to the little camping-place, 1400 perches; to the turn, 146 perches; to reach the fort going along the bank of the R. au Bœuf, 43 perches. The foregoing and other measurements are tabulated, making a total distance, fort to fort, of 4841 perches, 8 feet.

De Léry returned to Presqu' Isle, July 25th, 7 A. M. to 11 P. M., "although I was mounted and pressed my horse, so bad were the roads"; and on the 30th, with Péan, he set out for Detroit with 285 men in 27 canoes. It is not clear when he returned to Niagara, where he appears to have been in February, 1755, when he received the following letter from the commandant at Fort Duquesne:

*Monsieur:* According to information which reaches us daily by the Indians, the English mean to attack Fort Duquesne this spring. I beg, therefore, that you set out for this place as soon as my letter is received — I am just writing to M. De Muy on this matter and I beg him to let you set out as promptly as possible. For the journey you can put yourself in the hands of the trusty Indians who bring this to you. You will be most useful to us here as we

<sup>6</sup> Sketch in original MS.

have the greatest need of an officer capable of planning and carrying out works necessary to put this place in a state of defense. Messrs. Dumas and De Lignery wish you to come as soon as possible. The zeal which you have for the service makes me hope that you will seize with ardor this opportunity to be useful. . . .

CONTRECEUR.

The call appearing so urgent, De Léry did not wait to communicate with Quebec, but at once set off with the Indians, up the portage and on to Fort Duquesne. Here for a time he gave his energies to strengthening the works, and was about to undertake similar works at Fort Machault (now Franklin, Pa.) when he received a summons that made him hurry back to Fort Niagara.

The Governor, Vaudreuil, had kept informed as to the movements of General Shirley, who was preparing to attack Fort Niagara. Much concerned for that place, and for its dependencies on the Niagara and upper Ohio route, he turned with confidence to the hero of Fort Necessity. "In regard to Niagara," wrote the Governor to the Minister,<sup>7</sup> "'tis certain that, should the English once attack it, 'tis theirs. I am informed that fort is so dilapidated, that 'tis impossible to put a peg in it without causing it to crumble; stanchions have been obliged to be set up against it to support it. Its garrison consists of 30 men without any muskets. The Sieur de Villiers has been detached with about 20 men, to form a camp of observation there."

Under these orders Louis Coulon de Villiers came to Fort Niagara and continued there five months. That he, as well as the Governor, apprehended an English attack, is shown by orders he sent to De Léry:

Because of news which reaches us, that the English propose to invest this post, we order the Sieur De Léry, lieutenant of the troops, to hasten hither without delay, we undertaking to gain the approval of M. de Vaudreuil, that he [De Léry] may not have to make report on the state of things at Rivière aux Bœufs, where

<sup>7</sup> Vaudreuil to M. de Machault, Montreal, July 24, 1755.

he had been charged by M. de Contrecoeur with making preparations for the construction of Fort Machault. [Signed]

DE VILLIERS.

*Niagara*, 11 August, 1755.

As one sees from the above, Duquesne had been succeeded as Governor by M. de Vaudreuil, who, far from disapproving De Léry's return to Niagara, sent to him at that place the following letter:

MONTREAL, 23 September, 1755.

. . . I learn with pleasure, my dear sir, that you have returned to Niagara. It is my purpose that the battalion of Guienne shall rejoin you there, and I send at the same time M. de Boncheau [Pouchot], captain of the battalion of Bearn, who is a capable engineer. He shall labor in concert with you on the entrenchments and other works to insure the safety of this place, where you will prepare lodging for a garrison of 400 men. You can be very useful to M. de Boncheau, and I have no doubt that you will accomplish the work so that Niagara will be put in a state of defense, not only this autumn, but next spring, for it is certain according to reports from England, that sooner or later the English will do the impossible by taking it. Having full confidence in your zeal and ability, I am convinced that you will neglect nothing in response to what the service asks of you — that which affords me opportunity to assure you that I am

Very sincerely yours,

VAUDREUIL.

Throughout the fall and early winter, De Léry applied himself to the task of strengthening the fortifications; but in February, 1756, was summoned to Montreal to engage in other service.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> General William Irvine wrote to Washington, Jan. 27, 1788, that a Seneca chief had told him "that he was about 14 years old when the French went first to establish a post at Fort Pitt; that he accompanied an uncle, who was a chief warrior, on that occasion, who attended the French. That the head of Lake Jadaque was the spot where the detachment embarked; that they fell down to Fort Duquesne without any obstruction in large canoes, with all their artillery, stores, provisions, etc. He added that French creek was made the medium of communication afterwards, why, he could not tell, but always wondered at it, knowing the other to be so much better." This Indian offered to conduct Gen. Irvine "to the spot on the shore of Lake Jadaque where lie one of the four-pounders left by the French."

The soldier Bonnefons, who had so greatly enjoyed wild turkey shooting at Presqu' Isle the year before, again accompanied an expedition of 1754. He was one of 500 men, regulars and militia, who set out from Quebec, January 15, under Captain Contrecoeur and other officers. Montreal was reached on the 26th, and there they rested eight days and were reënforced with 300 more militia; and on February 3d they set out by land with provisions for two months, which the soldiers drew on sleds. Countless difficulties were encountered on the upper St. Lawrence and the shores of Ontario, where the ice sometimes served as road, sometimes blocked their way, and sometimes plunged them into the water. Following the north shore, there were long stretches where many of the soldiers skated, in single file, "drawing seven or eight sledges, one after the other, with men on them, making in this way as much as 20 leagues." In this fashion the hardy troop entered Toronto Bay, thence they crossed by bateaux to Fort Niagara, which they reached February 25th.

Leaving 100 men to strengthen the garrison of that post, the rest hastened over the portage. On the way, says Bonnefons, "I revisited the famous fall of Niagara, but with no idea of making the descent as I did last year."

According to this journal, 90 bateaux and canoes left Chabert's portage fort, February 28th, most of them reaching Presqu' Isle March 8th. It required 12 days to drag the artillery over the 15-mile portage to Le Bœuf fort, from which post they set out, March 25th, in bateaux and pirogues, heavily laden with munitions and food. "We had to make short days of it, on this river, since it was choked with many trees which had fallen, either from decay, or the hurricanes which are frequent, or tornadoes which often uproot them. We had to cut and clear away a great many in order to get through."<sup>9</sup>

The ardent Bonnefons improved the opportunity to hunt deer. He had with him a favorite dog which he tells us had cost him, two years before, 300 francs. "Without counting other services he had rendered, he had drawn me with my sledge

<sup>9</sup> In a canoe trip down Le Bœuf Creek, I have found the same trouble, though no doubt in less degree, that delayed the army in 1754.

over the ice and snow." This fine animal ranged into the forests of Le Bœuf Valley, on the track of a deer, going so far that when his master had to embark he could not be called back. "Finally, after having gone about a league down the river, I perceived my dog on the edge of a rocky height, from which he could not get down to join me. It was with deep regret that I abandoned him, convinced that he could only starve, or fall victim to wild animals."

The journal of this companionable soldier relates the arrival of the force, April 4th, at Venango, and the continuation of the expedition down the Allegheny. His subsequent service at Fort Duquesne in the eventful summer of 1754 lies outside the scope of the present narrative. Leaving Fort Duquesne, September 4th, by way of Presqu' Isle, Lake Erie and the Niagara, he returned to Quebec, where he arrived October 26th. Later we are to find him once more on the Niagara, for he passed this way a third time with a force of 600 militia which reached Fort Niagara February 15, 1755. By Presqu' Isle and Le Bœuf, they went down to Fort Duquesne, where Bonnefons remained three years. He became storekeeper at that post, and shared in the stirring affairs of the time. He writes of Washington, whom he appears to have seen. Again he passed down the Niagara, and in the last year of the war, at Fort Levis in the St. Lawrence, served as secretary for Captain Pouchot. On the surrender of that post, he was taken to New York, by way of Oswego and Albany, with Pouchot; and on New Year's Day, 1761, with some 500 fellow prisoners sailed for France.

Bonnefons' journal abounds in incident, with glimpses, rarely afforded in routine records, of the picturesque and romantic. It was indeed a time when ordinary life was an adventure, when the accepted hazards of the wilderness might at any moment turn to tragedy. The writer of tales, in quest of material, has at hand a rich field in the region and period we are studying; the novelist may find many a suggestive incident in the journal of this French soldier of fortune.

He tells us, for instance, of a priest who came with their troop to the Niagara, who had taken holy orders because he had been disappointed in love. What better prompting could

a knight of the fancy wish? He records, with something of circumstance, the fortunes of a maid of the frontiers, so truly typical of the time that a few lines devoted to it in summary may be ventured here.

During his service at Fort Duquesne there was one day brought into the fort, among other prisoners, a young woman, Rachel by name. Captured by Indians on the frontiers of Virginia, she had witnessed the burning of her home, the murder of her family. As the captives were marched through the wilderness, her last surviving relative, an aunt, being unable to walk fast enough to suit her savage captors, was brained by a blow of the tomahawk. When finally at the gates of Fort Duquesne, the young Rachel, with other captives had to undergo the ordeal of running the gauntlet; the huge fist of a savage smote her in the face; one eye was ruined. So grievous was her state that she was taken from the Indians and put in the care of the post surgeon. During convalescence she learned French and — to quote Bonnefons, who perhaps was touched with something more than sympathy — “as she was pretty and of a sweet and affectionate character, she touched without thinking to, the heart of a Canadian.” Happy Canadian, to find in a world of horrors so sweet a rose! He went to the commandant and asked to marry her, but there were difficulties — Rachel was a Protestant. The garrison priest — perhaps the one who had himself been disappointed in love — tenderly instructed her in the essentials of his faith. Rachel became a Catholic, the commandant agreed that the soldier might marry, the priest was on the point of saying the happy service, when suddenly appeared the savage who had captured her, and claimed Rachel as his own! His she was by all the usages of the frontier; to withhold her meant an Indian attack on the none too capable garrison. The commandant resorted to strategy, and while the sulky and threatening savage was being assured that he should have his pretty white slave, presently, the hastily-wed pair were set off by night in a canoe with a little food and a gun to get more, — and three months later arrived at New Orleans, well, and we must believe, still happy. Does any modern bride doubt that there were wedding trips in

the "good old days," let her imagination dwell on those three months of canoe-journey. Does any modern novelist seek a historic setting for the one tale that never grows old, let him follow for a little the experiences of the Canadian soldier and his sweet though one-eyed bride. He at least will admit that invention cannot equal the things that are true.

Among the troops in the expedition of 1754 was Thomas Forbes, a private soldier who had come out to Canada from France in the summer of 1753. How it chanced that he, an Englishman, was in the service does not appear; but that he was an intelligent and not unlettered man is proved by a short but graphic journal<sup>10</sup> which he kept of the expedition.

After stating that with 120 private soldiers and officers he "embarked in old France for Canada," he tells of the voyage to Quebec, and progress in bateaux to Montreal, where he passed the winter of 1753-54. On Easter Tuesday they "embarked to the number of six or 700 in about 300 Bateaus or Canoes (not Barken) and took with us a large quantity of Barreled Pork and Meal in Baggs; the Bags weighed 60 or 70 lb. each, and I believe there might have been 1500 of them, how many of the Pork there were I never heard nor could I guess, but I believe the Canoes that were not laden with Flour carried five or six Barrels at least, each of them, and the Bateaus received 17 or 20." They were three weeks in going from Montreal to Lake Ontario, keeping close to shore because of the swift current. The journal continues:

At Night we went ashore excepting a few that were left with the canoes. . . . Then we had our Biscuit, which was laid in for the Voyage, delivered to us, with 1 lb of Pork to each, and kindling large fires we cooked our Provisions for next day and slept round the Fires, each of us being provided with a blanket. We kept along the southeast shore of Ontario Lake, and passed so near to the English Fort called Conquen [Chouaguen] or Oswego that we could talk to the Centinels.

When we came to the Fort at the Falls of Niagara, we landed all our Provisions in which service the Garrison at the Fort as-

<sup>10</sup> The original is preserved with other MSS., "America and West Indies," Public Record Office, London.

sisted and carried them on sleds that were there at the fort, to a little Log House (called *le petit Fort de Niagara*) three Leagues beyond Niagara Fort, where we put them aboard other Batteaus and Canoes that were there ready to receive them. At our arrival at Niagara there were at that Fort 25 private men, commanded by Lieut. de la Perrie,<sup>11</sup> but Monsieur Contreccœur was also then in the Fort, and had the Chief command, there was also a Sergeant's Guard at the little Fort.

The Fort at Niagara is no more than an Emmenence surrounded with Stockadoes or Palisades, which stand about 14 feet above the ground very close together, and are united or fastened together by three pieces of long scantling that is put transversely on the inside at the distance of three feet or so from each other. These Stockadoes enclose an Area near 300 paces square on which is built a House for the Commandant, Barracks for the Men and a Smith's Shop, it is not rendered defensible by any out work or even a Ditch and there are not mounted in it more than four Swivel Guns.

As soon as we had put our Provisions on board at the little Fort that I mentioned, we proceeded to Lake Erie with Captain Contracœur [*sic*] who had himself now taken the Command of all the Troops in those Canoes. We kept along the Eastern Coast of this Lake to Fort Presqu' isle which I apprehend is about 50 Leagues from Niagara.

A description follows of the fort at Presqu' Isle: "Rather larger than that at Niagara but has likewise no Bastions or Out Works of any sort. It is a square Area inclosed with Logs about 12 feet high, the Logs being square and laid on each other and not more than 16 or 18 inches thick." The journal gives a brief account of the passage over the portage to Le Bœuf, and on to Fort Duquesne, unnecessary to follow here. Its chief value is its clear record of conditions as noted by this English soldier in French service.

The Government at Quebec eagerly questioned every prisoner carried thither, to learn of conditions among the English. Similarly, the English Colonial governments, especially New York and Pennsylvania, sought information from captive Frenchmen, and with better success than their enemies, since

<sup>11</sup> The spelling is doubtful. I have not identified this officer.



they did not have to rely on prisoners brought in from the frontiers. Many French and Canadian soldiers deserted and voluntarily sought the English towns, especially from Fort Niagara, or from troops which passed there.

Such a deserter was Charles Courtenay, who had many adventures before Fate marched him over the Niagara portage, late in the summer of 1754. He was a native of Lisle in Flanders; had been taken prisoner by the French at Bergen op Zoom, carried to Rochelle, put aboard ship and sent to Quebec. For four years he served in the garrison at that town, before being sent on the expedition of 1754. As is ever the case with prisoners, he exaggerated the strength of the army he had been with, and he told a picturesque tale. While at Quebec, he said, there arrived from Old France 6000 grenadiers, "picked as the ablest men out of the best regiments in France, and all taller than he." With these giant grenadiers Courtenay had embarked; 600 bateaux brought them through Lake Ontario; but at Fort Niagara and Presqu' Isle some 200 stalwart sons of Anak pleaded sickness and were left behind. Courtenay kept on, down to Fort Duquesne, where he did soldier's duty under Contrecoeur until October, when the last remnant of his patriotism oozed away and he ran off into the Pennsylvania hills, deserting Contrecoeur — as, he alleged, 200 had deserted before him. He reached Philadelphia in December, and when examined before Chief Justice Allen adorned his narrative with many statements of dubious accuracy.

Another French deserter who fell into English hands at this time was François Charles Bouvière, who had helped take from the English the fort afterward named Duquesne. Bouvière's earlier experiences were much like Courtenay's, save that he was a Parisian born, was compelled to serve in the army in France, and was sent out in 1750 from Bordeaux to Quebec. In the early winter, 1753, his detachment was sent to Fort Niagara. His own narrative continues:

They staid at Fort Niagara five or six months, and early in the spring [1754] they marched by land to the Ohio, and descended down that river [*i.e.*, the Allegheny] to a place where the English

had begun a fort, which they attacked and took; and then their commander, Monsieur Contreœur, ordered 400 men, of which he was one, to return to Niagara, detaining 200 men with him in the fort. That they arrived at Niagara, and he staid there about two months, and then deserted along with three other Soldiers, and in the Woods met with Three Indians of the Iroquois, who would have forced them to return to the Fort, and attempted to tye them, on which they shot two Indians and let the other go on his saying he would do them no harm; that they travelled fifteen Days in the Woods, and then came to the English Camp on Will's Creek.<sup>12</sup>

One other statement by Bouvière commands attention. He "heard among the soldiers in the Fort at Niagara the English would not deliver up Monsieur La Force, and that the King of France had sent these forces"—the picked men who were with Contreœur—"to recover him, as he was a very valiant Soldier." La Force must indeed have been held in exceptional esteem, for his capture by the English is much referred to in the documents of the time.

<sup>12</sup> Near Hyndman, Bedford Co., Pa., some 80 miles or more southeast of Pittsburg. The depositions of Courtenay and Bouvière are in the *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pa.*, VI, 224, 225.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE ISSUE JOINED

THE BRITISH SIDE OF THE DISPUTE — BRADDOCK'S INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING NIAGARA — A FARCE OF TWO MINISTRIES — ATTITUDE OF NEW YORK COLONY — PREPARATIONS AT NIAGARA — WHAT MALARTIC SAW.

BRADDOCK'S instructions, written by Colonel Napier, under order of the Duke of Cumberland, November 25, 1754, clearly included plans for proceeding against Niagara. "If after the Ohio expedition is ended, it should be necessary for you to go with your whole force to Niagara, it is the opinion of his Royal Highness that you should carefully endeavor to find out a shorter way from the Ohio thither, than that of the Lake, which however you are not to attempt under any pretence whatever, without a moral certainty of being supplied with provisions, etc. As to your design of making yourself master of Niagara, which is of the greatest consequence, his Royal Highness recommends to you, to leave nothing to chance in the prosecution of that enterprise."<sup>1</sup> He was further reminded that, should the Ohio campaign continue any considerable time, Pepperell's and Shirley's regiments in the meantime undertaking the reduction of Niagara, then Braddock was to consider whether to go to Niagara in person, or to send some other officer; but he was cautioned that if he did this, great care must be taken not to offend Shirley, who at Niagara would be su-

<sup>1</sup> Napier to Braddock, London, Nov. 25, 1754. A French translation is contained in the "*Mémoire contenant le précis des faits, avec leurs pièces justificatives,*" etc., Paris, 1756. A rare American edition is entitled: "A Memorial containing a summary view of facts, with their authorities, in answer to the observations sent by the English Ministry to the Courts of Europe. Translated from the French. Philadelphia: Printed by James Chattin, 1757." A different translation of the same letter is contained in the volume entitled "The Mystery Revealed; or Truth brought to Light . . . by a Patriot." London, 1759. It is also to be found in the Appendix of Sargent's "History of an Expedition against Fort Duquesne," etc., Philadelphia, 1856.

preme in command. How idle were all these counselings and cautious plans, the sequel soon showed.

In the New York General Assembly the enterprises of the French were constantly remarked upon. In April, Lieutenant Governor De Lancey addressed both Council and Assembly on the progress of the French, "in taking possession of his Majesty's lands, and building forts upon a most important Pass, between the Lake Erie and the River Ohio"; and he besought them to appropriate funds for sending smiths throughout the Iroquois cantons, for presents to the tribes, for building forts, and especially for strengthening the post at Oswego, where he wished to place a double garrison. The reception this proposal met at the hands of the Assembly does not present that body in a very sturdy aspect. From the tone of its reply it might have been an ally of the French: "It appears that the French have built a fort, at a place called the French creek [Venango.] . . . but does not by any evidence or information appear to us to be an invasion of any of his Majesty's colonies,"<sup>2</sup> and they cited Dinwiddie of Virginia to like effect. They did however appropriate £1000 for two independent companies to serve on the frontier. De Lancey rebuked them in a vigorous message, saying that he looked on the acts of the French as a distinct invasion of British territory, that he considered the forts as in Pennsylvania. He urged<sup>3</sup> the building of a fort in the Seneca country — on Irondequoit Bay — arguing that "besides the advantages we might draw from it, the French will be prevented from taking this step, which they would have done long ago, could they have prevailed on the Indians to consent to it."

The British built no fort on Irondequoit; and it was not until June, 1755, that the Assembly voted that a part of the forces raised for the expedition against Crown Point might be used against Niagara.

August 6, 1755, was a day of some moment in the New York Assembly, for on that day the Lieutenant Governor officially announced Braddock's Defeat, in an exceptionally vigor-

<sup>2</sup> Journal, Gen. Ass., Apr. 23, 1754.

<sup>3</sup> De Lancey to the Council and General Assembly, Aug. 20, 1754.

ous speech, devoted to the machinations of the French. "I am of opinion," said he, "the only effectual method to abate the pride of the French, curb the insolence of their Indians, and confirm and animate ours, is immediately to raise more troops, to support and reënforce those already on foot. We have the means, under God, in our power. Let us then with unanimity, spirit and resolution, exert those means He has put into our hands, in the defence of our religion from Popery, our persons from slavery, and our property from arbitrary power. The safety and being of the British Colonies are near a crisis."

This was one of many occasions in which the hostility of New York Protestants to the Roman Catholic church appears as an element in the strife on the frontiers. Wherever the French flag went in America, there went the Catholic faith. To some of the English colonies, notably New York and New England, this added a new terror to the foe, a new reason why they should not trade on the Lakes or build wooden forts on the Ohio. Beyond question, the Protestant aversion to Catholicism was often used as a cloak for a hostility in reality based on purely political or commercial reasons.

Stunned as the colonies were by the slaughter of Braddock's army, it was in one way a salutary affliction, for it spurred up more than one inert or reluctant Assembly to the necessary appropriations for increased militia and armament. For this, in New York, De Lancey had assured the Assembly, "We have the means, under God, in our power"; the means thus provided by Divine grace, proving to be, as he went on to specify, a poll-tax of 10 shillings on slaves, a stamp duty, and an excise on tea—"a Superfluity of pernicious Consequence to the Health and Purses of the People." It was not however until October, 1756, that the Assembly could bring itself to impose a tea-tax of sixpence per pound. In the meantime, war had been declared, and operations pressed forward on a larger scale.

France and England were still nominally at peace, but the situation on the Niagara and the Ohio was that of war. In January, the French Ministry proposed that France and Great Britain should both evacuate all the territory between the Ohio

and the Alleghenies. Even when Braddock and his two regiments were on their way to America, Newcastle assured France that the movement was only for defense, and that it did not signify a breaking of the peace.

In the opening weeks of 1755, there was an elaborate exchange of letters and so-called memorials, between the Duc de Mirepoix, French Ambassador to the Court of London, and Sir Thomas Robinson, British Secretary for the Colonies, each concerning himself with the claims, encroachments and general misconduct and bad faith of the opposing Government, in America. Neither of these men stands forth as a statesman, and both represented a Government which in the matter of the disputed frontiers was content to make an insincere and often puerile play with words, professing friendship while hastening on preparations for a clash at arms.

The matters under dispute were: The southern boundaries of Canada; the territory of the Ohio; the French establishments on Lake Champlain; and the limits of Acadia. Only the first two points pertain to our study.

Mirepoix began with a memorial<sup>4</sup> calling upon Great Britain to relinquish all claims to or occupancy of the Ohio country — which, it will be borne in mind, in the speech and thought of the time, included the little forts on the Allegheny tributaries even to the Lake Erie watershed. Robinson replied<sup>5</sup> that his King desired the status of the Ohio country to be restored as it was at the signing of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle; in direct phrase, that the French keep out. Replying to this, the Duke wrote<sup>6</sup> at wearisome length, but said no more than to restate the claim of France to the region: "Since the year 1679, in which La Belle Rivière was discovered by the French, the English have had no possession there, either in fact or claim"; concluding with the palpable absurdity that "the preparations which are making on his [the French King's] side, have nothing offensive in view, but solely the defence of his possessions, and the rights of his crown." Mirepoix now

<sup>4</sup> Mirepoix to Sir Thos. Robinson, Jan. 15, 1755.

<sup>5</sup> Robinson to Mirepoix, Jan. 22, 1755.

<sup>6</sup> Mirepoix to Robinson, Feb. 6, 1755.

laid before the British Ministry a "scheme of a preliminary convention," according to which all forts which had been built in North America by either Power, since the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (October 18, 1748), should be destroyed. On the French side, this would have wiped out Little Niagara, Presqu' Isle, Le Bœuf and Venango; but still would have left Fort Niagara, and the French in control of the Lakes. It was rejected by England — if indeed it ever received formal consideration — and a counter-scheme was submitted to France, whereby Fort Niagara was to be razed and abandoned within six months, as well as Chabert's fort above the portage, and the chain of posts from Presqu' Isle to Duquesne. A neutral zone was to be established south of Lake Erie between lines specified in the proposed convention, but which, when applied to the map, increase the absurdity of the proposition. Neither the French Duke nor the British Secretary knew anything about the country they were so sapiently parceling out. If any further proof of their ignorance were wanted, it is afforded by article three of the convention, which stipulates: "And with respect to the said river Niagara, and the Lakes Erie, Ontario and Champlain, the subjects of the two Crowns shall have free liberty to pass and repass them with the utmost security, and to carry on a commerce without any hindrance or molestation, with the Indians who inhabit the country situate around the Great Lakes, as well those who are the subjects and allies of Great Britain, as those who are the subjects and allies of France." One may imagine the derision with which an attempt to carry out this measure would have been hailed by the soldiers and traders and Indian allies of France, on the Niagara or the Lakes, and the discomfiture it foreboded for any Englishman hardy enough to attempt it.

The high representatives of the two Courts passed from one absurdity to another. The English finally advanced the proposition that the river St. Lawrence, and the lakes Ontario and Erie, should be the southern limits of Canada. In reply, the Minister, M. Rouillé, wrote to Mirepoix,<sup>7</sup> a long letter, which the latter delivered to the English Ministry, wherein France

<sup>7</sup> Rouillé to the Duc de Mirepoix, April 13, 1755.

set up the claim that the St. Lawrence, and Lakes Ontario and Erie "have ever been looked upon as the center of Canada," and refused to regard them as its southern boundary.

Here indeed was a claim worth while; for if the St. Lawrence and the Lakes were the center of Canada, to that colony must then belong all the region drained by streams flowing into the Lakes and the St. Lawrence from the south. Traced on the map, it presents a devious frontier; but the one feature of it which impressed England was, that this claim of France now embraced the principal seat of the Six Nations — the greater part of present New York State — regarding which she had long and strenuously urged claims of her own. An Englishman of spirit would have been at no loss for a reply; but the response which was made<sup>8</sup> is fairly owlish in the wisdom of its phrases: "M. de Rouillé has represented it [the boundary matter] in a manner very compendious and different from that in which it was intended to have been understood in the counter scheme," and more of like sort. The true explanation of such puerilities is, that the English were playing for time, pretending not to grasp thoroughly the proposals of France, but really, and on the whole, successfully, dragging on the negotiations until their plan of armed invasion was ready for execution.

If such was England's diplomacy, France lent herself readily to it, and perhaps with a like motive. Several weeks later<sup>9</sup> we find Mirepoix delivering to the Ministry at London a very long memorial, in which the claim that "the river St. Lawrence is the center of Canada," is gravely reasserted and argued — if statements like the following can be termed argument: "This truth is justified by all the records that subsist on that subject, by all the authors that have wrote upon it, and by actual possession." And again: "In the vast regions of America, there is no occasion to dispute about a little ground, if one side should happen to have more or less than the other"! But he followed up this generous if not especially

<sup>8</sup> In the name of the Court of London to the Duc de Mirepoix, April 24, 1755.

<sup>9</sup> May 14, 1755.



diplomatic utterance with a long reassertion of the claims of France to the Ohio: "The French have ever looked upon that river as belonging to Canada, and it is essentially necessary to them for the communication of Canada with Louisiana"—which was just what England was preparing to prevent.

If the French grew more grasping and absurd with each new claim, so did the English. Secretary Robinson's reply,<sup>10</sup> touching the Niagara region, said:

Neither can Great Britain admit, that France has any right to the Lakes Ontario and Erie and to the River Niagara, or to the exclusive navigation of these waters; since it is evident from incontestable facts, that the subjects of Great Britain and France, as well as the five Iroquois nations, indiscriminately, make use of the navigation of these lakes and that river, whenever opportunity or convenience require.

This was far from the fact, but neither party, even if they knew, cared for the fact. The controversy had indeed degenerated to a repetition of the old quarrel as to the meaning of Article 15 of the Treaty of Utrecht; which, as we have shown in a preceding chapter, was never construed alike by the rival Powers, and was always used as a justification for whatever "encroachment" either saw fit to make. The fruitless negotiations dragged on for months. Finally, on May 17, 1756, England declared war on France. The latter Power recalled her ambassador and on June 9, 1756, declared war upon Great Britain.

Said Voltaire: "Such a dispute as that about the frontiers of America, between the two colonizing races, had it taken place between individuals, would have been settled in a couple of hours of arbitration."

The student of this period will find a curious phase of its history set forth in the intercepted letters to the Duc de Mirepoix, purporting to be written from America in 1756, by "*Filius Gallicæ*." If the letters can be taken at face value, their writer was in the British service, but stood ready, would the Duke but help him with money and arms, to turn traitor and

<sup>10</sup> June 7, 1755.

serve the French. He professed to be able to raise an army, "very still and without noise." He and ten of his officers, he says, had "all solemnly sworn to each other (in case my request to your Grace be granted) not to sheath the Sword 'till all the Country to the Westward and Southward be the Property of His Most Christian Majesty." He was especially severe in his criticism of Shirley for "doing nothing else but repairing Fort Oswego and building vessels of war to cruise on Lake Ontario; if that had been a french Army, it would have taken Niagara (if it had been in the hands of the English) and whatever else it wanted." The writer of these letters, which fell into the hands of the British Ministry, was never discovered, though one surmise, probably unwarranted, ascribed them to George Croghan the trader.<sup>11</sup>

Before entering on the story of the closing years of the war, it is well to indicate briefly the attitude and spirit of New York Colony, in the performance of her part in the conflict.

We have noted the financial difficulties of the colony, which at the close of the war in 1748, had left it burdened with debt. But in the greater struggle that followed, New York met her obligations in a patriotic spirit, though now and then influenced by political cabals.

In September, 1755, De Lancey, addressing the Assembly, had dwelt on the action of other colonies in raising troops, and urged that New York bear its share. Two days later (September 4th) he was superseded by Charles Hardy. It is unnecessary here to trace the legislative action for the year or so following, relating to defense against the French, for the field of action, after the loss of Oswego, was not Lake Ontario or the Niagara, but Crown Point and Lake George. Hardy's short rule ended in September, 1757, when he was made a rear admiral in the British Navy and De Lancey once more took up the executive burden of the colony.

The English colonies are often accused of having been niggardly in raising money for the exigencies of this war. It is

<sup>11</sup> The originals are in the Public Record Office, London; copies are in the Archives at Ottawa; and they are printed, with some annotation, in the Report of the American Historical Association for 1896, vol. I.

an easy but inaccurate generalization. There were times when objections were made to specific levies. There was often delay, both in providing funds and gathering men; but more and more there developed in the colonies a spirit of independence, of reliance on their own resources for their own protection. New York Colony was far from being inert or unwilling. It looked after its own needs and helped its neighbors. In 1754, it had loaned £5000 to Virginia. In 1755 it contributed £8000 to Connecticut, to aid in supporting the troops furnished by that colony. In the Oswego expedition, and naval construction on Lake Ontario, Bradstreet used up about £5000. In 1756 New York armed and paid 1315 men; in 1757, 1000 men. In 1758 it raised, clothed and paid 2680 men, and by issuing bills of credit, provided £100,000 for purposes of the war. No other colony put troops in the field so promptly, or so well equipped, for the campaigns of 1757-58. After the repulse at Ticonderoga, many of the troops engaged there made up the force with which Bradstreet captured Fort Frontenac. In that year it was stated that one man out of every five in the colony had been actively engaged in the war with France. The burden fell heavily on many communities; nowhere more than at Albany, which in 1758 resorted to a public lottery to help raise £1000 with which to make payment on its war debt.<sup>12</sup>

More instances could be cited — as the General Assembly cited them, in a “Representation to the Home Government”<sup>13</sup> — showing how far New York had met the demands of the war. The petitioners referred to the encroachments of the French at Crown Point and Niagara, and added:

Being deeply sensible of the justice and necessity of the present war, and its vast importance, with regard to the freedom, sovereignty and independency of Great Britain itself, should these American provinces with their extensive territories, commercial advantages and numerous inhabitants, unhappily fall under the dominion of France; we have exerted our utmost strength to prevent it, and cheerfully paid all the taxes which have been laid

<sup>12</sup> Journal N. Y. Gen. Ass., Mch. 16, 1758.

<sup>13</sup> Dec. 16, 1758.

upon us, and incurred a debt, which in our weak and infant state, cannot be discharged until many future years are expired.

To this true and temperate statement was appended a request for assistance by Parliament.

In 1759, for the crucial campaigns of that year, Great Britain called on the colonies for 20,000 men, leaving it to New York to raise "as large a body of men as you did last year, and even as many more as the number of its inhabitants may allow"; for which force the King agreed to supply arms, ammunition, tents and provisions, as to the regular troops from over seas. Promise was also made of a Compensation Act, at the next session of Parliament. In this measure, which was likewise extended to the other colonies sharing in the war, is seen the hand of Pitt, who was able to assure the King, as no Minister before him could have done, of the loyalty and readiness for duty in the American colonies.

The battle of Great Meadows was fought July 4, 1754. It did not take many days for news of it, like an ever-widening wave from a troubled center, to travel through the forest. To Fort Niagara it presently bore the flotsam of many prisoners, most of them brought in by the Indians who had made them captive. Among those whose names are known were Jacob Arants and John Baker, of Captain Mercer's company; Barnabas Deven, of Van Braam's company; Daniel Lafferty and Henry O'Brien, of Monteur's company; Daniel Stuerdfages,<sup>14</sup> of Mackeye's company; and others of the Virginia regiment, which had capitulated.

A famous character styled English John took many prisoners about this time, some of whom reached Niagara. One was Andrew McBriar, who was taken at Gist's near Fort Necessity, at about the date of the battle. Another was Elizabeth Williams, who was with "Lowrey's traders" when captured, July 4th.

Somewhat unusual is the story of John Ramsey, who had deserted from the English (Mercer's company in the Virginia regiment) at Great Meadows July 3d, the day before the bat-

<sup>14</sup> Spelling doubtful, but so given in Stobo's "Memoirs."

tle. He is accused (by Stobo) of turning traitor, and carrying news to the French of the precarious situation of the English. The French confined him, with the assurance that he should be rewarded if his intelligence proved true; but if false, they would hang him. He has been blamed as the cause of the English defeat. With ten or more other English prisoners and deserters, he was sent to Fort Niagara in the custody of the Indians who were their captors; and from Niagara were dispatched by boat for Montreal.

The interesting personage known only as White Chief was a captive of about this time; and the few facts that can be told of him probably epitomize the strange careers of many an unknown whom fate in the form of a savage but not always unkindly Indian, brought into our region. The family name of White Chief is unknown. He was taken captive, a little child, in the valley of the Susquehanna; was brought by the Senecas to the Niagara and spent the rest of a long life among these people. He took to wife a Seneca maiden, and his three sons, Seneca White, White Seneca and John Seneca, were well known to the pioneers of Buffalo and the surrounding region.<sup>15</sup>

A somewhat similiar case was that of Mary Harris, who was one of several children carried off captive from Deerfield, Mass., in 1703 — 23 years before Fort Niagara was built. She was brought into the country south of Lake Eric, by what route is not known. In 1750 the traders Christopher Gist and George Croghan, with the interpreter Andrew Monteur, found her living on a tributary of the Muskingum, which has ever since been called, in her memory, White Woman's Creek. She had an Indian husband and a family of half-breeds. "She still remembers," says Gist, "that they used to be very religious in New England, and wonders how white men can be so wicked as she has seen them in these woods."<sup>16</sup> Six years later Robert Eastman, a prisoner in the hands of the French, found her at "Cohnewago" (Caughnawaga), near Montreal; she told of her captivity "and was kind." The known conditions

<sup>15</sup> In 1833 White Chief told as much of his story as he knew, to Mrs. Asher Wright of the Buffalo Creek mission.

<sup>16</sup> Gist, as quoted by Parkman.

of the time make it certain that she would have traveled from Ohio to Montreal by way of the Niagara; she had a son who was a captain in the French interest, and was probably on the Niagara, and at the fort with her adopted people more than once.

In all the varied throng of soldiers and traders, painted savages and prisoners bereft, that passed up and down the Niagara portage during this eventful summer, or tarried at the fort, there were few with a more picturesque career than Robert Stobo. If one may reconstruct him, as it were, from glimpses afforded by various records, we see him, a dapper, brisk little Scotchman of seven and twenty, with a lively and debonair way that won with the gentler sex, but withal of a boldness and ability that commanded respect from soldier and savage. Born in Glasgow, when but a lad he had sought fortune in Virginia, and, March, 1754, service in the Virginia regiment which was sent to the frontier this season to check the "encroachments" of the French; and as he was a favorite with Governor Dinwiddie he was made a captain, and with Major George Washington as his superior officer, marched into the Pennsylvania mountains. When Washington and James Mackeye signed articles of capitulation to Coulon de Villiers, it was agreed that Stobo and Captain Jacob Van Braam should go with the French, to be held as hostages until the English would arrange for the return of certain French prisoners. Stobo and the Dutchman, Van Braam, were sent to Fort Duquesne, where the former, at great risk, made a plan of the fort and managed to send it to Washington. This was spy's work, and passed undetected at the time, but it is worth noting that Stobo's plan of Fort Duquesne was in General Braddock's possession the following year when he fell.

On September 20th Stobo was taken from Duquesne and carried up to Venango, Captain Van Braam probably accompanying under suitable escort. From Venango they were conducted to Le Bœuf, thence over the long portage to Presqu' Isle and so on to Fort Niagara. On this journey, which ended at Quebec, the young Scot was treated with special consideration, and it is no slight testimony to his winning ways that the

Mississaga Indians, apparently at Niagara, did him the honor of adopting him. The author of Stobo's "Memoirs" thus relates the incident:

So much was he in their [the Indians'] esteem about this time, that they conferred upon him the honor of the Mississaga Indian nation. The ceremony of the instalation he has not declared, but the badge of this order he can never go without, for it is pricked on the foresides of both thighs, immediately above the garter, in form something like a diadem; the operation was performed with some sharp fish-bones dipped in a liquid which leaves a blackness under the skin which never wears off.<sup>17</sup>

Stobo — who was made a major in Virginia, during his detention in the hands of the French — was of the type which finds adventures. His sojourn at Quebec developed various episodes of gallantry, for he was "a ladies' man." He twice escaped from prison; in 1759 served under Wolfe, and after many hazards reached Williamsburgh, Va., where he received "the warmest thanks of the whole Assembly of Virginia." Major Stobo is said to have been Smollet's original for *Captain Lismahago* in "The Adventures of Humphrey Clinker"; not unlikely, for Smollet and Stobo were friends. The chronicler can but regret the lack of any adequate record of so romantic and adventurous a character, who evidently, if the truth could be got at, rendered no little service to the English colonies, and had an exceedingly lively time while doing it.

These were dreary days at Fort Niagara. The winter had been one of drudgery, the tedious routine of the post being varied only by the dismal incidents of desertion and death. In the summer before there had been as many as 2000 people in and around the fort, including a great many Indians, savage allies and hangers-on who were willing to forego the season's chase for the pickings from the King's stores. But now the garrison itself was hungry, with no stores to spare. By No-

<sup>17</sup> "Memoirs of Major Robert Stobo of the Virginia Regiment," Pittsburg, 1854. The anonymous author, Neville B. Craig, was a historical writer of repute, but his narrative of Stobo is conspicuous for its omission of the historically-essential, and is most absurdly written.

vember, 500 or 600 were "dead or unfit for duty."<sup>18</sup> In February there came in upon the post a body of 400 Canadians, under the command of Captain Mercier. They were bound for the "Bell river," as the old manuscript has it; and after a brief sojourn, during which they made sad inroads on the provisions if not the ammunition of the fort, they tramped away across the plain, up the heights of the Lewiston portage and around the south shore of Erie, bound for "*la belle rivière*," leaving the Niagara garrison depleted, diseased and disheartened, amid the snows and under the leaden and stormy skies of a Niagara midwinter. Death was a common incident towards the end of the season. Of the 1500 or so reported in early winter 250 had died by February. Two hundred and fifty more were sent the long march through the snow back to Montreal. There had been only 400 regular troops of the regiments of France. The rest were Canadians, many of them half-breeds. Small wonder is it that as March—the inexpressibly dreary, damp, chill March of the Niagara region—came on, there were those among the dwindled band who were ready to face death anywhere except inertly in that miserable corner of the wilderness. About March 4th<sup>19</sup> five, perhaps more, soldiers determined to take their chances in flight. Many others, no doubt, had done so before, but we have not their narrative. The chief spirit of the band was Antoine François L'Ouaqué, a Parisian born and a soldier of some intelligence. His companions in desertion were Jean Baptiste de Cortois, Jean Baptiste Giraud, a Provençal; Charles Chevalier de L'Axaqué, called St. Marie, and Louis Sabion. Others may have undertaken the venture with them, but only these five lived to tell their tale.

L'Ouaqué and de Cortois had left France in 1750, in a detachment of 1500 regular troops; before leaving Quebec they were augmented by 200 more. At Quebec 16 companies were formed for the western service, and at Montreal 17 more, 30 men to the company. L'Ouaqué and Cortois had been sent to

<sup>18</sup> N. Y. Col. MSS., L'Ouaqué's narrative; Calhoun to De Lancey. See also Penna. Arch., 2d ser., VI, 180.

<sup>19</sup> Exact date illegible in MS.



Niagara. All the time of their service cannot be followed, but in August, 1753, they were with a detachment sent to the Ohio. L'Ouaqué's report of what he learned on this expedition was afterwards of some value to the English. He and Cortois were at Presqu' Isle and Le Bœuf and shared in the building of these wooden forts, under Marin, and were back at Niagara in November. For three months they saw the garrison grow smaller and weaker. They envied their companions who were ordered back to Montreal; possibly they envied those who were put into the frozen earth. There was little that was gay about life at Fort Niagara then for our soldier of France. When all went well — when there was pleasant exploratory work, just fighting enough, luck at hunting and plenty to eat — even then soldiering in New France was not without its drawbacks. The regular soldier at Fort Niagara, and probably at other frontier posts, according to L'Ouaqué was paid a penny a day. He was also given daily half a pound of beef and one and one half pounds of bread. This was when provisions were plenty. The Canadians had no pay, except the food allowance as above. But with provisions growing short, the surrounding Indians growing sullen as favors from the fort were withheld, and disease apparently destined to wipe out the unhappy garrison, small wonder that desertion, with all its hazards, should have tempted the men. L'Ouaqué and his companions stole away unperceived, or at least unarrested. So depleted had the garrison, lately so strong, become, that there remained only 16 men. One of these, a young ensign named Contrecœur, was in command, his humble rank being the highest held by any who remained. His father, Captain Contrecœur, had been ordered some time before from Niagara to Le Bœuf, where he was in command at the time of the desertion.

The deserters made their way east along the lake shore to Oswego; then to Colonel Johnson's, where they were permitted to rest a night and part of the following day; and on April 11th, some five weeks after leaving Niagara, they reached Albany and gave themselves up to Alexander Colhoun. L'Ouaqué traced out for him on a map the position of the fort which had been built on the peninsula "on the south side of Lac Erié, 40

leagues from Niagara," also the form of the smaller fort on the River Le Bœuf, where Marin died. He told of the guns and the state of the trails. He said that, starting from Fort Niagara, the first "three leagues of the road next to the lake" were "very good, the other part very swampy"; but this apparently should read "Fort Presqu' Isle" instead of Niagara. At Fort Niagara, L'Ouaqué reported, there was talk of 3000 or 4000 men coming that spring to reinforce all the western posts and to build a stone fort on the Ohio to the westward; part of the stone for this, he said, was already dug and squared. Colhoun, having pumped him dry, put him and his companions in charge of one Isaac Swits and sent them down to Lieutenant-Governor De Lancey at New York. There they were again quizzed, and there, I regret to say, we lose sight of the adventurous Parisian and his companions.

The imagination turns however with a more sympathetic interest back to Fort Niagara where Ensign Contrecœur and his fifteen soldiers still represented the power of Louis XV. Perhaps the rumors that "3000 or 4000" of troops were coming up in the spring sustained them. Perhaps the advent of spring herself, with her accustomed renewals of means of sustenance and quickenings of hope, kept the garrison alive and brought it through to better days. The fort then mounted, according to L'Ouaqué, "about 12 carriages and swivel guns, the four largest 6-pounders."

An official return of the Lake posts for 1754 reveals their actual feebleness. At Fort Frontenac the regular garrison consisted of three officers, two sergeants, 12 soldiers, a chaplain, a storekeeper, and a surgeon. At Toronto there were one officer, two sergeants, four soldiers and a storekeeper. Some Canadians, laborers or boatmen, lived in or near the fort; but eight men constituted the entire military establishment at the time. At Fort Niagara there were five officers — one of them usually detached to Little Niagara above the Falls, and residing there — two sergeants, a drummer, 24 soldiers, a storekeeper, surgeon and chaplain, the last-named being expected occasionally to visit Toronto and any other isolated white man in the region. Five canoes came up from below, annually,

with supplies for Toronto, ten were sent to Niagara, and (in 1754) 17 others arrived there laden with goods for Detroit and its dependencies. One may believe that the annual passing of these trains of laden craft, up the Niagara on their way to the upper posts, made no small stir in the little lonely establishments on its banks.

Lonely and feeble well nigh to helplessness these wilderness outposts appear to us, to-day; yet a source of strength, greater than it may at first seem, lay in the system under which they had been established and were kept up. France depended less on the strength of forts or the number of troops sent to them, than on the character of relations maintained with the natives. As Sir Guy Carleton summed it up, in a letter to Lord Shelburne, the main reliance of France was "on the discretion of their officers, who learned the language of the natives, acted as magistrates, compelled the traders to deal equitably and distributed the King's presents; by this conduct they avoided giving jealousy, and gained the affections of an ignorant, credulous, and brave people, whose ruling passions are independence, gratitude and revenge, with an unconquerable love of strong drink."<sup>20</sup> Thus managing them by address, where force could not be had, the French Government thought gradually to accustom the Indian to the presence of troops, and to reconcile them to the constant strengthening of the fortifications.

It is essential at this point in our story to note some phases of the preparation by France for the campaign of 1755 on this frontier. Many details, not elsewhere recorded, are preserved in the journal of the Count de Maurès de Malartic, a brigade major in the regiment of Béarn.

The nine first companies of the second battalion of the regiment of Béarn sailed from Brest, May 3, 1755, arriving at Quebec June 19th. The first division of the regiment arrived early in July, and the united forces made their way up the St. Lawrence, and by August 1st<sup>21</sup> the regiment was in barracks at Fort Frontenac. Here, for the first time, Malartic

<sup>20</sup> Carleton to Shelburne, Quebec, Mch 2, 1768.

<sup>21</sup> Aug. 3d according to Pouchot.

began to see something of the life of the West. His journal is rich in notes of things that came under his eye. With almost daily frequency, messengers (*cadets*) were being sent to or arriving from Fort Niagara and the upper country posts. On August 27th, ten Indians from Niagara reached Frontenac and spread out in the camp the plunder which they had taken from the English at the time of Braddock's defeat. Nothing could have made more vivid to our French major the desperate character of the frontier service to which he was likely to be destined.

The canoes of Indians, or of traders, coming from the West laden with furs, greatly interested him. He records, for instance, that on the 28th of August, at 4 in the morning, three canoes laden with peltries reached the fort, and in two hours set out for Montreal. On the 30th, four bateaux arrived from Detroit. That same day twelve Indian canoes came in loaded with venison and fish, and there sprang up a lively market. The next day, he writes: "Several canoes and cattle which arrived yesterday have gone this morning. There remain with us eight drunken Indians, who have raised the devil." A few days later, a naval clerk, doing duty as commissary, comes from Niagara in a little canoe with two Ottawas. Then there arrive also from Niagara, twelve large bateaux laden with skins and bringing a number of sick men. These are scattered, but true, glimpses of the lake traffic in 1755. Malartic is much interested in the bark canoes, of which he could have had no idea until coming to America. He notes that they are of three, five, or eight places, but that the largest can carry twelve men. He sees that they are very light, and that the Indians are very careful of them, leaving them on shore high and dry at night, that neither wind nor wave may hurt them. All the wonderful strange life of the vast region beyond evidently appealed to him, but a soldier's duty did not at this time let him proceed further than Frontenac. There his regiment was variously employed; was drilled daily, while detachments worked on the fortifications. September 25th, a party of Indians arrived with prisoners taken near Oswego. He reported that Shirley was there with 2000 men, that he was building four

bateaux, "two of twelve cannon and the others of eight," and that he was about to attack either Frontenac or Niagara.

On October 1st, word came by courier to Malartic that the regiment of Guienne was to set out as soon as possible for Niagara, and when there was "to fortify the post and put the barracks in condition to lodge 400 men." The same messenger brought an order for M. de Pouchot, a captain of the regiment of Béarn and a good engineer, to proceed to Niagara to direct the work on the fortifications. On October 5th, the men of Guienne got under way for Niagara, in 45 bateaux, leaving 60 of their regiment to come on in the two schooners which sailed from Frontenac on the 7th. Three days later, Major Malartic was recalled to Montreal with a part of the Béarn regiment. On his way down the St. Lawrence, at the Cedars, he met two officers of Guienne on their way up to Niagara. They gave him, he says, a good many letters. He stayed five days at Montreal, was again ordered to Frontenac, and made the journey so expeditiously that on October 31st, at La Présentation, he overtook the same two officers of Guienne still on their way to Niagara. When he had met them on his way down, he had told them, he says, in jest, "that I would rejoin them before they reached Frontenac." It was probably not reluctance to reach Niagara, but the ordinary difficulties of travel at the time — adverse winds, rebellious boatmen, or lack of help, accident or sickness, shortage of food, or whim of Indians — these and many other causes might conspire to delay or prevent progress, even the advance of regiments in the old days.

That evening M. Duplessis, who was to assume command at Niagara, arrived. They went on to Frontenac, Duplessis hastening by canoe to his Niagara post and Malartic, after ten days of various duties, returning to Montreal, a part of his regiment being quartered at Frontenac, but the major part near Montreal, in the parishes of Longueuil and Boucherville.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Malartic's journal amusingly illustrates the Frenchman's difficulty with English proper names. In it Bradstreet appears as "Brakstreck," Johnson is usually "Jhonson," Webb is "Web," Wolfe is "Wollfs"; and — passing over many — the ever-difficult Abercrombie becomes "Alberkombrik." The journal was printed at Dijon in 1890.

## CHAPTER XXV

### SHIRLEY'S NIAGARA CAMPAIGN

ATTITUDE OF JOHNSON AND THE INDIANS — BRADDOCK'S PLANS  
REGARDING NIAGARA — NIAGARA AS SEEN BY SPIES IN EN-  
GLISH INTEREST — NEW ENGLAND HEARS OF NIAGARA.

WHILE the French were thus fortifying Niagara and strengthening its garrison, their enemies the English were equally active. Now it was that that abortive expedition known as Shirley's Niagara campaign, was undertaken. That the expedition never reached Niagara does not make the story of it any the less essential to these chronicles. Its inception, its progress and its abandonment were reported by tireless Indian news-carriers; considered and planned for, by the masters of the Niagara portage; exulted over by the French in all the Frontier posts of the Lower Lakes and the Ohio, who saw in this check to British arms a potent reason for strengthening the Indian allegiance to their own. Shirley's march was the one great event on the Niagara in this summer of 1755.

With the general narrative of the undertaking, the student of this period of our history is familiar. That General Shirley, in personal command of some 1,500 troops, made his way up the Mohawk, through the Oneida Lake and so on to Oswego, has been set forth in picturesque detail by more than one graphic writer. That further advance upon Niagara, the objective of the expedition, was abandoned, with the inglorious return of the army to Albany, begetting a subsequent flood of criticism and arraignment, just and unjust, are also matters of familiar record. What is not so familiar in this episode — in fact, what is generally slighted or wholly omitted — is what we may term the Niagara side of it. It is worth while to examine the correspondence of the time to discover if possible, what degree of importance was attached to the possession of the Niagara region by the British Ministry or the Colonial Governors at this

period; to fix the responsibility for the undertaking; and to consider its outcome as modifying the course of events in the Niagara region.

By a courteous fiction, which no doubt was often useful, the initiative in important measures lay ever with royalty itself. The Earl of Holderness, in "signifying His Majesty's commands to the several Governors in North America," as early as August 28, 1753, had given them authority to proceed with arms against those who encroached on his Majesty's dominions. Just how this was to be done, need not here be considered. It was sufficient warrant for colonial military movement against the French. Just how far the plan of campaign of 1755 was developed by the British Ministry before the appointment of General Braddock to supreme military command in America, is perhaps not easy to determine. The "secret instructions" which King George sent to Braddock, dated "at Our Court at St. James's the 25th day of Novr., 1754," were not only singularly explicit, considering the royal ignorance of America, but paid marked attention to the Niagara region.

Braddock was first to drive the French from the Ohio. "The next service, which is of the greatest importance, and therefore demands the utmost care and attention, is, the dislodging the French from the Forts, they now have at the Falls and passes of the Niagara; and the erecting such a fort there as shall, for the future, make his Majesty's subjects masters of the Lake Ontario; by that means, cutting off communication between the French forces on the Mississippi. It is our pleasure that if, for this purpose, you should think it necessary to have ships upon the said Lake Ontario, you shall concert with the commander-in-chief of our ships, and the Governors of New England and New York, the manner and means of building and manning such vessels as shall be most proper for that service." The instructions specify the troops that shall be employed against Niagara and direct Braddock to build a fort or forts there, as he shall judge necessary. The two British regiments were to take and hold Niagara; after that, the two American regiments, says his Majesty, with a curious blunder, were to dispossess the French "at Crown Point, on the Lake Cham-

blois." Effort at this point, however, was not to interfere with Braddock in "making yourself Master of that most material one, at Niagara."

It was in accordance with these royal instructions that Braddock developed his plan of campaign, appointing Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts Bay to command the Niagara expedition.

From the date of Braddock's arrival, the plan of campaign, including the advance upon Niagara, was credited to him. "The General . . . acquaints me," wrote Shirley to Sir Thomas Robinson, "that the plan of operations he proposes is to begin with the attack of the French Forts upon the Ohio, and at the same time to attempt the reduction of those at the Falls of Niagara; that for the first of these purposes he intends as soon as the transports arrive with the two Irish regiments, to march himself with the forces he shall have with him, amounting as he expects in the whole to about 2300 British and Provincial troops, and to pass Allegheny Mountains the latter end of April.

"The other part of the services he proposes to put under my direction and to appoint me to march as early as possible with the corps of the two American regiments to the attack of the Forts at Niagara, in order to cut off their communication with the French to the Northward by intercepting their reinforcements and to prevent their retreat."

Shirley heartily approved of Braddock's plan. "Nothing in my opinion, Sir, can be better projected than this scheme," he continues, to Sir Thomas. Of the various enterprises which Braddock's plan embraced, he wrote: "If all of them are successfully executed it will settle every point with the French this year; the demolition of their forts upon the Isthmus, St. John's River, at Crown Point, the Falls of Niagara, and upon the Ohio, and erecting defensible ones . . . at those places . . . would most effectually rid his [the King's] Colonies of all incroachments, establish a barrier for them against all attempts either directly from Europe upon their sea coasts or thro' the River St. Lawrence, the Great Lakes and the River Ohio on the back of them; and by putting his Majesty into possession of the



principal passes into Canada, go half way towards the reduction of that whole country."

Shirley is very careful in his correspondence with Sir Thomas Robinson, to give credit for the plan of campaign to General Braddock. Loyalty to his military superior, or the discretion of a politician, may in some measure have inspired this; for Shirley himself, in letters written before the coming of Braddock, had practically forestalled that general's plan. In a letter to the Lords Commissioners, dated Boston, January, 1754, he had pointed out that for the security of British subjects and the promotion of British interests in America "nothing would contribute more effectually . . . than a well-concerted scheme for uniting all his Majesty's Colonies against the rapid progress which the French seem to be making in perfecting a strong Line of Forts upon our backs from Bay Verte easterly, to the utmost extent of his Majesty's Dominions westward, and to bring the Indians to a dependence upon the English." This does not explicitly mention the Niagara or the Ohio, but Shirley's view of the situation obviously recognized them and their importance. Indeed, Shirley appears to have been first of all British officials in America to see that the issue could be met with no half-way measures, but that Great Britain must aim at the complete and final end of French power on the continent.

It is exceedingly interesting to note how the situation presented itself to him, before Braddock had begun organization. In the letter to Sir Thomas Robinson above quoted from, General Shirley continues:

"If the General should finally judge it not advisable to make both attempts with his forces divided, but proceed first with the main body of his forces to attack the French Forts near the Falls of Niagara, sending only such a detachment to the Ohio as might amuse the French Forts there with the expectation of a speedy visit from him, the reduction of the first mentioned forts would penetrate into the heart of their encroachments upon the Great Lakes and the Ohio, and by cutting off all communication between Canada and their forces upon that river, leave them an easy prey to famine, if no other stroke should be

given them (which yet might be done soon after the reduction of the Forts at Niagara was effected) and make them in a short time be glad to accept of a safe passage back to Montreal, if that should be permitted to them.

“The dislodging of the French from these Forts, Sir, and building a defensible fort some where on the Streight between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario with one or two vessells of force upon each Lake to command the navigation of them, and a few small fortify’d places of shelter upon the River Ohio, would in all appearances most effectually put an end to the encroachments of the French there from Montreal; and as to those which may be expected from the Mississippi, after their support from Canada is cut off, it seems probable that they would scarce attempt any, or if they should, that a most easy conquest might be made of them.”

That Braddock expected to reach Niagara is shown by his conversation with Benjamin Franklin, as set down in the famous Autobiography:

“In conversation with him [Braddock] one day, he was giving me some account of his intended progress.

“‘After taking Fort Duquesne,’ said he, ‘I am to proceed to Niagara; and having taken that, to Frontenac, if the season will allow time, and I suppose it will; for Duquesne can hardly detain me above three or four days; and then I see nothing that can obstruct my march to Niagara.’”

Franklin had his doubts, and cautioned him about Indian ambuscade, to which Braddock replied: “These savages may indeed be a formidable enemy to your raw American militia, but upon the King’s regular and disciplined troops, sir, it is impossible they should make any impression;” and Franklin, “conscious of an impropriety in my disputing with a military man in matters of his own profession,” said no more.

Among the Johnson manuscripts in the keeping of New York State were long preserved<sup>1</sup> numerous letters from General Shirley, and one elaborate document headed: “State of the case of the expedition against Niagara with regard to the number of troops sufficient for that service.” It is signed by

<sup>1</sup> Until the calamitous fire already alluded to.

Shirley, at Boston, May 31, 1755. Too long to incorporate in our narrative, its main points may be briefly summarized.

The general here asserts that when the expedition to Crown Point was first planned, there was no thought of making an attempt for the reduction of Niagara at the same time. Now, that a force is to be sent against each point, simultaneously, he argues that the disposition of the French forces will be materially altered. British occupancy of the Niagara becomes imperative: "The cutting the French off therefore from the navigation of the Lakes Ontario and Erie and the pass at Niagara must prevent them from effecting a junction of Canada with the Mississippi, disconcert their schemes upon the Ohio and put an end to their views of compassing that Empire, which they have long marked out for themselves upon the Back of the English Colonies, and of late made a progress towards obtaining."

It may be questioned, whether the prospect of French mastery of the Lakes and trans-Allegheny region was ever as imminent as Shirley made it appear — as indeed, it probably appeared to him. France was always pitifully feeble on these frontiers; her outposts were by hazard and adventure, not fertile plantings, with fair prospect of permanence and growth, as were the English colonies. There was nothing in the conduct of Louis XV, or the policy of his Ministers, on which to base a belief that these adventurous wilderness outposts were to be nurtured into the seedlings of an empire; but to the British in America, their own colonies none too strong, it no doubt appeared so. Such a belief lent eloquence to Shirley's plea for more men with which to attack them on the Niagara. "It is expected," he wrote, "that they [the French] will exert their utmost efforts to defend their possession of these Lakes and the pass at Niagara," and to do this he reasoned that they would lessen their forces at Crown Point, in order to strengthen Niagara. News from the front bore out this theory. Even before he began his advance from Albany, messengers from Oswego were reporting to him the constant passing of French canoes and bateaux to the westward. When the regiments of Béarn and Guienne went to Niagara, Shirley had

prompt word of it, as in fact he had of all the movements of the French on Lake Ontario, though not always with accuracy.

"It seems very likely," continues Shirley, "that upon the arrival of General Braddock's forces at the French forts upon the Ohio in good order, they [the French] will quit them and come in their battoes across Lake Erie to Niagara," in which case he foresaw such a strengthening of the enemy there, as to call for a greatly increased army to attack them.

It is unnecessary to follow him in all his efforts to gather an adequate force for the Niagara undertaking. He pleaded, in speeches before the General Assembly of Massachusetts Bay, in letters to other Governors. A study of his correspondence tends to free the mind from the impression, given by various writers, that Shirley was dilatory and incapable. Assuredly there was no lack of effort in behalf of his own force.<sup>2</sup>

To Governor De Lancey, Shirley wrote frequently and at length. A great deal was said over the use of six brass 12-pound cannon — an exposition of the pitifully slender resources of the colony. The debated service of 500 New Jersey troops in the Niagara campaign occasioned a vast quantity of letter-writing and illustrates the constant lack of harmony and concerted action between the colonies. "As to the apprehensions you express at the New Jersey troops not being to be joined in the attempt upon Crown Point, but being destined to go to Niagara, I hope upon Your Honour's considering the matter more attentively, they will vanish and that you will think their destination right. . . . The two regiments which are ordered to attempt the reduction of the French forts at Niagara will

<sup>2</sup> A hint of the difficulties of the time is afforded by a letter from Robert Livingston, Jr., to Lieutenant Governor De Lancey, written at Livingston Manor, June 15, 1755, in which he relates the labor troubles that had beset him: "The 6th of May last there came out from Sheffield and the mountains 103 men and 5 Indians to my Iron works & took thence several of my workmen & Carried them to Springfield Goal where they are still confined, the want of which was the reason of my Furnace blowing out." These troubles had prevented Mr. Livingston from supplying a contractor, William Alexander "with the Quantity of Shot I engaged to deliver him for the Expedition to Onjagera [Niagara] & Crown Point," etc.; but he promised to furnish the shot as soon as his workmen returned. See "Papers Relating to Manor of Livingston," N. Y. Doc. Hist., III, 811.

will not consist of more than 1300 men, and when augmented with the New Jersey men will not exceed 1800, a force greatly inferior, in the opinion of all, who know the importance of that pass, to what the attempt would require if one against Crown Point was not to be carry'd on at the same time and draw off at least the principal part of the French forces in the country of Montreal to defend them ag't the provincial forces.

"I look upon the attempt at Niagara with regard to that at Crown Point, in this light: The French will muster either a strong force at the former pass or they will not; if they should muster one, it must weaken their forces, which they would otherwise bring to defend Crown Point; if they should not, the main corps of English forces at Niagara will soon join those at Crown Point: It seems therefore clear to me, that the destination of the New Jersey forces is right and I have the satisfaction to find my own and other Governm'ts of my sentiments." The outcome was that 500 men of the New Jersey regiment were included in the "army" for Niagara.

In a speech before the General Assembly of Massachusetts, May 29, he presented his need of men so effectually that the committee having the matter in hand promptly reported in favor of giving him a part of the force which had been destined for Crown Point, reasoning that the importance of Niagara would cause so many French to be sent there for its defense that the force at Crown Point would be much reduced; "the Committee are therefore of opinion, that as many of the Forces raised for the Crown Point expedition as his Excellency shall apprehend necessary, may be employed in the proposed service at Niagara." But in this matter, ultimately, Shirley was disappointed.

As the season advanced, the correspondence increased. The progress of preparation, and especially the difficulties that arose, were written about by so many people, who beyond question talked of the matter as freely as they wrote, that the whole affair must have been from the outset a matter of common knowledge, with little concealment from the French, who did not lack means of gathering information about the English, especially at Albany.

In long letters, Shirley argued the greater importance of the Niagara expedition, as compared with that for Crown Point. "When the expedition to Crown Point was first determined upon," he wrote to Governor De Lancey, May 31, "there was no thought of making any attempt for the reduction of the French forts at Niagara at the same time," but with practically a simultaneous advance on both places, the colonies must see the greater importance of taking Niagara. For the French to hold on to the fur trade, they must hold on to the Lakes and the Niagara strait. "The forces employed in the expedition to Niagara will intercept the French now upon the Ohio, if they should attempt to cross Lake Ontario to come to the relief of Crown Point. . . . A defeat at Niagara would forever fix all the Indians in the interest of the French; on the other hand succeeding there would bring 'em all over to the English Interest."

And much more in this strain. Shirley was a lawyer and knew how to make the most of his arguments. His one object (at this time) was to get a larger quota of troops from the several Colonial levies.

It was Shirley's much-heralded expedition that first really acquainted New England with the Niagara region. The two regiments he chiefly relied on, the 50th and 51st American, were almost wholly filled up with inexperienced men from the New England colonies. Of a certainty, this far frontier was much talked of in communities whose sons and fathers were to march to service in so distant and forbidding a wilderness. Something of the popular state of mind may be judged from the stipulation made by certain of the militia, that they would go as far as Niagara but would not go south or west of there. The scanty press of the time is surprisingly full of allusions to the Niagara enterprise, and certain zealous souls resorted to the pamphlet the more fully to express themselves. Such an one was William Clarke, who published in Boston in this year of 1755 his "Observations on the Late and Present Conduct of the French," etc., in which he states the situation on the Lakes and the Niagara as he understood it; and, addressing General Shirley, exclaims with almost priestly unction: "May Success,

under the Protection of the Divine Providence, attend your Enterprize upon Niagara, by reducing which, and securing that important Pass, may you be the Instrument of securing to Great Britain, the Dominion of the Lakes and rich Countries, beyond the Apalachian Mountains; and by cutting off the French from their ambitious Schemes, may you lay the Foundation of a lasting Peace."

Benjamin Franklin, concluding a letter to Shirley regarding the procuring of supplies for him (Philadelphia, May 22, 1755) said: "I do not expect more pleasure from any news, till I hear of your safe return after a successful Campaign at Niagara." Governor Shirley may well have felt himself charged with heavy responsibilities.

In an elaborate communication<sup>3</sup> addressed to Colonel Johnson, Governor Shirley stated at length the reasons why the French wished to control Lakes Ontario and Erie, and to hold the "pass" of Niagara — briefly, that they might control the fur trade and keep in communication with the Mississippi country; so studied a statement of conditions which Johnson knew, in a practical way, far better than Shirley, may naturally have proved irritating when received in the nature of instructions. Shirley argued that the French would sooner lose Crown Point, than Niagara and the country it controlled. "If they should lose the latter, Canada itself would not be worth holding, nor could they well maintain the expense of it without the fur trade." Shirley further reasoned that, "it seems very likely that upon the arrival of Gen. Braddock's forces at the French forts upon the Ohio in good order, they will quit them, and come in their battoes across Lake Erie to Niagara," in which case he foresaw the gathering there of a French and Indian force far greater than the army he was to lead against them.

To Governor De Lancey, June 1st, he propounded the query, "whether the French will not probably have thrown up new works, and reinforced it [Niagara] with a body of troops, before the forces destined for the reduction of that fort can

<sup>3</sup> "State of the Case of the Expedition against Niagara with regard to the number of troops sufficient for the service," Boston, May 31, 1755.

arrive at Niagara." Every capable judge that he had talked with, he added, thought so; and then he tries to pin the New York Governor down by quoting his own words. De Lancey had indeed written: "I certainly look upon the attempt against Niagara in a true light, and that if the French muster a strong force at that place, it must weaken their forces at Crown Point." "Upon what, then," returns Shirley, "does Your Honour ground your opinion; that the French will give it up to the English without exerting their utmost efforts, and mustering a strong body of troops in the defence of it, before it is possible for the English forces to arrive at Niagara, since there can be no reasonable doubt but that our designs against it must be violently suspected by them, if not known with absolute certainty." Even "violently suspected" is inadequate to the situation. Whatever doubts the French may have had regarding the English plan of campaign, were dispelled after the battle of the Monongahela, when Braddock's papers fell into their hands, and revealed all.

At the Alexandria council, April 14th, De Lancey had suggested to Braddock "that 1300 men of the two regiments, should go to reduce Niagara, and that having secured that Pass, and left there a garrison of 300 men, the remaining thousand should proceed to the Peninsula, on the Lake Erie, and secure that post, by which means the General would with more ease penetrate through that country from the Ohio, and so return by the way of Niagara." Braddock had seemed to approve of this, but in his instructions to Shirley had not directed him to go on to Presqu' Isle and Fort Le Bœuf. Shirley wanted it clearly understood that "my orders for employing the forces under my command, after securing the Pass at Niagara, are discretionary." He assures De Lancey that the latter's advice will have great weight with him, but he adds in the next sentence: "I am informed I shall meet with an insuperable difficulty in executing your scheme, as without horses, which are not to be had at Niagara, I shall not be able to transport the battoes and train of artillery, over the Strait to Lake Erie."

June 28th Shirley left Boston bound for Niagara. On July



10th he reached Albany — the day after Braddock had met defeat in the Pennsylvania wilderness. It was not until July 30th, while toiling up the Mohawk, that news of that defeat, and of Braddock's death on July 13th, reached Shirley. It may well enough have taken the heart out of him, for its malign bearing on his Niagara project was obvious. Shirley's eldest son was with Braddock, and of his death too the father no doubt learned at this time. The evil news spread among his troops, many of them none too zealous from the start; and there were desertions and discontent.

Shirley's forces all told had not mustered over 1500 men.<sup>4</sup> Besides the 50th (Shirley's) and the 51st (Pepperell's) regiments, and 500 men of the New Jersey troops, he had a variable and dwindling retinue of Indians. The advance was never in compact form. Some companies of his own regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel Ellison, left Schenectady July 23rd; others had to wait many days for bateau-men.

On July 29th Shirley himself embarked at Schenectady with 200 regular troops, 150 boatmen and 40 Indians. He had 97 bateaux loaded with military stores and provisions. There were accidents and delays innumerable, especially at the long carry from the head of Mohawk navigation, now Rome, to Wood Creek and the Oneida Lake. Shirley was detained here from August 8th to 13th, for lack of men and horses to get his stores over the long portage, and did not reach Oswego until August 18th, with the last division but one of his army.

It is not necessary here to consider the relations of Shirley and Johnson, except as they bear directly on the Niagara issue. That there was lack of harmonious coöperation is well known. In his efforts to enlist the aid of the New York Indians, Shirley was forced to turn to Johnson. "You are to acquaint the Indians of the Six Nations," he wrote, "if you shall judge it from the temper you find them in, proper to do so, with his Majesty's design to recover their lands at Niagara out of the hands of the French."

June 15th, Shirley had asked Johnson to confer with Colonel Peter Schuyler, Colonel Lydius, and the field officers of

<sup>4</sup> At Oswego he reported 1376 fit for duty.

Shirley's and Pepperell's regiments, "upon the proper measures to be taken for conveying the troops destin'd for the Strait of Niagara in the expedition under my command from Schenectady to Oswego," on which Johnson wrote to Goldsboro Banyar, June 19th: "Mr. Lyddius showed me a commission he has from Governor Shirley as Collo of all the Indians, who may go with him to Niagara. I find Shirley thinks of himself and little of any body else." Lydius, who was very obnoxious to Johnson, made some effort to enlist the Indians for Niagara; but the Indians "complain'd to Colonel Johnson, that Lydius had been privately persuading them to go to Niagara," whereupon Johnson forbade Lydius and his interpreter "to interfere any further with the Indians, as it had and would occasion an uneasiness amongst 'em, which might be prejudicial to the Interest in general." Three days later Banyar wrote to Johnson: "I hope you'll take care that at least 3700 men be left for Crown Point, and that even none be sent to Niagara (if you can prevent it) unless you see proof of the consent of all the Governments concerned." He doubted if the French could strengthen Niagara enough to make necessary all the troops Shirley sought to take against them. "Niagara in a general view, or system," adds the picturesque Banyar, "is no doubt of very great Importance, but my Skin is nearer to me than my Coat, and I had rather be subjected to the inclemency of the Weather, than have my skin stript over my Ears." When he heard of Braddock's defeat, Banyar exclaims: "Oh how I lament our not laying hold of Niagara which was in our Power, when we might have taken *Possession* of it, for then it would have been little more." Just what time or opportunity Banyar alludes to is not clear.

July 29th, Johnson having learned of Braddock's defeat, wrote to Shirley: "I am of opinion that an Attack upon Niagara and Securing that Important Pass is now more than ever necessary and that no Delay be suffered which can possibly be avoided. I continue to think [it] does not require the Assistance of a considerable number of Indians, as the Operations will chiefly be conducted by Water." The next day, in a letter to Governor De Lancey, Johnson proposed that he him-

self go through the Six Nations country, or get their leading men to meet him at Onondaga and "lay matters before them, use all the arguments and Influence I am Master of to prevent the Dissolution of our Indian Connexions"; and he thought that Shirley's army should first attack Cadaraqui [*i. e.* Kingston] "and either totally demolish it or take post there if they succeed; the navigation of Lake Ontario secured, and when all the forces and their military stores are arrived and completed to make an attempt upon Niagara."

While it was yet expected that Braddock would take Niagara, Johnson wrote to Shirley<sup>5</sup> that in his opinion, "should the General begin the attack at Niagara . . . it would be the speediest method to deprive them of their incroachments on the Ohio," which region he thought they would have to abandon if the English held Niagara; and Shirley agreed to be mindful "of what you mention relating to Niagara," when he should see Braddock. Shirley, who never did the right thing where Indians were concerned, had instructed Johnson "to acquaint the Indians with his Majesty's design to recover their lands at Niagara,<sup>6</sup> which offended Johnson and did not deceive the Indians. Johnson chose to take orders only from General Braddock, who in this month of April, appointed him superintendent of the Six Nations Indians and instructed him to engage as many as he could for both the Crown Point and the Niagara expeditions. He had at this time to combat a wild idea which had spread far and wide among the tribes — the idea that the British army in America was for the purpose of killing the Indians. Thomas Butler wrote to Johnson from Oswego, May 14th: "I have in my house a Choapowa [Chippewa] Indian that lives near the Nigra who tells me all the foreign [*i. e.*, remote] nations are to help the French. . . . There is still a strong notion among the Indians that the English mind to destroy them."

Governor Dinwiddie was very clear in his mind as to the

<sup>5</sup> March 17, 1755. Much of the correspondence here used was drawn from the Johnson MSS., mostly destroyed in the fire at the Capitol in Albany, March 29, 1911.

<sup>6</sup> Shirley to Johnson, Apr. 16, 1755.

course to pursue. To Lord Halifax he wrote: "I gave my opinion freely to the General [Braddock] y't one of the regi-m'ts rais'd in N. Eng'd sh'd march and attack the Fort at Niagara, and the Gen'l to attack y't on the Ohio, wch, if he succeeded may march his men to Lake Erie (after leaving a proper Garison in the Fort at Ohio), and his Forces may join those raised to the No'w'd, and attack their strong Garison at Crown Point. I am further of Opinion y't N. York sh'd reinforce ye Fort at Oswego with at least 400 Men. for undoubtedly if the Fr. find we are determined to attack them at Niagara and the Ohio they will endeavor to get Oswego into their hands."<sup>7</sup> A few weeks later he wrote to Earl Granville: "The two regiments of Shirley and Pepperell are ordered to attack the fort at Niagara, and if the General succeeds on the Ohio he intends up y't river to attack the Fr. forts at River of Beuf and Lake Erie, and probably may join the two above Regiments at Niagara."<sup>8</sup>

General Shirley, fortified with these plans and opinions, was very diligent, in his own way. In April, Colonel Bradstreet was sent to Oswego, with two companies of the 51st; the reports which he sent down, of the constant passing of French forces in long flotillas of bateaux, furnished welcome reasons to Shirley, in his efforts to secure men and equipment. He was much pleased when Colonel Peter Schuyler, with 500 men raised in New Jersey, was assigned to the Niagara expedition, which the General held to be far more important than that against Crown Point. "I am now," he wrote to Governor Morris, May 28th, "fully satisfied that the French will muster all the force they possibly can for preserving the Pass of Niagara, upon their holding possession of which depends the keeping of all the southern territories and the Great Lakes and rivers they have at present usurped the dominion of, together with their influence over the Indians there; and what proportion does the value of Crown Point bear to that of the Lakes and Southern Country?"

<sup>7</sup> Dinwiddie to Lord Halifax, Mar. 17, 1755.

<sup>8</sup> Dinwiddie to Earl Granville, May 7, 1755.

To a long and eloquent speech before the New York General Assembly<sup>9</sup> a committee made reply: "that the removal of the encroachments made by the French at Niagara, is a matter of very great importance to his Majesty's interest, and must undoubtedly engage a very considerable proportion of the French force to prevent it; that this diversion of the French force will cause that a less number of men may be sufficient for the Crown Point expedition than what would otherwise be necessary. The committee are therefore further of opinion that as many of the Forces raised for the Crown Point expedition as his Excellency shall apprehend necessary may be employed in the proposed service at Niagara, during the time for which they are enlisted."

The Massachusetts Legislature took the opposite view — that the Crown Point expedition needed reinforcements more than that destined for Niagara, where, it heard, the French were in no condition to resist a much smaller force than Shirley proposed to conduct thither.

About this time — June, 1755 — one John Hart, who had been in Montreal, as prisoner or possibly as spy, testified at Albany that the French could not send more than 1000 men to Niagara and the Ohio: "If we are able to have vessels on Lake Ontario," he said, with soundness of judgment, "it will wholly prevent a single man from going south from Canada to support any French garrison."

In June, Colonel Johnson held a great council with the Indians. It is recorded that 1106 men, women and children, representing many tribes, responded to his invitation, and eagerly accepted the hospitality of Mr. Johnson. The note of the summons was, Crown Point and Niagara. To an impressive and picturesque assemblage of the sachems and chief warriors, attended also by Peter Wraxall, Secretary for Indian Affairs, by Rev. John Ogilvie, by Daniel Claus, who served as interpreter, and by other officers, Johnson announced his appointment as Superintendent of Indian Affairs. He recited the French encroachments; compared the Six Nations and the

<sup>9</sup> May 29, 1755.

English Colonies to a bundle of sticks — weak if separated, strong if united; a figure readily grasped by the Indian mind, and comparable to Franklin's device of the severed snake.

Two Onondagas had brought from Oswegatchie alarming news of 1200 French going to Niagara and the Ohio posts. "Did not the French impose on your good nature and confidence," asked Johnson, "when they begged your leave to build small houses at Cadarachqui [Frontenac], Niagara and Crown Point, upon your lands, and instead thereof built forts and put soldiers therein, contrary to your wish and their agreement with you? And in order to secure yourselves from their treacherous encroachments, did you not put all your lands under the protection and dominion of the Great King of England, your father?" And much more in like strain.

Johnson's great desire was a strong Indian following for the expedition to Crown Point; but he was not unfaithful to Shirley. "Brethren," he said to the Six Nations, "your brother and friend, Governor Shirley, who is well known to you, is now, or will be in a day or two, at Albany. He designs to go to Niagara, to prevent the French from sending any more reinforcements to the Ohio, and to open the road which is now stopped for your and our brethren to the westward, to Oswego. He expects and I desire you will meet him there and give him that assistance which as brethren you are bound to do." He spoke in Shirley's behalf better than Shirley could speak for himself, and he also asked for warriors to follow him to Crown Point. Thus rousing them to take up the hatchet, he gave them war belts, danced the war dance with them, and ordered "a large Tub of Punch out, for to drink the King's health."

Shirley was master of no such arguments as these. He had commissioned John Henry Lydius to act as his agent in pledging the Indians to go against Niagara, but his efforts were barren; Johnson, who said Lydius had "debauched five scoundrels," "but the rest were with me to a man," characterized Lydius as a snake, which coming to Shirley's ears, brought from that officer a demand for the minutes of the conference. In a superior but aggrieved tone he wrote to Johnson:

I depended upon your having engaged some Indians to have proceeded with my regiment from Schenectady to Niagara, when I sent you in my letter by Col. Ellison, and I must own I was greatly disappointed at the accounts he gave me from time to time of the answers he received from you. Your opinion that there is no occasion for any Indians to join me till my arrival at Oswego, is singular; all persons besides, whom I have consulted in this affair, are of different sentiments; I am so myself.

I don't understand your commission in the same manner you seem to do. I can't think General Braddock intended to forbid me by it to take any steps for procuring Indians to go with me from Schenectady to Niagara; or that you should assume to yourself a power to engage all the Indians to go with yourself to Crown Point. Your commission, I think, was given you to use your best endeavors to engage them generally in his Majesty's service for Niagara as well as Crown Point, and it was your duty to comply with my demand of a number of Indians to go with me, and not forbid all persons to speak to any persons for that purpose.

The quarrel was a bitter one, and reached far. To Lieutenant Governor De Lancey, Johnson wrote: "Lydius is his Indian Premier, and under him are a number of agents, working with money and by every kind of artifice to destroy my influence, to upset the measures agreed upon at our meeting, and to turn the Indians from the Crown Point to the Niagara expedition." It is worth noting that in this letter<sup>10</sup> Johnson argued that "the navigation of Lake Ontario [should be] secured and when all the forces and their military stores are arrived and completed, to make an attempt upon Niagara."

In this long letter, of great interest, Johnson shows unwonted feeling:

May God inspire us all with head and hearts for our own Preservation, for our Honour, for everything that Men ought to hold dear. Dejection, Amazement and a frozen inactivity will bring on us the last and worst of all Evils, namely, to perish infamously. The French and the Indians will undoubtedly surround our border, and the first necessary step is to be prepared to defend our Country, and when matters can be more maturely planned, with one united spirit to carry Desolation and Destruction thro every quarter of

<sup>10</sup> Johnson to De Lancey, July 30, 1755.

the enemy where we can come at them and by every method in our power. God Almighty direct our councils and most abundantly inspire us with unshaken magnanimity and Resolutions equal to the present call upon us. Let us not perish like slaves, like wretches insensible to all the distinguishing Virtues of Humanity. Let us take another and a more cheerful view of things.

It may be asked, whether Shirley's virtual failure to secure Indian support, did not influence him in his final abandonment of the Niagara expedition. On the other hand, it may be asserted, that had he shown more resolution and gone ahead with more fixity of purpose at Oswego, he probably would have had there something of the Indian following he sought. It cannot be argued, however, that the attitude of Johnson at this time, or of the Indians under his influence, were fatal to the expedition. It failed because Shirley was what he was.

Writing to Secretary Willard, July 22d, Shirley argued that Braddock's defeat made it all the more important to push forward the Niagara and Crown Point expeditions; otherwise, he argued, "the Indians of the Six Nations, as well as others upon the continent, must be given up for lost to the English. . . . As to my raising a number of Indians at Niagara in the service of the Government which may be equivalent to 500 men, that seems as precarious as the raising of 500 men in the province, and besides, may be too late if I should succeed in it."

Word of Braddock's defeat came to Johnson in a letter from Goldsboro Banyar, deputy clerk of the New York Council. Cautioning the post-rider not to discuss the news by the way, he wrote, July 19th: "Some think you should go to Niagara in order to retake the Train"—*i. e.* Braddock's captured artillery—"and defeat them in their return." Two days later<sup>11</sup> Banyar again wrote: "For God's Sake use your whole Influence with Governor Shirley to proceed as fast as possible." August 1st he still further relieved his emotions: "Our schemes discovered, and other operations not assisted by even a Feint! As to Niagara, if we fail of success that way,

<sup>11</sup> Letter dated: "Bowry 3 o'clock p. m., 21 July, 1755."



it will be asked how we came to be so tardy. . . . The enemy seeing our army past the mountains, will undoubtedly march with the greatest part of their forces to Niagara, and this may even risque Oswego. . . . A burnt child dreads the fire. We therefore are under apprehension lest your people are attacked by surprise." He lamented the grievous loss of Braddock's army, but adds: "What sticks most in my Stomach is the destruction of Stores." In a letter of August 3d he discussed the probability that all the English plans, with Braddock's instructions, and £25,000 in the captured military chest, were in the enemy's hands, and thought it was now too late to attack Niagara; no doubt reflecting in this conclusion an opinion already reached by many others in New York City and colony.

As a wise relief to popular feeling, if not as an act of piety, Governor De Lancey proclaimed August 27th as a public Fast: "And inasmuch as from our manifold sins and provocations we have reason to fear God is displeased with us, by His permitting a neighboring nation, in conjunction with their merciless and savage allies, treacherously and perfidiously to enter our borders and encroach upon the territories of our Gracious Sovereign," he called for solemn humiliation before God, with prayers and fasting. All his Majesty's subjects in New York Colony were strictly charged and commanded "to observe the said day with the utmost decency and reverence, by abstaining from all servile labor . . . and sharing in worship."

The irrepressible Banyar sent copies of this proclamation to Johnson, "imagining the New England men may think it proper to observe it in some way or other, not by abstaining from labor, however, whatever they may do from victuals."

Shirley is represented, by a friendly hand, as having won over many Indians to his cause. "With the Senecas," says the author of "A Review of Military Operations in North America,"<sup>12</sup> "the remotest from our settlements of all the Five Cantons, and therefore the most debauched by the French, he succeeded so well that they now dismissed Joncaire, one of their emissaries, whose father had been long suffered to reside among them in spite of our repeated remonstrances; and was the chief

<sup>12</sup> Attributed, among others, to William Livingston.

preserver of the fort at Niagara. They also engaged to meet him, the next campaign, with 100 of their warriors, and promised for the future to refuse the assistance they had formerly given the French, in transporting their furs, with horses and sleds, across the Niagara carrying-place."

Neither Joncaire nor Chabert was "dismissed" at this time from the Seneca villages. If Shirley really secured such pledges as alleged, they were lightly given and signified nothing.

Such pledges as the Indians committed themselves to, in Shirley's interest, were well reported by Daniel Claus, who attended the councils at Mt. Johnson. The Indians, he wrote, gave pledge that there would be plenty of them to join General Shirley at Niagara "as the Place was near their Habitations." All their people, said one of the Indian orators, "would lean where the Tree leaned"—meaning Colonel Johnson. "As to Niagara, the Indians think it no Difficulty at all about its being taken."<sup>13</sup>

One of Shirley's first acts on learning of Braddock's death, was to order Colonel Thomas Dunbar to capture and garrison Fort Duquesne, then to proceed to Presqu' Isle and take possession there. He thought Duquesne would now be easy to take, "as I am fully persuaded that your late retreat hath made the Commandant there think himself at liberty to draw off great part of his forces from thence to strengthen the Forces at Niagara."<sup>14</sup> Shirley's incapacity shines forth in this order. As Dunbar later showed him, had he set out at once for Fort Duquesne, it would have been mid-November before he could hope to reach it. If by a miracle, he captured it, a waste of snow-covered hills, a hundred and fifty miles of forest full of hostile savages, still barred him from Presqu' Isle. And could a repetition of miracles have enabled him to gain that point, there was nothing to expect, when miracles ceased, but starvation.

As he made his difficult way up the Mohawk, Shirley sought to attach the Six Nations to his cause, independent of Johnson's aid. He visited the two Mohawk "castles," and in harangues

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Claus to Richard Peters, "Canajoharie, July the 10th, 1755."

<sup>14</sup> Shirley to Dunbar, Aug. 6, 1755.

meant to be cordial, but with a note of patronage which the astute Indians could not fail to perceive and resent, he told them that "the King your father" had ordered him "to recover your country on the north side of the Lakes Ontario and Erie for you from the French; the chief command in the execution of which is committed to me." Shirley was ever an expert in phrases; but how could he expect to beguile the sagacious red man, with talk of the Niagara and adjacent territory as "your country," and then in the next sentence advertise them as the property of the King? "These lands you well know, brethren, by authentic deeds placed among the records of New York, were surrendered by your ancestors into the hands of the great King your Father, for his Majesty to protect for them and their descendants for ever. Nothing, therefore, brethren, now remains wanting to restore the Indians of the Five Nations to their former possessions, and ancient superiority which they maintained over the other Indians upon this continent before the French (our and their avowed enemies) found means by their artifices to break their united state, and afterwards draw some of them off from their obedience to the great King their father, but to reunite and strengthen his hands in recovering his children's country for them and driving the French out of it."

The lack of sincerity in all this must have been obvious to his Indian auditors. They knew well enough that the British aimed to dispossess the French of Niagara for the good of Great Britain and the profit of British trade. For thirty years — from the first building of Fort Niagara and the English countermove at Oswego, down to this great invasion of their forests and valleys by Shirley's scarlet-clad soldiers — the whole course of events had shown them the hollowness of English talk about gaining the Niagara pass and tributary regions for the Indian. Just now, as on more than one occasion in earlier years, the attitude of the aborigine was one of waiting, ready to cast in his lot with the stronger party of the quarrel. Thoroughly specious and undiplomatic as Shirley's speech to the Mohawks appears, without even a touch of the tactful friendliness and straightforward dealing that always won them

to Johnson, they still gave respectful ear to the consequential general, and agreed that eight of their young men from each of their castles, who were not, like most of the warriors, pledged to the Crown Point expedition, should accompany Shirley to Niagara; and with this small accession he had to be content.

At the Oneida carrying-place, where the difficulties of transport detained him five days, he "dispatched two Albany men and Indians to Niagara for intelligence of the strength and motions of the Enemy," instructing them to report to him at Oswego. Their secret mission occupied them until September 4th. Whether the Albany traders succeeded in getting within the French lines, cannot be said; but the spy Indians did. At Oswego, September 4th, these emissaries reported that Fort Niagara and garrison were both in a weak condition; "that the French told the Indians, who being well known to the garrison and unsuspected by them, were admitted into the fort, and continued there two days, that they had for some time expected 900 Indians from Canada, with a large quantity of stores, and were under concern lest the vessels, that were to have brought them, should be taken by one of the English vessels, they having heard nothing of them for several weeks; that the French had at Niagara 70 or 80 large battoes, with which they told them they intended to meet the English vessels, and board them; which last circumstance was confirmed by another Indian, who had lately come from Niagara, and upon meeting one of the English row-gallies upon the lake, cautioned the commander of it against proceeding further, for that reason."

The Indian spies who had spent two days in the fort, reported that the fortifications were partly of stone but chiefly of logs, "very weak and in ruinous condition." They saw 60 Frenchmen there; but upwards of 100 Indians, "chiefly Piarondacks," were about the fort; and the spies were told by Indians who had been with the French at Braddock's defeat that "they had never been in so sharp a fight as the engagement with the English, and that thirty of their party were killed in it." The Indian spies added, "that the French Indians were much disgusted at the treatment they had received from the French in the division of the spoils, and at their be-

haviour during the action, and were most of them returning to their castles." In Fort Niagara the spies saw many English scalps, "and much Cloaths and Furniture, in particular one very rich Saddle, all which they understood had been taken from the English at Monongahela."

Still other reports from Niagara were brought to Shirley at Oswego; among others, that of a Cayuga who with his wife and family had lived the past winter and summer in the neighborhood of Niagara, and who had been 12 days in coming from there to Oswego. General Shirley told the Indian that "as he was going to endeavor to recover their lands for 'em, and had a number of his tribe, as well as the other tribes of the Five Nations, he expected he would give him a true account of what he knew of the state of the fort and garrison, as he would avoid not only his resentment, but that of his own countrymen." The Cayuga's testimony however, added little to what Shirley already knew. There were at Niagara, the Indian said, not above 150 French and 50 Indians in the fort; there were no new works except a new stockade. The disparity of these two reports, as to numbers, illustrates the uncertainty of Indian spies in that respect.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### SHIRLEY'S NIAGARA CAMPAIGN (CONTINUED)

BRADSTREET AT OSWEGO — THE EXPEDITION ABANDONED — ENGLISH AND AMERICAN CRITICISM — CONDITIONS AT NIAGARA — ACTIVITIES OF CAPTAIN POUCHOT AND CHABERT.

MILITARY service at Oswego during this summer brought varied duties. One account of the work done by the troops mentions the cutting and pointing of 2500 palisades, trenching and setting them, constructing a magazine, making six wheel carriages, cutting and drawing timber for four vessels, building a wharf; a smith's shop, five saw-pits; cutting and making masts, yards, bowsprits and oars; hauling the masts and other timber "out of the woods and bringing them eight miles down the river"; making 1800 bushels of charcoal; cutting hay for cattle, and so on. Most of the work was done with gun at side and sentries posted, for the "French Indians" lurked everywhere.

Early in the summer seven men deserted and "were going to Niagara to inform the French of our designs," when they were captured, all but one, by Indians attached to the English, brought back to Oswego and severely punished. General Shirley offered £25 currency for the apprehension of deserters.<sup>1</sup>

While Shirley was laboriously gathering his men, or urging his cause with voice and pen, John Bradstreet, sent up to Oswego in advance, was working against many odds to build the vessels which had been ordered, and for which Commodore Augustus Keppel had furnished the plans. He had, in June, only 15 carpenters, "one a lad and another lame, all lyable to accidents and the whole but small to go on with such work." In the letter to Shirley in which this complaint is made, he further writes:

I hope the new galley you now order to be built and the schoon-

<sup>1</sup> *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 17, 1755.

ers may answer the purpose, but I think it my duty to inform you I am fearful they will not, for they are so full built they will not sail before the wind, and this lake is like the ocean where there is strong gails and great seas with few harbours. . . . The french that pass this place in their way to the Ohio do it by night, which is all I know about them.<sup>2</sup>

In another letter at this time<sup>3</sup> Col. Bradstreet wrote:

I am sorry that I have occasion to mention that there is not one man comes here but openly and notwithstanding my best endeavors proclaime your coming with the number of troops and the service they are intended for, and that the french have some of the five Nations constantly coming agoing [*sic*] from hence with an account of what passes. Neagara at this time has but a very small garrison and no work going on, but I am inform'd by Indians they expect several hundred men there soon to build a fort.

A letter of this period, obviously by an officer if not by Bradstreet himself, appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of July 31st, as follows:

OSWEGO, July 9, 1755.

. . . I found the sloop *Oswego* in great forwardness, and shall turn her off the stocks tomorrow.

We have been greatly alarmed, for two or three days past, with an account that the French were coming with 1000 European troops, and a large body of Indians, to attack this place, which, by all the accounts we can get from the French Indians, they intended, had not their spies, who come in here daily, informed them of the preparations Captain Bradstreet had made to receive them. We have now great reason to think they are gone to Niagara, but we can give no particular account of their number.

I sent Mr. Dean out in a small schooner, upon hearing they were nigh us, who soon discovered them encamped within eight miles of this place; but as there was little wind, he could not venture nigh enough in to form any judgment of their numbers. I sent him out the next morning in the same boat, but they had left their encampment in the night, which makes us conclude, they are

<sup>2</sup> Bradstreet to Shirley, Oswego, June —, 1755. Bradstreet MSS., Am. Antiquarian Soc.

<sup>3</sup> Undated, but in June; MSS. in Am. Antiq. Soc.

gone to Niagara. It was very unlucky that one of the sloops was not ready; if she had, I think they might have been stopped.

A little later, learning of the detachment of Béarn and Guienne that had gone to Niagara, Bradstreet wrote: "Your Excellency may be assured Neagra will be reanfors'd soon, and the troops sent by the north side of the Lake in small parties, but a dextrous management will be necessary and dispatch in order to succeed properly there." July 20th he reported that no Indians had come to Oswego for eight days; he thought because the French wished to conceal their own proceedings.

While these things were happening at Oswego, the French at Niagara, with entire cognizance of the preparations of the enemy, held what was reported to the English as a council of war. A Quebec correspondent of the *Boston Gazette* under date of July 10th, wrote that the principal commanding officers had lately met at Niagara Fort and determined, "that whatever should be the success of any future enterprize against the English, who were coming, arm'd at all points, to drive us out of Canada, the troops on the Ohio had at present nothing to do but maintain the ground there already got, and by no means to venture beyond the Allegheny mountains, into the Province of Virginia, till repeated success, or immediate orders from Europe, should authorize them to vary their conduct in this point." To this report, more accurate than the usual English version of French action, was added the following: "At the same time it was determined that the forces of Niagara had nothing to do but maintain that important pass; and that those on the Erie, at Crown Point and northward toward St. Lawrence Bay, being nearer the main force at Quebec . . . should push every material advantage they might happen to gain."<sup>4</sup> The assignment of Captain Louis Coulon de Villiers to Niagara in this summer of 1755, has been noted in a preceding chapter.

At Oswego Captain Bradstreet had awaited the coming of Shirley and his men, and was diligent in reporting on the situation. To Governor De Lancey, he wrote, July 9th, that the

<sup>4</sup> Quebec letter in *Boston Gazette*, Nov. 3, 1755.



French had been encamped six miles from there, evidently intending a surprise; but upon his sending a message to them by two Indians, with wampum, they sent the Indians back with the assurance that they would not attempt anything against the English. The defense was by this time so good at Oswego that the French commander with his Indians proceeded to Niagara, where, Bradstreet writes, "you may be assured they will erect a fortification as soon as possible."

On August 17th, as he neared Oswego, Shirley had word from Bradstreet, that some 600 regulars from France had just reached Frontenac; that that post was in constant communication with Niagara, and that a joint force from both these posts, with many Indians, were preparing to attack Oswego. When Shirley reached Oswego, the next day, he was convinced of the truth of this report; but if such a move had been contemplated by the French, it was frustrated by the diversion of Johnson's march against Crown Point.

At Oswego, Shirley at once set about strengthening the defenses. He built the first Fort Ontario on the east side of the river and erected other works. He had never been there before, and seems not to have fully realized till on the spot, the imminent risk of an attack from Frontenac. He began to waver in his Niagara purpose; but on September 21st, at a council of officers, it was voted that he should go on with 600 men, leaving the rest of his force to defend Oswego. His son, John Shirley, who accompanied the expedition as secretary to the General, has left, in letters, very detailed and graphic accounts of the council and the preparations that followed. The two large vessels, one a sloop, the other a schooner, were put in readiness; stores and ordnance were hurried aboard. Shirley himself was to sail in the sloop. He proposed to take 70 or 80 Indians, and some Albany men, that is, boatmen and others, not soldiers. But difficulties multiplied and embarkation was delayed. Another council was held, at which it appeared there were insurmountable difficulties in provisioning the troops, lack of proper boats, a multitude of obstacles. The zeal shown by the officers a few days before had all oozed away. "For want of provisions," wrote John Shirley, "it

will be impossible to leave a garrison this winter at Niagara in case we succeed. We must knock it down and visit it early in the spring." Finally a third council of war was held, September 27th, attended by Shirley, Major Bradstreet and seven other officers, among them Captain Bradley, in command of British vessels on Lake Ontario. The General addressed them on the situation, but it was a wholly one-sided presentation. Everything was unfavorable for the advance on Niagara; nothing favored it. The artillery and ordnance stores had been put on board the sloop *Ontario*, a part of the provisions were on the sloop *Oswego*, but there was no accommodation for the men; at least 400 of them would have to go in bateaux, which were not fit for the service. There would be a shortage of provisions. Reports from Frontenac and Niagara showed the French to be in strength and readiness. The Indians said it would be dangerous to go by the lake, and if the army got to Niagara it was very doubtful if it could return this winter. The Indians were deserting, scattering to their homes. The Albany traders thought the bateaux would be upset on the lake if there was a swell — and there *was* a swell, at this season. The weather was bad, and was going to be tempestuous. Even if the bateaux could keep afloat they would get separated from the larger vessels, with great risk. Some provisions would have to be carried in the small boats, and would get wet and be ruined. So would the ammunition in the men's pouches. About 300 of his men were sick and unable to go on. The General was very thorough in summing up the reasons why the expedition should be abandoned — or, as he put it, deferred until another year.

There was no dissenting voice in the council. They were unanimously of opinion that "nothing more can be done at Niagara this Fall than to dislodge the French and demolish their works there, which from our intelligence appears to be so weak as not to make it advisable for his Excellency to leave a garrison there without erecting new works, which neither the lateness of the season nor the present circumstances of our provisions will admit; so that no effectual possession can be taken of that pass this year."

And so, with plans for the strengthening of Oswego, the building of proper boats, and the promise of great readiness next spring, the expedition which had cost so much toil — and letter-writing — turned in its tracks and hastened back to Albany and the colonies whence it came.

When a party of Shirley ship-carpenters returned to Boston in October, they had reported the fort at Niagara “in a ruinous condition, defended by about 100 French and 60 Indians”; and that Shirley was “determined to attempt both Frontenac and Niagara this season.” The *Gazette* observed, “We impatiently await the event.”<sup>5</sup>

A few days later Boston had news of the abandonment of the Niagara enterprise. The *Gazette's* announcement of it carried disappointment and disgust throughout New England:

Last week an express arrived here from Oswego by which we learn that Major General Shirley, Commander of all his Majesty's forces in North America, has laid aside the intended expedition to Frontenack and Niagara, and that the three regiments under his immediate command were to take up their winter quarters at Oswego.

We are not a little startled at this advice, as we flatter'd ourselves that the three regiments with him, together with the Indians and Rangers, were more than sufficient to have carried both Frontenack and Niagara, inasmuch as Colonel Dunbar and his regiments were not order'd up in season to that service. We presume not to pry into the secret reasons of this conduct, but are obliged to suppose from the acknowledged wisdom and resolution of those who framed and conducted the expedition, and the great charge to the Crown with which it has been attended, that they are very substantial ones.<sup>6</sup>

The effort of the *Gazette* to respect the judgment and approve the conduct of Shirley was too great a strain to be kept up. The Niagara expedition had been to so large an extent a Massachusetts enterprise — led by her Governor, her ship-builders putting the first vessels on the Great Lakes to contest supremacy there with the French, her men drafted for the service and her people taxed for it — small wonder that the

<sup>5</sup> *Boston Gazette*, Oct. 13, 1755.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.*

Boston mind, not yet schooled in calmness, was rather hotly outspoken over all the failures of that disheartening summer. "What wretched complaisance is this," railed the *Gazette*, in the same issue and column in which it had announced the news, "to give the enemy time to fortify and strengthen themselves against us, whilst we have just roused them, and then tamely look on!" In a more and more exaggerated style it concluded: "And is all this mighty parade, then, to answer no other purpose but to distress if not ruin our country, by running us in debt, in expending upwards of 200,000 pounds Proclamation money, and leaving us in a worse condition than it found us. O tell it not in Quebeck! nor publish it in the streets of Montreal! Let the Daughters of the Popish Nunneries rejoice, and the British name be had in Derision by the Slaves of haughty Lewis!" So spake New England.

One could quote at great length from the Colonial press of the time to show the revulsion of feeling, the chagrin and disappointment occasioned by Shirley's course. He had his champions, though they spoke but feebly through the press.

If much had been said about Shirley's expedition before it was attempted, more was said of it after it had failed. The situation was ideal for the political wiseacre, who, now as then, is prompt to show how things should have been done differently. Added to this, in England, was the bitterness of opposition to a Ministry whose most elaborate plans in America seemed fated to miscarry. It was the day of the pamphleteer, when any one who could command the services of a printer could publish and scatter over the kingdom, not merely his views and opinions, logically written and civilly expressed, but his most vitriolic diatribes against political adversaries, the Ministry, or even Royalty itself; provided always that by the infantile device of omitting most of the letters from proper names, he supposedly concealed the object of his attack. At a little later period this peculiarity was to pass. "It is a singular circumstance," observes Lord Macaulay, a few years later than the period of our narrative, "that in this year 1760, pamphleteers first ventured to print at length the names of the great men whom they lampooned. George the Second had

always been the K—; his Ministers had been Sir R— W—, Mr. P—, and the Duke of N—; but the libellers of George the Third, of the Princess-Mother, and of Lord Bute, did not give quarter to a single vowel.”<sup>7</sup>

In 1755 and '56, however, the dash after the initial, with a final letter or two if needed to make the designation plain, or the still more obvious device of following the initial with as many asterisks as there were letters in the name (Mr. P\*\*\*, Earl of Or\*\*\*d, etc.) was still relied on as sufficient protection from libel laws or the exercise of press censorship. Especially was the Ministry to be held sacred and inviolate from the attacks of adversaries who rushed into print; the result being a vast number of pamphlets in which the M—y, the M—rs and the M—ial policy were assaulted with every missile and bludgeon of the English tongue, the writers being delightfully unhampered by restrictions which practically did not interfere in the least with their freedom of speech, although to modern eyes it often made their pages suggest riddles and rebuses devised for juvenile amusement.

Braddock, being dead, somewhat escaped the onslaught of the pamphleteer; but Shirley being alive, and the Ministry which was held responsible for his failure being still in power, received ample if not generous attention. Some of these pamphlets, published at sixpence or so, and now esteemed a bargain at as many pounds, bring out curiously a not illogical course of reasoning regarding the Niagara campaign. Among them was “A First Letter to the People of England,” followed, during 1756, with “A Second Letter,” a third and so on to the seventh. Taken together they form to-day a remarkable exposition of the situation and conduct of national affairs; but it is only of the Niagara region that we append a few quotations. The anonymous author, after impugning the motives of the M—y in sending Braddock against Fort “Lequesne” (a

<sup>7</sup> An illustration is found in a pamphlet attributed to the Earl of Derwentwater, published about 1713, the title-page of which runs as follows: “Seeing’s Believing; or K—ng G—rge proved a Us—per; and his whole Reign one continued Act of Cr—ty and Op—n, and other Notorious Fail—ngs, Written by a Subject to the Lawful King.”

blunder to which he adheres throughout), reasons as follows:

To attack Fort Lequesne at all then seems absolutely absurd, because all supplies for that Place being necessitated to pass by the Fortification at Niagara, situated between the two Lakes Erie and Ontario, whoever becomes Master of that Fort, necessarily cuts off all Communication and Power of Support from Fort Lequesne, and this latter Place must of consequence surrender itself in a very little Time, into the Hands of those who possess Niagara. . . . This Fortification of Niagara then situated between the Lakes, being absolutely the Pass by which all Supplies must go to Lequesne, the taking that alone should have been the Object of our Forces. . . . There are not wanting indeed Men well acquainted with those Parts of America who, with great Appearance of Truth, and Force of Argument, alledge, that a few armed Vessels on the Lake Ontario, would have secured us a safe and easy Conquest of Niagara, and Fort Lequesne. It is indubitably true, that no Ship of Force or Burden can enter that Lake from the Head of the River St. Lawrence; consequently the English Ships being first set swimming on the Lake Ontario, they must have prevented all Supplies from going by Water to Niagara, as well as destroyed all Ships pretended to be built on the Borders of the Lake by the French, as the English by that Conduct would become absolute Masters of that Water. Hence by the cruising of these Ships, it being rendered impracticable to supply Niagara and Fort Lequesne, a few Months consuming the present Provision would have given us Possession of both; Famine being an Enemy which no human Power can resist. . . .

Is it not self-evident, that General Braddock should, instead of dividing his Powers, have marched in Union with Mr. Shirley to Niagara, if they were determined to take that Fort by a land Force?

“How contemptible,” adds our writer, “must we appear in the Eyes of all Europe, from this Imbecility of M——I Judgment!”<sup>8</sup>

The logic of the foregoing passage is in the main sound. British occupancy of Niagara would have put an end to all

<sup>8</sup>“Dr. John Shebbeare distinguished himself as a political writer in the reigns of George II and George III. Commencing as an apothecary at Bristol, he went to Paris, where he obtained the degree of M.D. On his return to England he began his literary career by writing on a variety of subjects. But he was brought more conspicuously to public notice by a series of ‘Letters to the People of England,’ the most successful of his works, though it subjected him to a prosecution. On the publication of his

French posts dependent on Niagara; but the same reasoning might have been applied with still greater cogency to the capture of Quebec. With Quebec in British hands, not only the French outposts south and west but Niagara, Crown Point, Frontenac, even Montreal, must inevitably fall. Niagara was the key to the inner country, but Quebec was the master-lock. It took some years for the British Ministry to realize it.

If the English press was provoked by Shirley's failure, into criticism both of him and the Ministry, much more so was the colonial press aroused. The small and scattered journals of New York, New England and Pennsylvania, better informed as to American frontier conditions than were the writers of England, variously voiced the disappointment and disgust of the people. Never before had the colonial press in America ventured so far in outspoken criticism. A few years later, the Stamp Act and the Tea Tax were still further to develop this phase of American journalism; but as the failure of 1755 strengthened the new-born consciousness among the English colonies — a consciousness of a need for united action — so it also gave rise for the first time to an expression of popular sentiment through the press. Usually it was couched in careful phrases, with no note of disloyalty, although venturing to criticise and disapprove. Sometimes it was sarcastic or humorous; and now and then it was frankly indignant.

The *Boston Gazette*, already quoted, had much to say regarding Shirley's failure and its consequences. Of one phase of the frontier situation it discoursed with no little spirit:

Do we value the friendship of the Indian warriors? And shall

'Third Letter' in 1756, orders were issued for his arrest; but it was not till January, 1756, after the 'Sixth Letter' made its appearance, that he was taken into custody; when a 'Seventh Letter,' then in the press, was likewise seized. He was tried for the alleged libel, and being convicted, was sentenced to pay a fine of £5, be imprisoned three years and to stand in the pillory. On his release from confinement under the reign of a new sovereign, and the administration of Lord Bute, he obtained a pension, for which he defended the conduct of government in the American War. His apostasy from the popular cause consigned him to contempt and he died almost forgotten in 1788, at the age of 79."—*Gorton, Biog. Dic.*

we expect to secure it, unless we can and do make it fully appear to them, that neither Treachery nor Cowardice was at the bottom? Will there not be the greatest reason to believe that their alliance which has for some years past been doubtful, will now be wholly broken, and their strength turned against us for the future? What can we imagine will be their apprehensions of us, than their own situation, when they reflect on their inglorious defeat at the Ohio — the Niagara expedition — and 8 or 10,000 men — New England men, rais'd, not to build forts, but *to take one*, and recover to them their ancient lands — when they reflect upon such an army, all in high spirits, refusing (at least in their apprehension) to seize the most favorable and perhaps the only opportunity — disbanding — disappearing. Will not their confidence in us cool in proportion as our assurances to them and their expectations from us fail?<sup>9</sup>

And more in like vein. A few days later the *Gazette* permitted a correspondent to narrate the story of a supposed Roman general “in those Days of Simplicity” when military leaders “were not acquainted with the extraordinary profits which in corrupter times of that State were made of such undertakings” — by no means the only hint at the time that Shirley’s conduct was influenced by venality. The story itself is *à propos* our theme:

I have heard of one who received sudden instructions to lay siege to an enemy’s fort, but being indisposed himself, he obtained leave for his son to take the command of the army in his room. He being a plain-hearted young man, set out without delay, took the fort and returned home. His father, instead of commending him for his bravery and dispatch, upbraided his want of common prudence.

“You should have spent the first year in reconnoitering the ground, etc., and taken the fort the next.”

“Why so?” said the young general.

“Why, then,” replied the father, “you would have gained twice as much.”

The son mused a while on the unexpected reception his father gave him. “Got twice as much” — twice as much what? Surely not twice as much glory, for we have reap’d a full harvest of that. And as to their money, we took all they had — what more could be expected?

<sup>9</sup> *Boston Gazette or Country Gentleman*, supplement, Feb. 9, 1756.



The father perceived he was a perfect novice in some essential things, and so degraded him to a lieutenantcy, under an experienced officer, to be instructed in the true nature and full extent of P — y and P-rq-s-te.<sup>10</sup>

Less subtle and more direct was the following thrust, in the guise of a letter to the editor:

I was afraid you would set our C—n P——t and N—g—a Ex——ns in an odd light to the world. . . . I hope for the country's sake we shall go on with Ex——ns (just as we have done) for two years to come — by this means we shall all be employed, and there will be plunder enough somewhere, to pay us!<sup>11</sup>

Governor Robert Hunter Morris of Pennsylvania took a lively and intelligent interest in the plans of the campaign of 1755, which so vitally concerned his province. As early as February he “with some difficulty prevailed on a man in this town, one Evans,” to furnish him “a map of the back Country.” This was the very valuable Lewis Evans map, which corrected many errors regarding our region — and made a few new ones; but was, on the whole, a wonderful advance in American cartography.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Boston Gazette or Country Gentleman*, Feb. 23, 1756.

<sup>11</sup> *Ib.*, Feb. 23, 1756.

<sup>12</sup> Evans accompanied Conrad Weiser and John Bartram the botanist, on horseback to Onondaga in 1743. Two years later he visited Albany and Cohoes Falls. In 1749 he was advertising his map as showing “the route of the Albany traders to the fort of Oswego, on Lake Ontario; the path from Pennsylvania through the mountains to Onondaga, the capital of the Six Nations, and to the Great Lakes.” In 1755 appeared his most valuable map, with 32 quarto pages of text. He appears to have traveled in the Ohio valley, which he says “exceeds in extent and good lands all the European dominions of Britain, France and Spain. With moderate cultivation it is capable to maintain 50 millions of people.” Evans died in June, 1756.

His notes on the region we here study are interesting. Lake Ontario, he says, “like the Mediterranean, the Caspian and other uvasated waters, has a singular rising and falling of the water like tides some 12 or 15 inches, occasioned by changes in the state of the atmosphere.” The south side of the lake was best for canoes and bateaux, because of rocks on the north side. Snow fell deeper on the south side “than any other place in these parts,” “but the lake does not freeze in the severest winter, out of sight of land.” The Niagara (from Lake Ontario) was easily passable five or six miles for any ships, or 10 miles for canoes; “then you are obliged to make portage

In sending this map to Sir John St. Clair, Governor Morris wrote, February 28th: "You will observe that the carrying-place near the Falls of Niagara, where the Upper Lakes all empty themselves into that of Ontario, and where the French have a small fort, is the only communication between Canada and the new settlements upon Ohio and the Lakes, and if we can make ourselves masters of that Pass all their southern forts must submit, as they can in that case have no supply either of men or provisions on the Lake Ontario." Here was a true concept of the situation; but when he went on to state that "not very far from Niagara we have a fort called Oswego," which he thought might readily be taken, "and cannon may be carried by water from thence to Niagara," he rather underestimated the distances and difficulties involved.

In a subsequent letter to Braddock, Governor Morris complained of the conduct of the Colonial Assemblies which "almost without exception has been so very absurd" that they "had suffered the French to take possession of the most advantageous places; . . . such are their forts at Niagara, Crown Point, and the several ones upon Lake Erie, the river Ohio and its branches." Four years before, he maintained, the Indians had informed the English of all the French were doing, but the Pennsylvania Assembly "refused to be at any expense about it, tho' a thousand pounds sterling would then have been sufficient, and having shamefully suffered the French to encroach upon them now more shamefully refuse to afford assistance to the troops that are employed to remove them. I am heartily sorry," adds the Governor, "that a Province that I have the Honour to preside over should behave in so shocking a manner."

We may not enter here upon the subject of colonial defense of the western frontiers, although it lies close to our theme.

up three pretty sharp hills about eight miles, where there is now cut a pretty good cartway." He gave the height of the Falls as "5 or 6 and 20 fathoms," and says travelers "embark again at the Fishing battery." Toronto appears as "Tronto"; "Sissisogaes" appears for "Mississagas," west of the Niagara; "Petroleum" is indicated near the Allegheny above Venango, also on the Ohio below Logstown. The river Condé of some earlier maps is omitted.

The Governors were forever pleading for more protection, for more liberal appropriations, for what to-day we designate preparedness, than the Assemblies were willing to grant. Incidentally, they all discussed the situation on the Niagara; none earlier, or more freely, than Governor Morris — rather too freely for Shirley's taste, perhaps, when he wrote: "Niagara is the strong point that everything else ought to submit to. . . . If Niagara is taken this year it will be a glorious point gained, and if you miscarry for want of Force when all the Troops upon the Continent is under your Command, the blame will justly be laid at your own Door."<sup>13</sup>

Governor Morris's frequent letters on the subject indicate the anxious but not over-confident interest with which the public watched Shirley's movements. Five days later he again wrote:

"Should you prove successful against Niagara, as I have high hopes and warm wishes that you may, you will permit me to say that you should employ an officer well attached to you to carry the News to England, who should be furnished with every Argument to shew the importance of the place, and the weight and consequence it is of to all America, that without it the French Trade Settlements upon the Ohio and the Lakes to the Southward [?] cannot be supported and what they have to the Northward of it are not worth keeping." He enlarged on the idea, adding that he thought the person best adapted to this special messenger service was Governor Shirley's son John, younger brother of Secretary William Shirley, killed with Braddock: "You cannot have any Person so fit to employ upon this service as your own Son, who can have no Interest but what is Yours, & cannot raise himself but by your means. The Honour of gaining and securing that Pass will put it in the power of England to become Masters of America, will be wholly yours & you and your Family should receive the advantage of it." It was the sort of suggestion calculated to appeal to Shirley. To Thomas Penn, Governor Morris wrote in a less confident vein, predicting that Shirley "will find the taking of Niagara more difficult by Braddock's defeat," and

<sup>13</sup> Morris to Shirley, Phila, Aug. 19, 1755.

adding: "The great difficultys and delays which he has met with . . . probably may be the means of his miscarriage."<sup>14</sup>

In freedom of expression he was outdone by Secretary William Shirley, the General's son, who was with Braddock. From Fort Cumberland, in May, he dispatched a long letter to Governor Morris, reporting the progress of the army, and discussing the opening by the English of a road "to Fort Venango or Presqu' Isle, upon Lake Eric, or to Niagara." Then, with the indiscretion of youth, and admonishing Morris to burn his letter, he continued:

We have a G—— most judiciously chosen for being disqualified for the Service he is employed in, in almost every respect; he may be brave for aught I know, and he is honest in pecuniary matters. But as the King said of a neighboring Governor of yours when proposed for the command of the American Forces about a Twelve-month ago, and recommended as a very honest Man tho' not remarkably able, "a little more Ability and a little less Honesty upon the present Occasion might serve our Turn better." . . . I am greatly disgusted at seeing an Expedition (as it is called) so ill concerted originally in England, and so ill appointed, so improperly conducted since in America, and so much Fatigue and Expencc incurred for a Purpose which if attended with success might better have been let alone. . . . I have hopes, however, that the attempt against Niagara will succeed, which is the principal Thing.

There were others besides the outspoken young Shirley who felt the fatuity of Braddock's attempt. Had the ax been struck nearer the root of the tree, as at Niagara, all the upper branches, even Duquesne, would have fallen without another blow.

Immediately on learning of Braddock's defeat, Governor Morris wrote to Governor Shirley, commiserating him on the death of Secretary Shirley, and cautioning the father to beware of ambush on the Niagara expedition, especially at Wood Creek and on the Niagara. The Indians were wild over their success near Fort Duquesne. "I imagine," wrote Morris,

<sup>14</sup> Morris to Penn., July 31, 1755.

“they will move from Ohio to oppose you at Niagara or in your Way to it, as they must now be fully acquainted with Your Design and no longer afraid of an Attack upon the Ohio.” This warning, and the danger which it suggested, must have been in Shirley’s mind when he gave up the Niagara expedition, but fear of Indian ambush was not among the reasons which he set forth for its abandonment.

The correspondence of the colonial governors at this period contains many interesting allusions to the Niagara region. Governor Horatio Sharpe of Maryland — an uncommonly good letter writer — and Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia were ever watchful of the situation on this frontier. Sharpe, soon after Braddock’s advent in America, sent him a long letter well calculated to give him a true conception of the main problem. “I am apprehensive,” he wrote, February 27, 1755, “that unless the communication between Canada and the forts and settlements that the French have made to the southward of Lake Erie can be cut off, it will not be an easy matter to secure our possession of them after the success of your arms have recovered his Majesty’s dominions on which the French troops have presumed some time since to encroach. The permission and license that that nation obtained some years ago to build a fort in the country of the Six Nations at Niagara, the pass or straight between the Lakes Erie and Ontario, have now given them the command over those people and an opportunity of monopolizing the trade with the distant nations and has secured to them a short and easy communication between their northern and southern colonies, as they are masters of Ontario Lake by means of their strong and well-garrisoned fort thereon named Cataracui, and the nature of the adjacent country renders a road to Niagara by land impracticable, they have not hitherto given themselves much trouble to render that place more defensible than nature has made it, imagining for the two reasons just mentioned that the English would never attempt its conquest, however strongly its vast importance might invite them thereto.” Five months later (July 23d), in a letter to Lord Albemarle, he wrote, not very accurately, that Shirley’s and Pepperell’s regiments “are at this time en-

gaged in making Oswego fort more defensible, and in building galleys on Ontario Lake whereby it is hoped they will be masters thereof and be enabled to make an easy descent on the French fort at Niagara. But," he adds, "should the French from the Ohio immediately reinforce their garrison at that place before Shirley execute the business or part he undertook to act at this time his enterprise may be also rendered abortive and himself be obliged to act on the defensive only. However, I entertain warm hopes that by fortifying on Ontario lake and building vessels thereon he will secure the navigation through it and cut off all communication between Canada and the Ohio by water." A few weeks later, Sharpe, having heard that a French reënforcement had gone to Niagara from Fort Duquesne, wrote to Calvert that he felt sure the French "would leave nothing untried to interrupt him [Shirley] in his operations and to prevent his making himself master of Ontario lake." On the same date (August 11), in a most interesting letter to William and John Sharpe, giving details of Braddock's defeat, the Governor writes that a prisoner who had escaped reported that "the second day after the battle a great number of the Indians departed from the fort with a design as he supposes from their route to give Governor Shirley a meeting at Niagara."

The shock of Braddock's defeat turned general attention as never before to Niagara. Shirley's task had become vastly more difficult than it appeared when his expedition was first planned. Colonel Dunbar, who was retreating towards Philadelphia with the remnants of Braddock's army, was ordered by Shirley to proceed to New York and Oswego — orders which to Dunbar seemed impossible and which he made no effort to obey. But as it became more difficult, Niagara appeared more essential to British success. "The fort and pass of Niagara," wrote Governor Sharpe, "is in my opinion the most desirable place in North America, as I intimated to General Braddock upon his arrival upon this continent."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See also, Sharpe to Calvert, Aug. 11, '55; to Wm. and John Sharpe, Aug. 11, giving an Indian's story of a proposed meeting at Niagara; Dinwiddie to Sir Thos. Robinson, Aug. 7, '55, on his shortage of small arms, because he

Governor Sharpe put forth a curious apology for Braddock's rashness: "Had the General used less dispatch in marching to Fort Duquesne, and employed his men in making places of defence at proper distance as they marched, the enemy would have been kept in suspense on the Ohio while things were carried on more privately to the northward, and till a descent could have been made by water on Niagara; but as General Braddock through the impatience of the young people about him as 'tis said hurried on too fast and miscarried so early in the summer I am afraid that ere this more troops are at the streight than Shirley is able or will undertake to deal with."

Washington, considering if Dunbar could in any measure retrieve Braddock's defeat, suggested that he might establish provision depots in the western (Pennsylvania) country, but added: "The success of this tho' will depend greatly upon what Governor Shirley does at Niagara; for, if he succeeds, their communication with Canada will be entirely cut off." He evidently felt far from sanguine as to Shirley's chances at that point. A little later came the intelligence that Shirley had abandoned the attempt on Niagara for this season; but so far as the present writer has noted, Washington's subsequent letters contain no further allusions to the undertaking.

The *Boston Gazette*, November 17, 1755, printed the following "extract from a letter from a gentleman at Oswego, dated 16th October last":

Ever since I wrote you, we have been employed in building new forts and barracks. Indian affairs, which have been the subject of general consideration, begin to wear an agreeable appearance; and I flatter myself that the General's attention to these matters, will have a powerful influence on the next campaign. The Onondagues, who were most in the French interest, of any of the Five Nations, declared their attachment to us. Many of the Confederate tribes, seated at Oswegatie, I hope soon to see here at Oswego. Among the Messassagaes and Chippawces, residing on the north side of this lake, and in the country, extending thence to Lake Huron, we have sent trusty messengers. The Ontawaes, who were had sent what he had to Braddock, and to New York, "to prosecute the expedition against Niagara," etc.

active against General Braddock, resent the conduct of the French, both in the action and division of the spoils, and declare they will abandon their interest, and fall upon their settlements this winter, if we will forgive their past conduct, and supply them with necessaries. We doubted their sincerity till our messenger had returned from their country.

The Senecas, heretofore too little known to the English, gave us great satisfaction. Joncuer, a French man, who has resided among them several years past, was driven away from their country, about a fortnight ago; and they assure us, they will never admit him again.

The General sent a message about a month ago to the Senecas, and in consequence of it, 50 men engaged to meet us at Niagara. Besides double that number, which they promise for our assistance the next campaign, they have engaged to inhabit [? prohibit] the Indians, from aiding the French over the carrying-place at Niagara.

I do assure you, sir, that our Indian affairs are altered much for the better. If the means we have begun be pursued, 'tis really not a hard task to gain all the Indians who inhabit [inhabit] the countries on this [lake] and the lakes Huron and Erie. I am astonished, that we should have had so slender an acquaintance with the Indian natives. The Mohawks indeed we knew, but tho' they are a brave people, yet their numbers are very small. The Oneidas, too, with whom we have had a connection, are but a handful of dastardly thieves. As to the Onondagaes, their chiefs as I said before, are mostly in the French interest, till secured this summer by the industry and art of General Shirley. Unless an unexpected accommodation between the two Crowns disappoint us, the preparations already made, give us reason to hope, that the frontiers of these colonies will be perpetually secured from future invasions, and the French driven out of all their encroachments.

Peter Williamson claimed to be a member of Shirley's troop, and in his book <sup>16</sup> makes pretty full record of his experiences. His account of the advance up the Mohawk emphasizes the hardships which the men underwent. He draws a dismal picture of the state of affairs at Oswego, with the men worn out and sick and provisions running short: "Sickness, death and

<sup>16</sup> "French and Indian Cruelty . . .," Edinburgh, 1758. Many subsequent editions and variants. Williamson's narrative, abridged, appeared in the *Grand Magazine*, London, June, 1758, and later dates.



desertion had at length so far reduced us, that we had scarce<sup>16</sup> men enough to perform duty. . . . On the 24th of October we were preparing to attack Niagara: though notwithstanding we had taken all the provisions we could find at Oswego, and had left the garrison behind with scarce enough for three days, the fleet had not provisions sufficient on board to carry them within sight of the enemy, and supplies were not to be got within 300 miles of the place we were going against. However, the impracticability of succeeding in an expedition undertaken without victuals was discovered time enough to prevent our march, or embarkation, or whatever it may be called; but not before nine bateaux laden with officers' baggage, were sent forwards, four men in each bateau, in one of which it was my lot to be." This would naturally be understood to refer to a departure towards Niagara; but the dubious author proceeds to describe his exploits and difficulties on the Onondaga, and the reader is left in doubt as to whether any of his alleged experiences are real or pretended.

At Oswego, it was an inert and tedious winter that followed, the feeble garrison apprehensive of attack. It would have been even more so had it known that a French spy, Ensign Monet de Louvigny, lurked with his men for many days in the vicinity, examining everything. He could not burn the sloops, since they were under the guns of the fort, but before disappearing, as stealthily as he had come, he wrecked 60 to 80 bateaux, and carried off two prisoners.<sup>17</sup>

Note has been made of the wretched condition of Fort Niagara in 1754. So little had been done to strengthen it that in July, 1755, as already noted, Vaudreuil thought it certain the English would take it if they came to attack it. "They tell me," he wrote, "the fort is so dilapidated that one can't drive in a peg without making it fall to pieces. They have had to shore it up with stanchions"—referring to the palisading.

The badly-equipped garrison of 30 men was increased by the force of De Villiers, and, in September, to nearly 1200, when a large number of soldiers and Indians arrived from Fort Duquesne.

<sup>17</sup> Vaudreuil to Machault, Feb. 2, 1756.

Chabert, during this summer, spent much of his time on the Niagara. He especially exerted himself among the tribes, and even went as far towards the enemy as the villages of the Onondagas, to pledge them if possible to the cause of France.

Vaudreuil did little or nothing for Niagara that would have prepared it for Shirley, had that officer proceeded with the expedition. He ordered nails, oakum and rosin to be sent to Fort Little Niagara, where 40 bateaux were to be built — serviceable in case a retreat were necessary. He exerted himself with the Indians; at Montreal, received Joncaire, a Seneca chief and 10 warriors; belts of friendship came from the Oneidas, Cayugas and Tuscaroras; and as soon as Joncaire returned to Niagara, his brother Chabert set out on a peace mission among the Six Nations.

This was in September, before the reinforcements for Fort Niagara had arrived; yet Vaudreuil, prone as he was to magnify his own deeds, wrote to the Minister: "I have stopped the enemy; but for the proper steps which I have taken, he would now be in actual possession of Niagara and of all our posts in the upper country."<sup>18</sup> This would have surprised no one more than General Shirley.

The detachment from the regiment of Guienne which left Frontenac October 5th, reached Niagara October 28th; its men worked there on the fortifications until November 16th, when most of them returned to Frontenac, leaving three piquets and as many more Colonial troops or Canadians. With these troops came, and departed, the most interesting character who figures in the later history of the Niagara under the French, to whom sundry allusions have already been made — François Pouchot, a captain in the regiment of Béarn.

Born at Grenoble in 1712, Pouchot had entered military service in 1733, as a volunteer engineer, in which capacity he soon won a considerable reputation. In 1734 he became attached to the regiment of Béarn, and served with it in Corsica, where he built roads. In 1744 we find him in the Tyrol, making maps and writing a memoir on the country. Made captain by

<sup>18</sup> Vaudreuil to the Minister, Sept. 31, 1755.



H. M. Severance, photo, 1916

The Old Parade, Fort Niagara, Looking Northeast  
French Bakehouse and "Castle" at Left. The Blockhouse, Right of Center, was Built by the British



brevet, and having received the Cross of St. Louis, he came to Canada with his regiment; and now, having directed the strengthening of Frontenac, is sent into the further wilderness to create at the mouth of the Niagara for the first time a fortress in some measure worthy the name.

More than two months before Pouchot and the troops that came with him, reached the Niagara, General Shirley and his army, as already related, had come on as far as Oswego. It was on September 27th that the military council at Oswego decided the hazards were too great for him to attempt Niagara that season. Pouchot and the men of Guienne did not reach there for a whole month after this cautious decision. Had Shirley persevered, he would have found at Niagara what is best described in Pouchot's own words: "Sixty Canadians formed the sole garrison of this rotten stockade, with no defensive works."

Pouchot's first concern, on taking charge of construction work at Fort Niagara, was to provide shelter for the troops. His naïve description of what was familiar to every Canadian woodsman helps us picture the scene:

It was at once necessary to build houses for these troops in the Canadian manner, that is, huts made of round logs of oak notched into each other at the corners. In this wooded country, houses of this kind are quickly constructed. They have a chimney in the middle, some windows and a plank roof. The chimney is made by four poles placed in the form of a truncated pyramid, open from the bottom to a height of three feet on the four sides, above which is a kind of basket-work, plastered with mud. They take rushes, marsh grass or straw, which they roll in diluted clay and drive in between the horizontal logs from top to bottom, and then plaster the whole.

Captain Pouchot thought this sort of work might be useful to European armies in any wooded country, if the soldiers could but learn to do it.

In these log huts, four platoons of the Guienne battalion spent the fall and winter of 1755-56. Including the Colonial troops and other Canadians, there was a force of about 300

men,<sup>19</sup> who worked through the winter on fortifications drawn and laid out by Pouchot according to the principles of Vauban and Cohorn. Pouchot records that he "was much opposed by the officers of his detachment, who having no more knowledge of his business than of their own, laughed with disdain at an undertaking which according to their ideas could not be finished within four or five years with double the number of troops — but in this," he adds, "they were mistaken."

The winter of 1755-56 at Fort Niagara was devoted to work on the fortifications and was otherwise not devoid of incident. Captain Pouchot had his lodgings in the best building of the place, which we know to-day as the old mess-house or castle; and here, in the intervals of supervision of construction, the reception of Indian deputations, and the varied other duties and diversions of his post, he wrote out a memoir on Oswego, "in which he showed the way of disturbing the English at that post and of retarding their operations." Early in February he sent it down to Vaudreuil.

On the 25th of that month there came in upon him 112 men, women and children of the Senecas and Cayugas. These Indians, who had counted as hostiles, now came ostensibly to talk of peace and to pledge their friendship. Actually, they came for food and anything else they could get. It was the hungry time of year. In March, the artillery taken from Braddock the preceding July, arrived at Niagara; and early in May, two bands of savages, one consisting of 25 Sauteurs, the other of 21 Mississagas, set out from Niagara for Oswego. In eight days they were back again, exultantly showing to Pouchot the bloody scalps of 12 victims. They also brought to Niagara three English prisoners — ship carpenters whom they had surprised at work on a vessel near Oswego. A good many such parties were sent out, or set out of their own volition, from Fort Niagara at this time. Terror and death attended them, and many prisoners were brought back.

A letter which Captain Pouchot wrote from Niagara, May 30th, to M. de Vaudreuil, vividly sets forth other conditions of his administration:

<sup>19</sup> Vaudreuil, Feb. 2, 1756.

Our articles of subsistence must be well looked after, as you may judge, sir, for there remains of our whole stock not forty quarters of meal. We are obliged to issue provisions and equipments to the Indians. They have traded bread with the French and Indians, which has so dangerous a tendency that it is mere chance that we are not now all dead with hunger, or forced to abandon this post. . . . Endeavor, sir, to compel those who are charged with furnishing provisions, to be exact in rendering faithful accounts, and in sending them in good condition. Make those who carry them responsible, for everything that arrives here is more or less damaged. One of the greatest pieces of economy which could be attained in this country, would be to avoid this evil. They give their charge no attention, and nothing is more true, than that the provisions arriving here can hardly sustain life, and they are but very little at that.

On June 22d the regiment of Béarn departed and one month later the fortifications were so nearly finished that Captain Pouchot went down to Frontenac.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### LAKE ONTARIO

IT BECOMES THE THEATER OF WAR — CAPTAIN POUCHOT STRENGTHENS NIAGARA — CAPTAIN BROADLEY AND THE BRITISH FLEET — FIRST NAVAL ENCOUNTER ON THE LAKES.

WHILE the abandonment of the Niagara enterprise turned many against Shirley, he was still not without adherents. In December, at New York, he convened a council of war, designed to serve as the council at Alexandria had served the preceding April. On that occasion he had been authorized to build a fort on Lake Erie, or one or more vessels, for the defense of that lake, the expense to be defrayed by the Governments of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. He now sought moral and financial support for a new undertaking.

The New York council opened December 12, 1755, and continued its deliberations for two days. All the colonies were invited to send representatives, but there were in attendance, besides General Shirley and various officers, only the governors of New York and Connecticut, and the lieutenant governors (though commanders-in-chief under this title) of Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Most of the deliberations had to do with Lake Ontario, and the circumvention of French operations there. Never before had the British colonies in America more carefully considered conditions in the Lower Lakes region. Shirley dominated the council, and drew a vivid picture of the existing conditions. He showed that the English had access to the Lakes only at Oswego; whereas the French were established at Forts Frontenac, Niagara and Toronto,<sup>1</sup> and had constant passage

<sup>1</sup> Transformed into "Fronto" in some reports. See "A Review of the Military Operations in North America, from the commencement of the French hostilities on the frontiers of Virginia in 1753, to the surrender of Oswego, on the 14th of August, 1756; in a Letter to a Nobleman." London,



through the lake. He laid especial stress on the fact that so long as the French were thus situated, they could build and maintain "vessels of force" on Ontario; and he added, he had just learned that "the French were building three large vessels, of superior force to ours, in the harbor of Frontenac." He pointed out that the French fort at Niagara, and those to the south of Lake Erie, and on the Ohio, got all their supplies by water-carriage from Montreal, through Lake Ontario, and nothing whatever from the French settlements at the mouth of the Mississippi. Governor Shirley concluded: "That could the French be dislodged from Frontenac, and the little fort at Fronto, and their entrance into Lake Ontario obstructed, all their other forts and settlements on the Ohio, and the western lakes, were deprived of their support from Canada, and must ere long be evacuated." He proposed, as a plan of operations the coming year, that 5000 men be assembled at Oswego, 4000 of whom should be sent against Frontenac and La Galette; and that when these were taken, the force should be sent to Niagara, then to Presqu' Isle, Le Bœuf, Detroit and Mackinac.

It was a logically-conceived course of action; and the council of war, with surprising unanimity, approved the plan, and advised him to begin at once the building of three or more vessels at Oswego; they also endorsed the proposed attack on Fort Frontenac.

The approval of the war council did not, however, guarantee the desired end. Shirley had by no means the unanimous backing of New York colony, where a strong influence was at work for his removal. The importance which he attributed to Oswego and English control of the Lakes was made the object of "buffoonery and ridicule." De Lancey, hostile to everything proposed by Shirley, declared that 300 men were enough for Oswego, but that the colony should bend all its energies towards the capture of Crown Point. The dissension was for the time being fatal to the proposed undertaking; and the year 1755, which had promised to bring so much to English arms

1756. This valuable letter is attributed to Gov. Livingston and Messrs. W. Smith and Scott, lawyers of New York. It is our best exposition of the political influences and cabals that affected the campaign of 1756.

on the American frontiers, closed not merely without a victory, but with the melancholy record of one defeat and no advance at Niagara or Crown Point, against the enemy. On the other hand, the French had materially strengthened their positions, and more truly than ever before were masters of the Lakes.

Before the close of the year the plan of campaign which had been approved by the New York council of war, was dispatched to England for the royal approval. It was not until April that a returning vessel brought the reply. Shirley found his conduct and his plans entirely disapproved, himself removed from command of his Majesty's forces in North America, and the Earl of Loudon named to succeed him. The same ship brought news of the exaltation of Johnson to the baronetcy, with other appointments that greatly delighted the anti-Shirley faction in the colony.

Before this intelligence reached him, General Shirley, with a zeal which, if exercised earlier, might have altered the history of the Lakes region, had ordered the building of three vessels at Oswego, one of 18, one of 16 and one of 12 carriage guns. Under his orders the fort had been strengthened, various other works accomplished, especially at Oswego falls and the Wood creek portage, and 250 whale-boats made ready on the lake. Work was under way on 500 bateaux to be sent to Oswego, as were also six months' provisions for a force of 7000. Shirley appears to have continued his preparations for the campaign of 1756, some weeks after word of his dismissal had reached New York. It was not until June 25th that Major General Abercrombie, succeeding Loudon, reached Albany, when Shirley relinquished to him the command of the army. Although Fate—not so much the fortunes of war as the power of politics—had denied him a second opportunity to capture Niagara and reestablish his reputation, he maintained an admirable attitude and high spirit to the end; advising the incompetent Abercrombie of the status of operations, and of the measures most essential. He especially sought to impress his successor with the importance of taking Niagara, and of gaining a naval and trade control of Lake Ontario; arguing, with force, that on these two things depended the loss of the

Six Nations or their strengthened allegiance to the British cause.

The regiments of Béarn and Guienne, which were to play so important a part in the story of Niagara, were sent to that post in the summer of 1756. In order to picture the conditions of that time, some details of their advent and service there may be permitted. These troops left their winter quarters near Montreal and early in June made rendezvous at Frontenac, Béarn being in quarters there by the 4th of June, Guienne arriving on the 9th. Disaster fell on the camp on June 6th, when the Canadians by accident set fire to the barracks. It was with great difficulty that the camp was saved. Efforts were made to embark the regiment for Niagara as early as possible, but baffling winds delayed their departure for many days.

In readiness for transport service were the corvette *Marquise de Vaudreuil*, 16 6-pounders; three companies could be embarked in her and three in the corvette *Hurault*, armed with 12 6-pounders. The schooner *Louise*, 8 3-pounders, and the bateau *Victor* with four little cannon could each carry two companies.<sup>2</sup> On the 8th a portion of the regiment embarked with rations for eight days. It is specially recorded that there was fresh bread for only six days. In the evening, a dozen bark canoes arrived, bringing twenty-one Mississagas who sang the war song and gave the Calumet dance at the commandant's lodging. They were counted on as sure allies of the French. But with preparations thus advanced, adverse winds prevented a departure, so that on the 11th M. de Jonquière set out for Niagara with a retinue of twelve canoes, perhaps less at the mercy of the weather than were the sailing vessels. It was not until the 14th that a northeast wind enabled the little fleet to get under way. Leaving three companies of the regiment to await the return of the vessels, they set sail at six in the

<sup>2</sup> Montcalm's *Journal* says: "We had on Lake Ontario four armed barques commanded by Sieur La Force: the *Marquise* of 20 cannon, the *Hurault* of 14, the *Lionne* of 6, and the bateau *Saint-Victor* of 4 *perriers*. These barques were to cruise on Lake Ontario, to carry munitions and troops from Frontenac to Niagara." No other mention of the *Lionne* is noted, but there are numerous allusions to the *Louise*.

evening. The vicinity of Kingston, to-day, familiar to summer tourists, still presents its difficulties to the navigator. In 1756, with no channels charted, no shoals or rocks marked, no light-houses nor any other guide to safe sailing, it is not strange that the network of channels and islands presented many difficulties. Our fleet doubled two points to the north from the camp, made "the big bay, the little Catarouqui, the two isles of Tonoguyon," and others. On the south lay Hog Island, Forest, Lost Child, Buck and Wolf. At 4 o'clock they sighted the point of Quinté strait, but the wind kept them out of it; they had to stand off and on all night. The next morning the captain of the *Marquise de Vaudreuil*, seeing that they had lost ground instead of advancing, that the wind was strong in the southwest and that all hands were tired out, having manœvered all night, resolved to rest on the isles of Coui. He found anchorage and at noon the four little vessels dropped anchor and the soldiers were quickly ashore, where we may be sure Gallic gaiety and light-heartedness asserted themselves. An afternoon in June, on a virgin island, could scarce fail of agreeable diversions. Malartic himself, who records this incident, made a tour of the island, which he reports as three-quarters of a league in circumference and pretty. "It is covered with woods and has three prairies. They found cabbages<sup>3</sup> and a good deal of wild garlic, good to eat." He adds that their hunters killed some pigeons and little birds. "It," the island, "is surrounded by shoals, which make the approach dangerous. There is to be seen the wreck of a boat which was lost there several years ago."

It was not until the 18th that they sailed. For four days they made a devious progress, with fickle winds. On the night of the 20th, by moonlight, Malartic says they made out the mouth of what to-day is called Oak Orchard creek to the south and to the north rose the cliffs of Scarboro Heights. The latter statement is more easily credited than the former. At ten the next morning, being the 22nd, they were beset by "a wind accompanied by a storm and a tempest which appeared to wish to swallow up the vessels," but at seven in the evening it drove

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*).

them into the Niagara river. An hour later these men of Béarn had debarked and were gaily making camp.

We have lingered somewhat over the incident of this passage to illustrate the difficulties of lake transport for troops at this time. Even in June, not usually a tempestuous season, the regiments of Guienne and Béarn were two weeks in coming from Kingston to Niagara.

The vessels were discharged and the soldiers were set to work on the fortifications. The little fleet furnished 150 men for the work. Two days later, June 26th, M. de Jonquières arrived with his retinue of a dozen bark canoes. He had gained nothing in point of time by setting off ahead of the fleet.

And now four companies of the regiment of Guienne which had wintered at this isolated post, embarked on the four vessels to return to Frontenac.

In the days that follow, work on the fortifications is rapidly pushed, under the skillful direction of Captain Pouchot. Major Malartic finds something every day worthy of note in his journal. Two or three items may suffice. On the evening of the 26th, an officer arrives at the portage (above the falls) from the Ohio, with eight bateaux to be provisioned; he reports everything tranquil on that frontier. Early in the evening of the 28th, the boom of cannon came to Fort Niagara from out the mists of the lake. It was supposed to be signal guns from English vessels. The next day, M. de Chabert arrives with a chief of the Five Nations and several Indians had come for trade. The next day, a good many Indians had come in, not merely to trade, but to observe with infinite curiosity the construction of the fortification. On July 1st, Malartic himself makes a survey of the work. Pouchot had traced out a demi-lune with its fosse, the covered way and all the work *à corne*. July 1st they closed the breach of the demi-bastion on the lake side, on which they raised a platform. Malartic walked around the outworks of the fort and examined its position, which, he says, "I found good. It is situated on an elevated point which commands the lake, and the river laves it on the other side, north and south; it is 600 feet from the woods, the ground which lies between is a fine prairie, it cannot be attacked by

land except by this front which has 300 feet in breadth from the lake to the river for defense. M. Pouchot has built there a great work *à corne* which occupies the whole extent of it, he has made around the old fort and on the banks of the lake and river several redans which put them in a state of defense, several cannon *à barbette* placed upon the curtain and upon the demi-bastion to command the woods, 4 cannon placed at the end of the branch of the demi-bastion on the river, to command the river, and a little foot-path along which they can steal. Behind the house is one battery which commands the entrance of the river. This point is defended even against the attacks of vessels, there being shallows here a quarter of a league wide. The surroundings of the Niagara are beautiful. The woods are clear and fine, some parts appear to have been planted to form alleys."

This is the most detailed description of Fort Niagara at this date. Not even Pouchot himself, who had the work in charge, gives so many particulars.

July 2d, continues Malartic, "we made a job of it to mount the artillery in the fort." On the 5th, in the constant coming and going, appeared two Shawanese, deputies from their nation to Montreal. "They appeared enthusiastic over our work, which they measured with their blankets. They compare us to beavers."

Every day brought not only its work but its stirring news. By July 7th, the demi-bastion on the lake side was finished. A boat which had been sent with supplies to Toronto, brought back word of three prisoners and nine scalps brought in there by Indians who had fallen on an English bateau. The next day five Indians came to Fort Niagara with one scalp of the five English whom they had killed on the Oswego. The savage arrivals varied in their gifts, from the scalps of slain Englishmen to food in great variety. A party of Mississagas brought in a buck. Others gave the officers a wild turkey, "which we found very good, resembling those of France." One of the Indians at the Fort, "stung by a small serpent, ate it before us." Amid such incidents, and with much interruption from rain, the work on the fortification went forward. On July 11th,

Joncaire and Chabert arrived with a band of Mississagas who sang their war song. At the same time deputies of the Five Nations came and camped at La Belle Famille. One of them reported that M. de Villiers had attacked an English post which he had counted on surprising, but had been repulsed with a loss of thirty men. The English, reported this savage, are to leave Oswego on the 28th to besiege Frontenac. "This," adds Malartic, "appears to us to need confirmation." Still Niagara grew more and more concerned at reported activities centering at Oswego. Messengers (two soldiers and five Canadians) were hastened off in canoes with dispatches for Frontenac. Then came a courier from Montreal, bringing news not only from down the river, but from France, two vessels having lately arrived at Quebec from Rochfort. "M. de Bourlemaque who commands at Frontenac forewarns our commandant that he will receive by the barque [now *en route* for Niagara] an order to return to Frontenac, and to carry there the heavy artillery, leaving only a picket here." On the 18th, when the three barques arrived, the regiment of Béarn received the expected orders to return at once to Frontenac.

A day or two were requisite for discharging and loading the vessels, and on the 20th Malartic treated himself to a visit to the great falls. In view of the fact that up to that time very few descriptions of the cataract had been written, it is well to include his account of it here:

The 20th [July] I went to the fall which is one of the rarest and most curious phenomena of nature. It is formed by the waters of Lake Erie which is very contracted at its mouth. The water throws itself down after being parted at the end of a little isle, which they appear to have drawn down between two very high mountains into the stream or Niagara river. It is 150 feet high and nearly 200 fathoms wide. It forms several sheets of water infinitely varied in salient and reëntrant angles. The spectator is agreeably recompensed for the noise occasioned by these cascades, in seeing in the clear and limpid depths of these waters as it were jets which ascend in all the colors of the rainbow. This fall is often covered with vapor. It is six leagues from Fort Niagara and half a league from the little fort which is the entrepôt of the provisions which they

bring by land from the foot of the great cliffs. They are conveniently loaded in front of this fort. The road which leads to the fall is good and runs through fine woods. The river Niagara empties into the lake at the point of [Fort] Niagara.

The next day the men of Béarn stopped their work on the fortifications, laborers and artisans were paid, and with provision for eight days the regiment embarked. The wind drove them into Toronto on the 24th, where they anchored and Malartic went ashore. "I entered the fort," he says, "which I found like all those of the country, in a bad condition, built of wood." Sailing on the morning of the 25th, the wind shifted and at evening they were again at anchor in the Niagara. The men had supper on shore but slept on board, the commandant thinking that he read signs in the evening sky of a favoring wind on the morrow. The storekeeper at the fort was ordered to bake bread for the regiment, during the night, but early in the morning, says our chronicler, "they sent to the fort to get the bread, which was not ready. In order not to delay the sailing of the fleet they took what was ready baked," and sailed away at 7. This time fortune favored; in 27 hours they disembarked at Fort Frontenac, and Major Malartic paid his respects to M. de Bourlamaque and the Marquis de Montcalm, who were there.

Among the arrivals at Fort Niagara, in the spring of 1755, had been Lieutenant Antoine Gabriel François Benoit. A Parisian, born in 1715, he had come out to Montreal in 1735, a *cadet à l'aiguillette*. In 1739, he shared as second ensign with many another who figures in our story, in that great adventure, neglected by historians, the campaign against the Chicasaws. In the years that followed he saw much hard service, not necessary to detail here; he became *ensign en pied* in 1745, lieutenant in 1749; made the campaign of 1753 under Marin, learning the Presqu' Isle portage all too well; and was in command of the garrison at La Présentation when, in the spring of 1755, he was assigned to Presqu' Isle. At Frontenac he took passage on the King's transport to Niagara, and in April entered upon a long term of service as commandant at Presqu' Isle, succeeding the Sieur Douville.





Types of English Vessels, Lake Ontario, 1756  
(See *Appendix*)



A year later we find Benoist asking to be transferred; the Governor replied that he could not be spared from Presqu' Isle: "If it were possible to name a successor, I would do it; but your post is one of infinite detail, and only you can accomplish it. I beg you, continue to do your best; in this way you serve the country as well as though you were on the field of battle.<sup>4</sup> The multiplicity of orders and instructions contained in the same letter amply prove that Benoist's post was indeed one of "infinite detail." Presqu' Isle was a base for operations to the south and at Fort Duquesne, where Dumas looked to him for the prompt supply of everything needed. It was also a junction point, where met the forces from Niagara, and other reinforcements from Detroit and the West. Considerable food stuffs came to Presqu' Isle from the vicinity of Detroit. If more Indian war parties came from the West than Dumas desired at Duquesne, Benoist was to send them to Niagara, "where," wrote Vaudreuil, "I shall be able to employ them usefully." In other words, they would be turned over to Chabert, to harass the English frontiers.

The French at this time fully expected an English attack on Niagara. Shirley's expedition of the past season had been abandoned with loud declarations that Niagara would be taken the next spring; and now, at Niagara and the posts beyond, preparations were afoot to meet the expected invasion. Very early in the season, while the four companies of Guienne which had wintered at Fort Niagara were still there, the Governor had written of the anticipated attack. The regular troops, who with the Canadians at the fort, numbered about 300, "had worked continually"; and in ordering additional troops and an ample supply of provisions to be sent up as soon as navigation opened, he added: "I expect an early siege by the enemy."<sup>5</sup> Had Shirley attempted it, in 1756, he would have found a task harder than it could have been the year before. Ample provision was made for the reinforcement of Niagara, not merely from below, but from Duquesne and the West. Benoist was instructed in case the English approached Niagara,

<sup>4</sup> Vaudreuil to Benoist, Montreal, Mar. 16, 1756.

<sup>5</sup> *Corr. Gén.* Letter of Vaudreuil, Feb. 2, 1756.

promptly to forward the artillery which Dumas was ready to send up from Duquesne. Had an English army reached Niagara this season, it would have been confronted by most of the guns which for years the French had been sending to Lake Erie and the Ohio. It may be noted in passing that often in the correspondence of the time Presqu' Isle is spoken of as one of the posts of the "*Belle rivière*."

The attempt was not made, and Benoist gave his summer to other duties. There had grown up about Presqu' Isle fort a settlement, part French, part Indian. Some live stock was kept, and much hay cut.<sup>6</sup> Hogs were probably raised there, as we know they were at this time at Le Bœuf and Duquesne.<sup>7</sup> Many horses were used on the portage, where the heavy work soon killed them. One of Benoist's duties was to secure fresh horses, chiefly from the Indians of the Ohio. The introduction and early use of the horse in this region is a subject not without interest; we merely note in passing that at the time under study the Indians had horses, most of them stolen from the English settlements and traders. The French early bred horses at Detroit; the Indians may also have raised some. As early as 1749 we find Céloron asking Captain de Raymond, commanding a post among the Miamis, for "as many horses as possible," to transport baggage over a portage.

At all of these frontier posts corn was grown; the forts always stood, for safety, in an open clearing, where as much land as possible was tilled for the good of the garrison. This work employed a considerable number of men not on military duty. The records do not mention the presence, at Presqu' Isle, of the wives and families of officers. They did reside, in more than one instance, at Fort Niagara. During Lieutenant Benoist's service at Presqu' Isle, his family remained at Montreal.<sup>8</sup> Not the least of his troubles during his command at the Lake Erie post, was the illicit brandy trade, which demoralized the horde of Indians about the fort, and made so much difficulty that the Governor was besought to take measures to stop it.

<sup>6</sup> Duquesne to Vaudreuil, July 6, 1755.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.*

<sup>8</sup> His wife was Marie Louise, daughter of Captain de Senneville, of the Troops of the Marine.

Lieutenant Benoist was recalled to Montreal in the spring of 1757; was promoted in that year to be captain, and given a company. He fought at Lake George and at Ticonderoga; and again in the decisive years of the war is found serving his King in the Lake Ontario region, as will presently be related.<sup>9</sup>

As early as 1750, officers assigned to Fort Niagara in many instances took their families with them. This was the case also at Fort Frontenac. Wives and children, relatives and servants, were carried along to live at the King's expense. The practice was forbidden, but violations were winked at.<sup>10</sup> Naturally, it became an abuse and one of the countless frauds practiced against the Government. Something of good, however, attached to the custom. The tedium and idle tendencies that beset a young officer at a frontier post were relieved by conditions of domesticity. Existence was no longer wholly a hardship, or a dull round of savage barter and indulgence. The garden at Fort Niagara, between the stone house and the lake, where peach and cherry trees were flourishing in 1759,<sup>11</sup> was a wholesome adjunct of the garrison. That even down to the surrender, officers at the fort had their wives with them is suggested by the Articles of Capitulation, which distinguish between the "ladies" and the "women."

Allusion has been made to the settlement about Fort Presqu' Isle. In a letter of Vaudreuil to Machault, August 8, 1756, is a reference to "the domiciliated Mississagas of Presqu' Isle." Although other places on the Lakes were at times designated "Presqu' Isle"—present Toronto among them—yet the context in this instance points to the Presqu' Isle of which Benoist was now commandant. That Indians were "domiciliated," indicates a settlement, as distinguished from the camps of war parties or migratory bands.

<sup>9</sup> Sources of information regarding Lieutenant, later Chevalier, Benoist, are the official correspondence of the time, especially the letters of Vaudreuil; and the "*Aperçu sur le Chevalier Benoist*," contained in the "*Histoire des Grands Familles Françaises du Canada*," Montreal, 1867.

<sup>10</sup> "*Mémoire pour Messire François Bigot*," 69.

<sup>11</sup> Mrs. Anne Grant's "Memoirs of an American Lady." She writes of the garden at Oswego, in the first years after the Conquest, and of "another military garden which emulation had produced at Niagara."

Some further testimony on the subject is found in the deposition of one William Johnston, who had been a prisoner among the Indians for 14 months, and made his escape from them about 40 miles northwest of Fort Duquesne, some time in 1756. At his examination he testified that a considerable settlement had grown up around Fort Presqu' Isle. To the Council of Pennsylvania he described the fort as of squared logs, filled in with earth: "The barracks within the fort, garrisoned with about 150 men, supported chiefly from a French settlement begun near to it. The settlement consists, as the prisoner was informed, of about 150 families. The Indian families about the settlement are pretty numerous; they have a priest and a schoolmaster. They have some gristmills and stills in this settlement."<sup>12</sup> This was hearsay, not his own observation. He said Presqu' Isle was 30 miles from Le Bœuf (it is 15), and that the stockaded fort at Venango was weak, with provisions scarce, and a new fort which was proposed, not yet built.

Among the many who came and went on the Niagara portage, in this busy season of 1756, was Michel Maray de la Chauvignerie, on his way to the command of Fort Machault at the junction of the Le Bœuf and Allegheny. All his life long he was a figure of consequence, a most useful officer, in the region we write of; but the records regarding him are none too explicit. The Abbé Tanguay, whose great genealogical dictionary of French-Canadian families is so often our authority, says he was born at Montreal, September 5, 1704. Contemporary documents are full of allusions to the important services among the Six Nations, rendered by La Chauvignerie, some of them as early as 1710! Canadian boys in those days early bore the part of men, but we cannot believe that infants of six conducted embassies to savage tribes. In the earlier years the Chauvignerie of the documents was no doubt Michel's father, Louis Maray, born 1671, married in Montreal in 1701. The baffling thing is, that nowhere in the documents is any hint found that there were two men of the name. Both were ensigns. It was the elder Chauvignerie who in 1697, was sent

<sup>12</sup> Johnston's deposition is endorsed: "Oct. 16, 1756." Pa. Archives, ser. I, vol. III, p. 13.

“on the ice” to Fort Frontenac, where he found Duluth sick with the gout; who in 1705 performed a mission to the Ottawas at Michillimackinac; and who in 1710, was so well received by the Onondagas and Cayugas that much was said in official correspondence, of their friendly relations. It was this Ensign de la Chauvignerie who in 1711 carried to the Indians of the New York cantons news of the outbreak of war between France and England. The next year the Iroquois are referring to de Longueuil, Joncaire and La Chauvignerie as their “three children.” In 1721, when several Canadian officers visited Niagara, “Ensign de la Chauvignerie,” the interpreter, was with them. Was it Louis, the father, then 50 years old, or Michel the son, then 17? Probably the father; but soon it is probably the son who figures in many a conference, undertakes many a mission; his duties, like those of the Joncaires, being chiefly to hold the Iroquois tribes friendly to the French.

In 1728, Chauvignerie was sent on a mission to the Onondagas, whose ancient “castle” was not far from present Syracuse. He wrote a graphic report of his experiences, worth drawing on, briefly, for it was an adventure of some spirit; perhaps the reader can decide, from the tone, whether the writer was a veteran officer of 57, or a cadet of 24.

Chauvignerie with his men crossed the eastern end of Lake Ontario. When near Oswego, Onondaga messengers met him, with a message from the English commandant at Oswego: “That as I was passing his place on public business, I must fire the first salute and lower my flag.”

The people with Chauvignerie tried to persuade him to salute the English flag; he was surprised, and grew angry:

“I suddenly stood up and said to them: ‘Ye know such is not the intention of your Father, Onontio, whose message I carry.’”

“A young fool in the canoe of those of the Lake<sup>13</sup> cried out to me, that he would fire and salute the fort. I replied to him, Indian fashion, that he lied, and that I should not suffer it, . . . that I had no manner of business with him who was Commandant of the house of Choueguen [Oswego].”

<sup>13</sup> *I.e.* Lake of the Two Mountains; Montreal Indians.

As a result of this sturdy stand, the Onondagas went back to the fort, then came again and reported that the English officer insisted that his flag be saluted. Chauvignerie thereupon took the Onondagas in hand:

“I asked them, whose was the land over which I wished to pass? The question caused them to droop their heads, and they remained in pensive silence.”

Finally, as our officer insisted, they answered that the land was theirs. As this admission broke down all their arguments that the English flag should be saluted, the party landed at the mouth of the Oswego River, Chauvignerie proclaiming that he would not salute until the English officer had fired a salute for the French flag.

They were scarcely ashore when a war-party arrived from Sault Ste. Marie, with prisoners. They were making these wretches dance, “as is the custom,” when a summons came from Chauvignerie and the Indian chiefs to visit the English commandant. Our Frenchman told his Indians they could go if so minded, but he would stay in his tent. So the chiefs, whose scent was keen, went to the fort:

“In the interval of their visit three cannon were fired, the meaning of which I did not understand. On their return I learned it was to do honor to the toasts. They began by, The King of England; the Commandant of the Fort; and the General of the French in Canada.”

The English officer made a friendly speech to his wild visitors, and gave them “three pots of Rum, a large piece of Pork and a bushel of Peas.” With this gift they came back to camp and were drunk three days. While the spree was on, the savages tried to make Chauvignerie haul down the flag which was over his tent. Although, he says, he was not free from uneasiness, he replied that he knew no other flag, “and it should not be lowered until I was tied. Contrary to the custom of lowering it at sundown, it remained flying, night and day, the whole of the time I was constrained to remain at that post.”

Finally, when the effects of the rum, the pork or the peas, had passed off, and he would resume his way to the Onondaga



country, he was again told that he must salute and strike his flag.

“This I would not do; therefore, no salute on the one side or the other, and we set about starting. A Nontagué [Onondaga] chief, carrying a British flag in his hand, called out to me to embark. I forbade my people doing so, telling them I would not march under an English flag, and they obeyed me. . . . They furled the British flag, which has not made its appearance since.”

Flag salutes, or their absence (as more recent history has shown) sometimes have far-reaching consequences. In this case, the incident begot in the Indians new respect for the French, new admiration for Ensign de la Chauvignerie. His mission prospered; he held council with the Onondagas, the Oneidas and Cayugas; and returning to Montreal, wrote a long report of it all, one of the most vivid and spirited narratives of the time.<sup>14</sup>

If this was an experience of the elder Chauvignerie, his also, it appears, was the enumeration of Indian tribes in 1736, a useful report ascribed to him by the historian Schoolcraft.<sup>15</sup> It could only have been made by one of experience and wide observation.

The son, Michel, became an ensign of infantry, on full pay, February 28, 1748. Like the Joncaires, father and sons, he served as interpreter at councils, went incessantly on embassies, and lived much of the time among the tribes of what became New York State. In 1747 he visited the Seneca villages; in June, 1750, was interpreter at a great council at Montreal; now he is negotiating for the exchange of prisoners, now “wiping away tears,” *i. e.*, condoling for the dead, and giving presents.

Fort Machault was his first command of a post; and when he went there in 1756, he took with him his 17-year old son,

<sup>14</sup> A translation is printed in N. Y. Col. Docs., IX, 1007-1010.

<sup>15</sup> “Indian Tribes of the United States,” III, 558. O’Callaghan says the “supposed author” was Louis Thomas Joncaire.—*Doc. Hist. N. Y.*, I, 23, *note*.

also Michel by name. The father, now a lieutenant of marines, was under orders to complete this fort and put it in state of defense. The son, an ensign, was sent out with Indian war-parties, to fall upon the English frontiers, to burn cabins, ruin crops, run off the stock, take prisoners when they could, and when they could not, to kill and scalp. Such was the schooling of a French-Canadian lad in the year of war 1757!

Young Michel was given command of a party of 33 warriors. After traveling 14 days eastward, over the mountains of Western Pennsylvania, they fell in with a war-party returning with prisoners, two women and a man, and scalps. Our young ensign pushed on with his braves, crossed the Susquehanna below Fort Augusta [present Sunbury], and coming to a German settlement, took five children prisoners, four girls and a boy. Five days later, marching through the woods, and munching a ration as he tramped, he dropped his bread,<sup>16</sup> and as all provender was precious, lingered to look for it; his savage band with the five prisoner children disappeared down the forest path — he was alone. “Finding himself lost and being afraid of starving,” says an old record, “he, after spending in vain two days in search of his party, repassed Sasquehannah and delivered himself up at Fort Henry<sup>17</sup> the seventh day after he lost himself as aforesaid, which he chose to do, rather than starve in the woods, as he found he must if he did not surrender himself up to the English.”<sup>18</sup> He was carried prisoner to Philadelphia and held, at Germantown, until the spring of 1758, when he was exchanged, with two others, for Captain Lewis Martin of the Royal Artillery. During his imprisonment young Michel wrote a naïve, misspelled boyish account of his adventures, sending it, with messages of love and respect to “*tres cher Pere et chere mere.*”<sup>19</sup>

Once more there is perplexity in trying to trace the later fortunes of father and son of the same name. We here merely

<sup>16</sup> His word is *galette*.

<sup>17</sup> In Berks Co., Pa., north of Millersburg.

<sup>18</sup> “Examination of Michael La Chauvignerie, Jr.,” etc., before Chief Justice Wm. Allen, Philadelphia, Oct. 26, 1757. Penna. Archives, 1st ser. vol. III, 305-308.

<sup>19</sup> Printed, in French, in Penna. Archives, 1st ser. vol. III, pp. 329-330.

note that on September 14, 1776, an "extraordinary gratuity of 300 francs was granted to "Michel de la Chauvignerie, officer from Canada," then residing in "Rue St. Honoré, in front of the Opéra," Paris.

We turn for a moment, from adventures of the forest, to a survey of navigation on the Lakes.

In the absence alike of pictures and trustworthy descriptions, it is impossible to be precise in designating many of the early craft on Lake Ontario. The French usually spoke of their sailing vessels as "barques," but it was a general, not a specific word. La Salle's *Frontenac*, built in 1678, styled a "barque," was probably a brigantine. He had, in all, four little vessels, of from 10 to 40 tons.

*La Générale*, one of three vessels on Lake Ontario in 1687, was a "barque." Two barques were burned at Fort Frontenac in 1688; when the fort was rebuilt in 1694, the hull of one of them was raised and rebuilt, and in 1696, Count Frontenac sailed in it to the mouth of the Oswego river.

In 1726 two vessels were launched near Fort Frontenac, and used for carrying stone and other supplies to Fort Niagara. In 1729 the King had directed that only one vessel navigate the lake, "or discontinue both if possible," to save expense. He disapproved of putting any "barques" on Lake Erie. During the next 30 years the French had a number of small vessels on Ontario, craft of one and two masts. In French records they are frequently termed *goëlettes* ("little gulls"), and were probably fore-and-aft rig, or with a square topsail, suggesting the modern sloop.<sup>20</sup>

In 1733 there was but one sailing vessel on the lake, fit for service; but a new one was built in that year. Ten years later there were still but two small vessels, both French, chiefly used in transporting men and supplies from Fort Frontenac to Fort Niagara. Although the English had developed a considerable fur trade at Oswego, they had made no move to put a vessel on the lake; it was in this year that Governor Clarke urged the construction of two or three vessels, superior to those of the

<sup>20</sup> The name *goëlette* was also sometimes applied to ocean-going vessels.

French, but no attention was paid to his recommendation, and the English at Oswego inertly saw their neighbors over the lake strengthen their hold on its commerce. In 1739 a French barque, returning laden from Fort Niagara, was wrecked, October 5th. By this disaster Douville de la Soussaye claimed to have lost 3000 livres.

In 1747 there were four French vessels on Lake Ontario, two of them, the *St. Charles* and *St. François*, spoken of as barques, being of about 50 tons each. When the lake became the highway for French military expeditions to the Ohio, Benjamin Franklin urged that the English colonies contest the monopoly of France on this lake, by building and arming vessels. In 1754 the British Ministry tardily acted on his suggestion. For 80 years the French had sailed these waters unopposed.

The year 1755 is memorable for the beginning of English shipping on the Lakes. On June 28th the brig *Ontario* was launched at Oswego. She was of 40 feet keel, 12 guns.<sup>21</sup> She was built by ship-carpenters from Boston and provided with long sweeps, for rowing if necessary. There were also built at this time at Oswego, a decked sloop, named the *Oswego*, launched July 10th;<sup>22</sup> and three other vessels, schooners, one of them decked. The English vessels were unrigged and laid up early in the fall, but the French craft continued in commission and visited Niagara as long as open water permitted.

The war of 1756 developed a larger type of craft, both French and English, than the earlier years had seen. What the former termed a *corvette* was much like the English sloop-of-war: of ship rig, with guns on the upper deck. Others were properly brigs — with two masts, square-rigged. Of this type, according to a picture<sup>23</sup> in the British Museum, were the *George*, and another two-master named in this print "*Lemon-calm*" — *Le Montcalm*, a name incredible in a British fleet. The *Ontario* and *Vigilant* are shown as of one mast, schooner-rigged.

<sup>21</sup> According to Mante; other authorities say 14.

<sup>22</sup> Williamson says the *Oswego* was launched June 28, confusing her with the *Ontario*.

<sup>23</sup> Reproduced in Robertson's "Landmarks of Toronto."

The French fleet, shown on the same map, includes, the *Marquise de Vaudreuil* and *La Hurault*, both two-masted schooner-rigged craft, with square topsail; the former pierced for seven guns on a side, the latter for six. The *Louise* was a two-masted schooner, four guns on a side, the *Victor* of three. It is impossible to say how trustworthy these map-sketches may be.

Captain Pouchot's large map of 1757<sup>24</sup> shows two vessels as in service for the French on Lake Ontario. Both are two-masted, square-rigged, with bowsprit and jibboom; in other words, they were small brigs. A low row of portholes indicates a lower gun-deck.

At Oswego, Captain Housman Broadley had worked with great diligence to strengthen the English sailing craft and adapt them to the requirements of Shirley's expedition. General Shirley had ordered that the *Ontario* should be given a sloop rig; she sailed so well that it was decided to refit the *Oswego*, Broadley's flagship, and make a sloop of her also. The abandonment of the Niagara expedition left Broadley with these vessels, on which he had so strenuously labored, idle on his hands. Early in October, with the *Ontario* and one of the small schooners, he cruised to the westward, as he says "about 30 leagues, which would have brought him about off Oak Orchard creek; but the weather getting bad, he thought it too great a risk to sail nearer the Niagara, so returned to Oswego, where the sloop *Oswego* was unrigged and laid up for the winter, but the *Ontario* he undertook to keep in commission "in case there should be occasion for her to go out." Leaving the command of the vessels to Captain Laforey, Captain Broadley went down to New York for the winter.

When the council of Governors at New York in December, authorized Shirley to increase the fleet on Lake Ontario, Captain Broadley was the practical man to whom they looked for the execution of the order. It was decided to build two brigantines and another sloop; the brigantines, to be named the *London* and the *Halifax*, to be 60 feet in keel length, 21 feet beam, with 25 seamen each; the sloop (also called a snow), to be

<sup>24</sup> British Museum.

named the *Mohawk*, with a keel of 66 feet but a deck length of over 80 feet; her tonnage was 172, and her crew numbered 20.<sup>25</sup>

In March, 1756, Broadley left New York with a company of seamen. At Albany, they were greeted with the news of the capture of Fort Bull, at the Oneida carry-place, and the killing of 25 men. Their progress up the Mohawk was made with apprehension and extra caution, for these deep-water sailors were not Indian fighters or adepts in woodcraft. At Oswego the work of construction was pressed forward.

Broadley brought with him some ship-carpenters and builders; others had wintered at Oswego, but had accomplished very little. Indians in the French interest hung about the place, captured some of the carpenters and carried them to Fort Niagara. May 20th Captain Broadley wrote at Oswego: "There was some Carpenters sent up in the Winter but as there was Continually Scalping Parties about this place they did very little. There was, the day before I got here, Eight of them Scalped & Four Carryed off Prisoners, the Day after I gott here, Lieutt. Blair with a Party of Twenty Five Men that were sent to protect the Batteaus coming down here was Attack'd about a Mile from this Place, Blair and two of his Men killed, we killed it is imagined Five or Six, two of which we gott, the others were carried off." Ship-building on Lake Ontario had no lack of zest in the "good old days."

While Broadley was hastening work on the vessels, there arrived at Oswego, in May, another builder and 35 seamen, whom General Shirley had sent up. The carpenters were set at work on a new snow. June 5th, Broadley sailed with several of his fleet, going this time, he says, about 40 leagues to the westward "and after examining both Shores for that distance for Harbours for the Vessels found none." He sent small boats into several rivers, but found none of them with water enough for a small schooner. He discovered that a current of about a mile an hour set through the lake to the eastward; and on June 17th returned to Oswego. On the 23d he

<sup>25</sup> These particulars are contained in Housman Broadley's letters, the originals of which are preserved in the Public Record Office, London. My narrative of his operations on Lake Ontario is chiefly drawn from this source.



Types of French Vessels, Lake Ontario, 1756  
(See *Appendix*)





sailed again to the westward, in command of the *Oswego*. Accompanying were Captain Laforey in the *Ontario* and Captain Jasper Farmer in a little schooner. Of this somewhat notable cruise, several accounts are preserved.

The Jesuit missionary, Claude Godefroy Cocquart, wrote to his brother: "On the 19th of April [1756] was launched at Fort Frontenac a schooner of 150 tons, 18 pieces of cannon and 30 swivels, to oppose the English Admiral of 24 guns, which was likewise built on Lake Ontario. . . . Our little fleet on Lake Ontario, in number about 5 vessels, having met the English fleet, amounting to 10, gave them battle. We have taken the English Admiral; afterwards put the others to flight, and obliged two to run ashore, with all sails set, near Fort Chouaguen." "Canada has seen," he says of this affair, "for the first time, a naval engagement on these lakes."

This is a singularly distorted account of what happened, although the engagement, much less impressive than the priest made it appear, was truly enough the first naval conflict between French and English on the lake. As already related, the French vessels, carrying the troops of Béarn which had worked on the fortifications of Niagara, had sailed from that fort late in June. On the 27th, they fell in with the English, but the latter, mistrusting their own strength, took to their heels. The best-equipped of the French craft, *La Marquise de Vaudreuil*, La Force, commander, carried eight 8-pounders, eight sixes and eight swivels of two pounds, a crew of 30 men, and 50 marines. A consort schooner, *La Huron*, commanded by La Broquerie, carried eight 6's, four 4's, and six swivels, a crew, by one account, of 80 men,<sup>20</sup> and 40 marines. A third schooner carried six 4- and 3-pounders, four swivels, a crew of six men, 25 marines and two sergeants.

The two English schooners carried six guns each, and a third, a smaller craft, had six swivels. The French gave chase, and when within sight of Oswego overtook and captured the smallest, which was manned by 15 sailors. According to the French account, the others escaped by rowing "after having

<sup>20</sup> So printed in the translation of Abstract of Dispatches, N. Y. Col. Docs., X, 482; but the original is probably 30.

thrown overboard their boats and part of their baggage.”<sup>27</sup>

A more detailed account is contained in a letter<sup>28</sup> written on board the *Oswego*, at Oswego, dated July 2, 1756. Following is an extract:

I have been out with Commodore Bradley [Broadley] on two cruizes, on the first we were out 12 days, endeavouring to get to Niagara, but the wind blowing constantly from the westward, and our vessels but badly calculated to turn to windward, were forced to return, having made no discovery, but what related to a further knowledge of the lake.

Last Wednesday se'nnight we sailed on a second cruize. On the Sunday following, at day dawn, as we were steering a course for Oswego (having promised Colonel Mercer to return off the harbor in four days) we saw four sail of French vessels, from whom we were glad to make all the sail we could. As I make no doubt, but this affair will be variously represented at New York, I shall give you an impartial account of the same, which is as follows:

At half past three we saw two sail standing towards us from the N.W. we then steering S.E. by S., the wind about W.S.W., on which we immediately made the signal for the *Ontario* to chase, and got all ready for action, wore ship and stood for them; at three quarters past 3, saw two more sail from the same quarter. At this time one of the two vessels who proved to be the Commodore, fir'd two guns to leeward, and hoisted a French flag at his fore-top-mast head, which we took to be a signal for the two sternmost vessels to make sail and join, as he and the next to him directly hall'd on a wind, and clew'd up their main-top-sails; at 5 o'clock, being then about a mile and a half from them, found they were all four schooners, and the two whose distance I have just mentioned, very large vessels, with seven guns of a side, the other two, appeared as large as we, but of what force could not see, they being farther off.

On which Captain Lafory came on board, and a council being called, it was thought most prudent to avoid an engagement, the

<sup>27</sup> Readers of Cooper's tale, "The Pathfinder," which pictures with something of vividness the strife between French and English at this period for control of Lake Ontario, will recall the cruise of the *Scud*, her quest for the *Montcalm* at the mouth of the Niagara, and various episodes, more or less realistic, in the vicinity of Oswego and the Thousand Islands. With all his shortcomings, Cooper remains preëminent if not alone, as the novelist of Colonial America and the conflict with France on the Great Lakes.

<sup>28</sup> *N. Y. Mercury*, July 26, 1756. There is no signature.

enemy being far superior to us, and the utmost consequence our welfare was to Oswego. Our force consisted, first, the *Oswego*, Commodore Bradley, with only four 4-pounders, one 3-pounder, ten swivels, and 45 seamen and soldiers; the *Ontario*, Captain Lafory, with four 4-pounders, one 3-pounder, and 45 seamen and soldiers. A small schooner not bigger than a 4-cord boat, under the command of Mr. Farmer, with six swivels, and 13 seamen and soldiers.

At half after 5, wore and made the best of our way to Oswego. On which the enemy gave chase, and had the French commodore behaved at this time as he ought, he must have bro't us to action very soon and taken us, but he was unwilling to attack without his little fleet being close together, and in chasing fired single shot at us, to do which he was obliged to luff up in the wind, having no bow chase, by which means he lost every time twice his length. At 7 o'clock, he being then little better than half a mile off, first luffed up in the wind, then clapt his helm hard a weather, wore round and fired his broadside at Captain Lafory a stern of us, and left of[f] chase, none of which, or those before, did any execution.

At our first making off we found Mr. Farmer to drop a stern very fast, on which the Commodore hail'd the *Ontario*, to tell him to bare up more large; the two sternmost schooners gave chase to him, and soon after saw him hall up to the northward, for what reason know not, and the two vessels in chase of him, firing at him, which guns by the report they made were heavy; we soon after lost sight of him and the chase, and at 11 o'clock heard firing again; at 3 in the afternoon we got into Oswego."

The unknown writer continues with an account of the ship-building operations at Oswego, the arrival of Bradstreet with 600 bateaux, and complains of a shortage of guns; "however," he adds, "we shall get some small guns for the sloop from the fort, and directly go and look for monsieur, who I am afraid will not give us the opportunity of speaking with him, as they have been to Niagara, and I suppose have carried provisions sufficient for that garrison." The long letter concludes with a vivid glimpse of the conditions under which this halting, feeble warfare of the frontier was carried on:

"We are yet much troubled with scalping parties, large bodies laying within 6 or 8 miles of us, and as our garrison is not sufficient to dislodge them, they do us much damage; we are obliged to have

large parties to cover the carpenters, others to clear the woods round the garrison, that it would be imprudent to attempt it, till we are stronger. For these 10 days past we have quitted the fort on the hill, on Oswego side, it not being tenable; but as some troops (about 200) are come up with Colonel Bradstreet, expect it will immediately be put in a posture of defense. Provisions we abound in, but now the cry is Men, so believe we shall rest on the defensive this summer and winter . . . and may the Enemies of Our Country meet their just Desarts, is my sincere Wish."

Captain Broadley's official report of the engagement, while less graphic, agrees substantially with that above given. He first saw the French sail "about 22 leagues west northwest from Oswego," at half past three, morning of June 27th. There were four vessels, and as they drew near "one of them hoisted a white flag at his fore-topmast head & fir'd two guns." Broadley summoned Captain Laforey on board the *Oswego*, and with other officers they debated what action to take. One of the enemy appeared to have seven guns on a side, another appeared about the same size: "We saw plainly she had eight guns mounted with ports for more." The decision was reached that it would be imprudent to engage them, "the whole strength of our vessels being four 4-pounders, one 3-pounder, and 10 swivels each, the small schooner six swivels; we with the party we had from the Garrison off Oswego, had 45 men each, the small Schooner 14." So the little English squadron scurried away to the southeast, the Frenchmen giving chase, and occasionally sending a shot after them, which did no damage. That night the *Oswego* and *Ontario* reached their home harbor, but Jasper Farmer in his little schooner, falling behind, was overhauled by two of the enemy, compelled to surrender, and carried off prisoner to Fort Frontenac.

In the light of these facts, the report of the priest Cocquart somewhat loses in impressiveness. No "English Admiral" was taken, nor any other craft of 24 guns — an unheard-of armament on the lake. The English bottoms numbered, not 10, but three; none of them "ran ashore with all sails set"; the sole prize was a little schooner, so small a boat that Broadley's official report does not even give her a name.

A number of interesting letters, written in this eventful summer at Oswego, were printed in the colonial newspapers. We cannot better picture the incidents of the time on Lake Ontario, than by including a few of them in our narrative. One <sup>29</sup> runs in part as follows:

*Oswego, June 25.*— On the evening of the 23d inst. two schooners and six whaleboats were sent out on the lake in order to reconnoitre the enemy. Next day they discovered a large body of them on a small island, about eight or nine miles long and a half mile over. Our people stood for the n.e. end of it, in order to cut off their communication with Quadraque [Cataragui], and in rowing close up along the shore, the foremost whaleboat, commanded by Captain Bickers of Colonel Schuyler's regiment, was fired upon about 3 o'clock p.m., and every man in the boat but two, was either killed or taken prisoners. The people in the other whaleboats observing a great number of craft coming off, scuttled three of them, and went on board the schooner, in order to attack the enemy. Mr. Lowe, a volunteer, and Captain Bickers, are both killed and are much lamented. . . .

These details, nowhere else recorded so far as noted, are probably trustworthy. Most of the letters from Oswego at this time were written either by participants in the actions described or by officers of the garrison. It may further be borne in mind that the English force on the lake was at this time at its highest efficiency. Besides the *Oswego* and *Ontario*, the snow *Halifax* of 18 6-pounders and the brigantine *London* of 16, there were at least two sloops and two schooners, and more than 230 whaleboats capable of holding 16 men each. The fleet appears to have been in number of guns and weight of shot, and also in number of men, superior to the French naval force. In face of this, Montcalm captured it and laid waste to Oswego.

<sup>29</sup> *Boston Gazette*, July 19, 1756.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### OSWEGO

THE BRITISH POST DESTROYED BY MONTCALM — INEFFICIENCY OF THE BRITISH FLEET — CHABERT-JONCAIRE'S SERVICES — INCIDENTS OF LIFE ON THE NIAGARA IN 1756.

THE plan of the present work does not contemplate a recital, to the last detail, of events at Oswego. They are elsewhere chronicled, far more fully than is the case with events on the Niagara, which is our especial field. For the general purpose of the narrative, it suffices to recall that after the dismissal of Shirley and the abandonment of his large plans, Oswego knew evil days. Neglected by the colony on which this outpost relied for existence, Oswego soon found itself surrounded by an alert and audacious foe. Seated across the lake, the French kept well informed of the situation and were not slow to seize a favorable opportunity. The abandonment of Shirley's Niagara project the preceding year was to the French equivalent to a victory. From their base at Frontenac, spies and armed bands, French and Indian, made their way around the east end of the lake, or, skirting the shore, lurked in swamp and forest, watchful of all that occurred, and waiting a favorable hour.

Despite the various works begun under Shirley, the feebleness of Oswego was never more apparent. The old fort, on the west side of the river near its mouth, had evolved, by various constructions, from Governor Burnet's original fortification of 1726-27. Never, in its 30 years of existence, had it really been a stronghold. Near it, on the flat bordering the river, had grown up a little settlement of traders, of "handlers" of goods in transit, and of Indians. At periods, it had been a mart of consequence, with storehouses filling and emptying with beaver-skins, or with casks of rum and trading goods from Albany. It was a turbulent community, as was to be expected of a remote frontier post, the resort of the roughest and most lawless

of mankind. There were times when trade was paralyzed by the Indians, who drove off the Germans who with their horses waited for the flotillas of goods to be portaged; and either monopolized the portage themselves, or pillaged and caroused in defiance of all authority. There were other times when traders and Indians alike connived with the enemy, so that Indian goods from Albany soon found their way to the French at Niagara and the posts to the west and south.

In his efforts to strengthen the place, in 1755, Shirley had undertaken the erection of a fort on the east side of the river, which he styled the East Fort, but which soon was known as Fort Ontario. It was built of logs, surrounded by a palisade and ditch, and even at its best was far from formidable. A third construction, to the west of old Fort Oswego, was called Fort George; or, presently and with greater significance, Fort Rascal. The French termed the whole establishment Chouauguen. The western fort stood on higher ground than Fort Oswego, and commanded it; was a square of 170 feet, with a masonry and earthwork rampart 20 feet thick and 12 feet high, surrounded by a ditch. This fort was never completed.<sup>1</sup>

Much that was begun, or proposed by Shirley, was never carried through. The ship-building was delayed by the difficulty of getting iron-work, there being but one forge; when the bellows got out of order, work waited.<sup>2</sup> In June, 1755, a reinforcement of ship-carpenters arrived from Boston, and on the 28th of that month, as already noted, was launched the *Ontario*, the first vessel built by the English on the Great Lakes. This vessel, with the *Oswego* and others, built that season, and 320 men, represented the actual force at Oswego. Meanwhile, the French were passing to and fro, between Frontenac and Niagara, with no attempt to conceal their movements, knowing that the English were powerless to attack. "The reason our forces could not attack them," says Williamson,

<sup>1</sup> A boulder and tablet, commemorative of Fort Oswego, was located at Montcalm Place, Oswego, by the Society of Colonial Wars, 1898. Another marker is near the river, but the accuracy of its location is questioned.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Williamson, who was with Shirley, gives this and other details in his "French and Indian Cruelty."

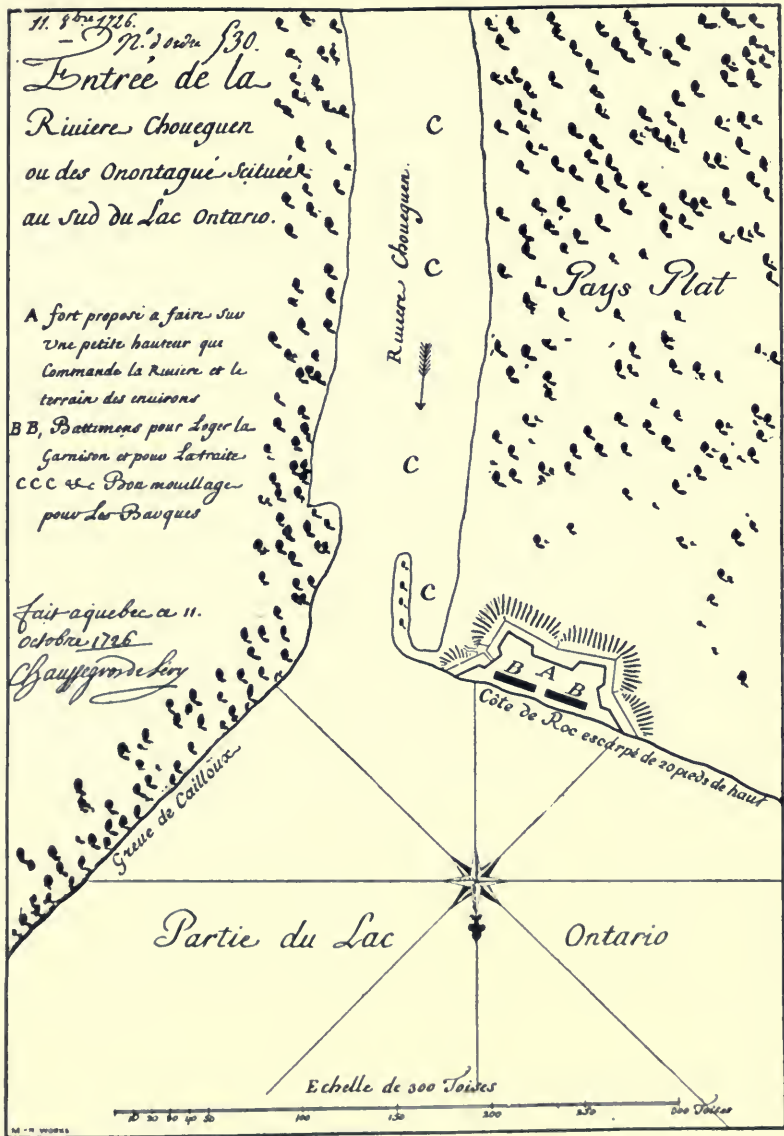
“was because they were four miles in the offing on board large vessels, in which the soldiers could stand to fire without being over-set; and our bateaux, in which we must have attacked them, were so small, that they would contain only six men each, and so ticklish that the inadvertent motion of one man would over-set them.”

The arrival of Col. John Bradstreet, July 1, 1756, with 600 bateaux, 16 large guns and other arms and supplies in quantity, was the first cheering event since Shirley's departure the preceding December. Colonel Mercer, in command of the fort, renewed his defensive operations, and ship-building again went on with vigor. When Bradstreet and his bateau-men were returning towards Albany, they were ambushed at the Oswego Falls portage, and in the sharp fight that followed, the English lost 30 men, killed and wounded. The English reports put the French loss as much greater; but to the French it was only a prelude of a more decisive stroke, planned by the genius of Montcalm, and executed by Captain de Villiers—Louis, the “Great Villiers”—assisted by the engineer, Pouchot.

With a force of 900, French, Canadians and Indians, De Villiers had advanced to what is now Henderson Bay, where he made headquarters, sending out war parties to do what harm they might along the Mohawk-Oswego route. This was in May, on the 10th of which month one of De Villiers' parties fell upon a party of ship-carpenters within 300 yards of the fort and annihilated it. Other raids of like character followed; and while the details of them, according to French or English report, vary widely, the general effect was to convince Montcalm that he could risk an assault.

The blow was struck, August 14th. Montcalm had come on from Frontenac to Henderson Bay, August 6th, with his first division, made up of the battalions of Guienne and La Sarre. Two days later he was joined by the battalion of Béarn, with 80 bateaux, bringing stores and artillery. Péan was in the expedition as a major of colonial troops. Advancing along the shore, while two French vessels cruised off Oswego, on the night of the 12th, earthworks were thrown up within 180 feet of Fort Ontario, which the English abandoned on the 13th, fall-





French Fort Proposed for the Oswego, 1726  
(See Appendix)



ing back across the river to the old fort. A part of Montcalm's forces immediately occupied Fort Ontario; they also opened batteries with which to pound the old fort. Another force, under De Rigaud, crossed the river and invested Fort George, at daylight of the 14th. After a brief cannonading, the English hoisted a white flag, and capitulated.<sup>3</sup> The English commandant, Colonel Mercer, was killed during the action, the surrender being made by Lt.-Colonel John Littlehales; Colonel Schuyler was in command at Fort George.

Again there is wide difference between English and French accounts, the former claiming that there was no surrender until ammunition was exhausted; but Montcalm reports quantities of cannon shot and grape being found, some of which had been thrown into a well.

The forces engaged seem to-day small, and the losses trivial. The number of killed and wounded, on each side, apparently did not exceed 30. The number surrendered to the French, including soldiers, mechanics and laborers, is given as 1520 by the English, as 1700 by Montcalm. The total French force engaged or in reserve was, according to English reports, 7000; but Montcalm puts it at 3000, which is probably nearer the truth. Many of these were Indians.

A small affair, by modern standards; yet of vast importance. It was the greatest battle which had thus far taken place between the French and English, for control of the Lakes; it was the first battle since the declaration of war. It took away from the English their only base of operations on the Lakes. It demonstrated not only to the English, but to Vaudreuil and the rest of Canada that Montcalm's reputed ability as a soldier was no myth. It gave new courage to the French, and it brought to them a greater Indian allegiance, which, while likely to be lost at the first reverse, was for the time being an element of strength.

The naval side of the affair has peculiar interest. In prepa-

<sup>3</sup> The details of this action are best given in Montcalm's *Journal*. Record of various raids around the east end of Lake Ontario will be found in the *Journals of M. de Charly* (major under Montcalm), Feb.-Apr., 1756; and of *M. de Villiers*, in May, 1756. These documents are in the *Collection de L vis*.

ration for it, under orders of Vaudreuil, the Sieur Cressé had that spring completed two "*corsaires*" at Fort Frontenac.<sup>4</sup> The official correspondence repeatedly testifies to the efficiency of this contractor. He was a native of Canada, and of great value in helping the French establish control on Lake Ontario.

August 4th Captain La Force "put to sea" with the *Marquise* and *Hurault*, fully armed. Their presence on the lake had not encouraged Broadley to put out from Oswego. While they were on guard, the *Victor*, unarmed, was carrying supplies and traders' goods to Niagara, the *Louise* being held in reserve at Frontenac.

In his defense Broadley wrote: "So little did they [the French] apprehend from our vessels, that they did not think theirs, which they knew to be superior to ours, necessary to cover their landing." In fact, the *Marquise* and *Hurault* did not appear at Oswego until after the surrender, and then only to act as transports.

English energies at Oswego for the past year had been spent not so much on fortifications as on vessels for offensive warfare. All that they had achieved in this line was now in Montcalm's hands. "We captured," he wrote, "seven vessels of war; one of 18 guns, one of 14, one of 10, one of 8, three mounted with swivels, 200 barges or bateaux, 7 pieces of bronze, 48 of iron, 14 mortars, 5 howitzers, 47 swivels, a quantity of shot, bombs, balls, powder and a considerable pile of provisions." The captured vessels included the *Ontario*; the *Oswego*; the *London*, a brigantine of 16 guns, only 12 of which were mounted; the *Halifax*, an unfinished snow, of 18 guns; the *Mohawk*, a sloop of 10 guns; and another, a small schooner of 12 swivels. One of the smaller craft appears to have been named the *George*, another the *Vigilant*. Montcalm himself mentions "the brigantine *London*, the *Ontario*, *Vigilant*, a goëlette," and skiffs.

Montcalm demolished the works, laid waste the garrison gardens, emptied the storehouses; and with his prisoners embarked, August 21st, for Henderson Bay. That the capitulation was followed by Indian atrocities and a massacre, was

<sup>4</sup> *Corr. Gén.*

charged, and denied, at the time. Certain English accounts state that nearly a hundred prisoners were tortured and scalped; one of the narratives is so circumstantial as to merit attention.

A letter and journal purporting to have been kept by an English officer who was taken prisoner at Oswego were published in England in 1757.<sup>5</sup> No one but a participant in the events described could have written it. The author states that two English schooners, cruising off Oswego on August 7th, saw an encampment two miles from Fort Ontario. On the 10th a French Indian scalped a man under the guns of that fort. The next day the French invested the place, keeping up their fire during the 11th. On the 12th, Lieutenant Dame and Ensign Tyng were wounded and several privates killed. On the 13th the French advanced to within 70 yards of Fort Ontario; and on the 14th Colonel Mercer was "killed by a cannon-shot" as he was giving directions about remounting some guns. A grenadier and drummer were killed by the same shot. Lieutenant De la Court of the Ontario garrison lost his left leg; the command devolved on Lieutenant-Colonel Littlehales of Shirley's regiment. At a council of war which he called, an engineer, MacCuller, declared the fort no longer tenable. The enemy, said to number 3000, were fording the river. Lieutenant Drake and Mr. Cruse carried a flag of truce to them, with a proposal that the English march out with honors of war. This the French rejected, whereupon Littlehales surrendered, August 14th.

It is from this point that the journal of the anonymous British officer becomes important, for it gives details of events following the surrender not elsewhere noted. The French force, it says, consisted of 1500 regulars, with 38 cannon, 3000 Canadians and Indians. After the English delivered up their arms, the Indians stole their baggage, "murdered several of our soldiers as they stood on the parade and scalped all our sick in the hospital. They cut Lt. De la Court to pieces, as he

<sup>5</sup> Contained in "The Military History of Great Britain for 1756-1757," London, 1757.

lay in his tent, after having his wound dressed, tho' delivered into the care of a French officer."

On the 15th, the captive officers were set off in bateaux for Montreal. Four days later, when Lieutenant-Colonel Littlehales stepped on shore, he was seized by a number of savages "who buffeted him, knock'd him down and would have killed him, but were prevented by some regulars."

Montcalm made no effort to repair and hold Oswego. To do so would have alienated his new-won Indian allies. Whether or not this consideration had weight with him, he was strategist enough to see that a French garrison there would be precariously exposed and a source of little strength.

There is much discrepancy in the account of pillage, guns taken, etc. A manuscript report<sup>6</sup> states that notwithstanding the destruction of food stuffs, a great store of provisions was carried off: "it was hoped enough were preserved to supply Niagara and Frontenac the coming winter." At Fort Ontario, of the guns taken, were two 4-pounders, six 2-pounders, five mortars and other small ones. At Fort Oswego, seven brass cannon, of 18, 14, 12-pounds shot; 48 iron cannon from 1 to 25 pounds; mortars and howitzers; 23,000 pounds of powder, 8000 cannon balls, 450 bombs, 1476 grenades. This appears a precise inventory.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Can. Archives.

<sup>7</sup> Of no other episode in the history we here trace, is there such an abundance of documentary source-material, or such a mass of printed papers, essays, pamphlets, books even, as of the taking of Oswego. Of French sources, Montcalm's own journal should have precedence. It is included in the collection of Lévis manuscripts printed at Quebec in 1895. In the unpublished papers of the *Correspondance Générale*, Canadian archives, many reports deal with it, including a journal of M. Desandrouins; and a detailed and graphic narrative of the Oswego campaign by an unknown participant, who wrote: "We made 1640 prisoners, of whom 120 were women; 5 flags, 120 cannon, 6 large barques, storehouses full; they estimate the King of England's loss at 20,000,000 [livres]. The least superstitious attribute our success to Providence. . . . We lost 80 men, and our little army would have been overcome if the valor so justly attributed to the troops of old England, prevailed in their colonies. Ours is to-day more flourishing than ever, commerce wholly reëstablished. Lake Ontario ours with no power to oppose." But, he admits, the Canadians and Indians "have a very con-

Chabert Joncaire bore an active part in the siege and capture of Oswego. During the early months of that year, he says, he "strove to strengthen the Five Nations in the neutrality to which they were pledged," but his idea of neutrality appears to have been of a sort sometimes shown during a later and greater war. From going and coming among the Seneca villages, he records in his Memoir: "I came back to my fort at the Portage, and I engaged several tribes to march against the English." Learning that some 600 Indians in English interest were "to set out on depredations in our territory," Chabert sent two chiefs to them, with wampum peace-belts. "Their readiness to listen to my proposals was to me a new proof of the influence I had over these peoples. They accepted my wampum and retraced their steps. I gave them some reproaches, and still more presents, always at my expense, and persuaded them to expiate their faithlessness in the blood of our enemies. They followed my advice, and went off to raid and burn in the vicinity of Oswego."

In July Chabert led 500 warriors to the support of Montcalm. He says the chiefs of the Five Nations were opposed to his personal leadership. "They represented to me that if I should perish in this undertaking, there remained no one to keep up the good understanding between them and the French." Chabert flattered them, and with another play on their "neutrality," said "it was a pity to leave so fine a troop useless," whereupon they declared themselves for the French. Four Seneca chiefs, with their bands of 80 men each, announced themselves ready to march with him. "What a pity," they said, "for our nation, if it cannot do for its son that which strangers do." The English never had such a hold on any of the Six Nations, as is shown by this declaration. Chabert continues: "I had in view only to pique their honor; so I went without difficulty; and for fear lest their ardor should cool, as soon as I siderable part of the cake." He calls the Indians "*des dogues enragés*" and says they killed more than 100 persons included in the capitulation.

A useful collection of papers relating to Oswego, 1727-1756, is contained in the N. Y. Documentary History, Vol. I. Several other unusual or little known source-documents, drawn on for our narrative, are duly acknowledged in footnotes.

had equipped them at my expense, as well as 112 warriors from other nations which I had the credit of bringing together, I led them with the rest of my troop, numbering 500 men, to the siege of Oswego, in the capture of which they contributed a great deal by their bravery.”<sup>8</sup>

He says nothing of their participation in any massacre after the surrender; but if, as appears, there was a massacre, Chabert's Indians were responsible for it.

One naturally asks, what was the English fleet doing, during the assault, for the defense of Oswego and the honor of the flag? After all the labor and cost of building it, could it give no account of itself in this crucial hour?

Apparently not. Captain Broadley was taken prisoner and with other officers and men of the fleet, and the survivors of the garrison, carried off to Quebec, where, September 26th, he wrote a long report to the Admiralty. It is a humiliating exhibition of unpreparedness and inefficiency. As is ever the case with the unprepared, there was an excuse if not a reason for every failure. Broadley had perhaps done personally all he could, with facilities at hand. That more should have been done, to give the fleet efficiency enough to justify the expenditure made for it, is evident in every line of Broadley's report.

He tells of the action of June 28th, on the lake, in which he ran away from the French, with the loss of Captain Farmer's schooner. On July 3d, at the Oswego shipyard, he had launched a new sloop and a brig, but they were not ready for sea until the 29th. He was short of officers, so transferred to the new vessels some of his command from the *Ontario* and *Oswego*, and also some of their guns. Here was excuse Number One: That although he could sail with two additional vessels, his armament was no greater than before, and his crews were actually weakened, by being thus distributed. He says,

<sup>8</sup> Sir Charles Hardy wrote to Gov. Stephen Hopkins of Rhode Island, Apr. 18, 1756: "Col. Mercer has further information . . . that another body of Indians, etc., are on their march from Niagara, which together with the first-mentioned, are to form an attack on Oswego." ("Records of the Colony of Rhode Island," etc., V, 524.) There is no lack of testimony that Indians in the French interest went from Niagara to share in the attack on Oswego.



that as no new officers were appointed for the new vessels, he was forced to put one of them in command of his lieutenant, Mr. Deane, the other of Lieutenant William Bedlow, brought from New York, where he had been master of a merchantman. "I thought it for the good of his Majesty's service," Broadley wrote, "that we should appear out on the lake as strong as we could. . . . On the 30th of July I sail'd with the above Force; on the 31st, it blowing very hard, the *Ontario* having sprung her boom, and the Brig carried away her gaff, was Obliged to bear away for Oswego to get new ones."

Excuse Number Two: What might have been expected had happened. Sailors who did not know lake navigation soon came to grief. Here the French were at great advantage: they knew the winds and ways of Ontario, and by long experience knew not only how to sail, but how to build for it.

August 2d Captain Broadley once more ventured out. The weather being favorable, no mishap befell the vessels, nor did any French sail send them back to port; the trouble this time was a new one: "After being out two or three days found the Magazine of the Brig so damp, from her being built of all Green Timber, that a Great number of the Cartridges were Milldew'd, which I thought to put a Stop to, by keeping them in the Sun every opportunity. Upon examining them the 6th of August, I found some of the Paper quite Rotten, and the Bottom of some of the Cartridges dropping out; the New Sloop labouring under the same inconveniency made it necessary for me to go in."

Excuse Number Three: the "inconveniency" of wet powder.

Even in making the home port, perverse fortune followed Broadley: "In running into Oswego, was taken with a violent Thunder Squall close to the Harbour, which after my getting through the Narrows, not being able to carry sail, drove me ashore on the East Side of the Harbour, which obliged me to get my Guns and part of my Ballast out to get her off again, which we did the next morning, but as there was a Swell Rose very soon after she went ashore, which occasioned her striking upon the Rocks, it was thought Necessary to heave her down to Examine her Bottom."

It may not have been lack of seamanship or foresight, but

merely concurrent misfortunes, that put our captain in such a plight. It was, in fact, a desperate time; for Captain Broadley was still busy overhauling his brig, and fitting a new keel, August 11th, when a small schooner which had cruised outside the harbor on lookout duty, reported an enemy craft off shore to the eastward, and a little later brought word that there was a large encampment behind Fort Ontario. This was the first word the English garrison had of the approach of Montcalm's besieging army!

Captain Laforey in the *Ontario* and Lieutenant Deane in the new sloop were sent out to reconnoiter. The French promptly sent several 12-pound shot into the *Ontario's* hull and upper works, rendering one of her guns useless and so disabling her that boats had to be sent out to help her back to harbor.

Up to this point, it is an amazing record for British seamen. They had run away from the enemy, and had been under the enemy's fire; but do not appear to have returned a single shot.

On the morning of the 12th, two sloops were sent out to cruise up and down, off the harbor; not to fire upon, but merely to report on, the enemy. Because of rocks and shoals, they could not draw in close enough to open effective fire on the French forces ashore. Captain Broadley proposed going out in the brig, with a force of soldiers, but was told to await the action of a council, to be held the next morning. To this meeting, a letter was brought from Captain Barford, commanding at Fort Ontario, stating that he must abandon that post and retreat to Fort Oswego on the west side of the river; upon which, it was ordered that all the English fleet should be brought into the harbor, to cover the retreat of the Fort Ontario garrison; and this was done. Broadley thought that at night (of the 13th) he could escape with the vessels into the lake; but he says he was told to wait, because reënforcements were expected. On the morning of the 14th, he would have sailed, but "there was so Great a Swell upon the Bar it was impossible to get out." His thought then was to destroy the fleet; but seeing the French and Indians crossing the river about a mile up stream, he ordered Mr. Deane, who lay nearest, to fire upon them, but they could not make their shots reach. When Colo-

nel Mercer was killed, Broadley, realizing that the situation was desperate, and lacking men to defend all the vessels, was about to retire on board the brig, barricade her and make a last gallant stand, when a drum-beat announced a parley, followed by surrender. This, he says, "prevented my setting fire to all the vessels, which I certainly should have done, had he informed me of his intentions time enough." He had the chagrin of seeing the French do this, destroying all but two vessels, which they kept for transport purposes; and on the 15th, with his brother officers and the survivors of the garrison, Housman Broadley departed by bateau for Montreal, a prisoner of war. With Captain Laforey and their lieutenants, he was later carried to France, on the *Outarde*, a French store-ship. He was exchanged; and in January, 1757, being at Deal, made such defense as he could, for the British Admiralty Board, of his service on Lake Ontario. All the adverse circumstances with which he had had to contend were rehearsed. While he said much in his own justification, he could say nothing to make the story of the first British fleet on Lake Ontario anything but an inglorious record of inefficiency.<sup>9</sup>

After the downfall of Oswego, Chabert, in company with a numerous band of Senecas who had distinguished themselves in that conflict, went to Montreal. That town was his home; rather, it was his parental home, and the residence of his young wife and children. On his occasional brief sojourns there, we may be sure that he cut some figure in the community, accustomed though it was to the rough heroes of the wilderness. But Chabert de Joncaire was no common man; his service to the Colony was distinguished if not unique. To be sure, when he discoursed of his exploits, he did himself full justice; but if he had inherited something of the Gascon, at any rate he "made good" in many a difficult undertaking. He was trusted and relied on by the Governor Gen-

<sup>9</sup> I have not noted any verdict in the cases of Broadley or Laforey, either of punishment or exoneration. Several of Broadley's letters are given as an appendix to an admirable paper by W. Lawson Grant, "The Capture of Oswego by Montcalm in 1756," printed in the Transactions, Royal Society of Canada, Sept., 1914.

eral, as was his brother; and now, as usual in his Montreal visits, he was summoned to a conference with the Marquis de Vaudreuil.

Before he departed from Montreal, in October, he received explicit orders from the Governor to return to the Niagara, where his brother Joncaire was soon to hold a great council, to which all the Five Nations were invited. Chabert was to confer with his brother, and with Captain Pouchot at Fort Niagara, as to ways and means of attracting thither more of the Five Nations in trade; but the instructions went beyond trade: "One or both of the Messrs. Joncaire will betake themselves to the Five Nations to engage them (so much the better to execute our plans) to fall upon the English and to take some prisoners, to prove to us the sincerity of their attachment to the French." Montcalm's stroke at Oswego, to which Chabert and his Indians had so contributed, was to be followed up by every device possible, to strengthen the allegiance of these tribes. Chabert was also directed to build a storehouse in their country, Vaudreuil promising to send a blacksmith to live with them.

It was hoped that a greater trade would now develop at the Niagara posts. Large stocks of trading goods were sent to them and Chabert was admonished to see that the Indians had "no occasion to regret the English. The clerks put in charge of the King's trade shall give the goods to them on as favorable terms as possible." Chabert was expected to make it, not only easy for the Indians, but profitable for the King. It was no light obligation.

One clause in the Governor's instructions is significant: "The savage tribes who will come to Niagara, must naturally address their speeches to M. Pouchot, to whom we have entrusted our authority in this post; but it is for the good of the service that he shall do nothing except in concert with the Sieur Chabert<sup>10</sup>; and the latter was cautioned "to accord as far as he can with this commander." He was authorized to establish some of the Five Nations Indians, who had asked the privilege, at the Little Rapid — in or near the present city of Buffalo;

<sup>10</sup> Instructions of the Marquis de Vaudreuil, etc., Oct. 19, 1756.

and he was urged to expedite the transport of goods over the portage, to relieve the Ohio posts; in his necessary absence that work was to be superintended by M. de Morandière. Finally, he was to come again to Montreal, the following Spring, with as many Indian chiefs as possible.

The loss of Oswego was a shock to the colonies scarcely less than had been Braddock's defeat. The latter may be ascribed to an arrogant self-confidence; but the former is largely traceable to Shirley's removal, and the paralyzing effect on military efficiency of the factional strife in New York Colony. Shirley's failure in 1755 was no ground for predicting his success in 1756; but it is plain that, had the elaborate preparations which he had set in train for that season's campaign been carried through, Oswego would not have been so easily at the mercy of the French.

"The loss of Oswego," wrote the author of the "Review" already cited, "must principally be ascribed to a junto, who have all along embarrassed every part of his Majesty's service on the Lake Ontario." The allusion was to Lieutenant-Governor De Lancey, to Sir William Johnson and their adherents. "By these intrigues, our country bleeds. Oswego is lost; lost, perhaps for ever, with the naval armament, above 60 pieces of ordnance, and a rich supply of stores and provisions. Would to God," he exclaims, "this was all." In the writer's apprehension he saw the French more firmly established than ever in control of the Lakes, monopolizing the fur trade, to the ruination of Albany, and rapidly spreading throughout the region between Canada and Louisiana; "The French can now, with the utmost facility, secure the inland country, and confine us to the very brinks of the ocean." To the French, such despair may well have afforded amusement, save when they reflected how far it was from the truth.

A very curious glimpse of Niagara at this time is afforded by an Indian report which is preserved in the minutes<sup>11</sup> of a conference held at Easton, Pa., July 25, 1756, between Governor Robert Hunter Morris and others, and a deputation of Delawares. These Indians bore the formidable names of Tee-

<sup>11</sup> Pa. Archives, 1st ser., vol. II, 722.

dyuscung, Tehisquahunk, and Betschihillewi; such at least is the spelling in the Pennsylvania records. In the Johnson papers, where a slightly different version of their report is preserved, the names appear as Tatteneskund, Tepisgaukunk and Betschihilhewi. As in most Indian names, these spellings but represent the attempt to spell and set down in writing sounds which the ear but imperfectly caught.

Teedyuscung, who was of some importance in his day, called himself "the king." It is recorded that he was of a "big raw build," and could drink three quarts or a gallon of rum a day without being drunk. He it was who persuaded the Delawares to go over to the French. Earlier in this summer of 1756, with his companions, he had been at Fort Niagara. On his way to Easton he fell in with a Jersey Indian known as Jo Peepy, and told him of his Niagara experiences. These Peepy repeated to Mr. Horsfield, Justice of the Peace for Northampton County, at Bethlehem, who wrote out the story and sent it to Governor Morris. The language in which it is preserved is probably Horsfield's; but Teedyuscung is represented as the narrator. He and his companions said:

"They had been three or four weeks ago amongst the French at the Fort Niagara, where the French made exceedingly much of them and were very open and free with them. One of the chief officers said, striking his breast:

"I am a Man! Look at me (stretching out his arm). My arm is strong. I have thousands more like me."

"As to provisions, the French had bread in tolerable plenty, but their meat was very scarce, and what little they had was quite spoiled. They told them they expected a supply of provisions every day.

"Teedyuscung and company, requesting some goods &c of them, the French officer answered that he would willingly help them to everything they wanted but at present, goods were scarce with them. He said that they expected four large ships from their Mother Country and if they would come again in two months' time they should have everything plenty, all what their eyes could see or their Hearts desire.

"The French Captain said, 'I will now show you what works

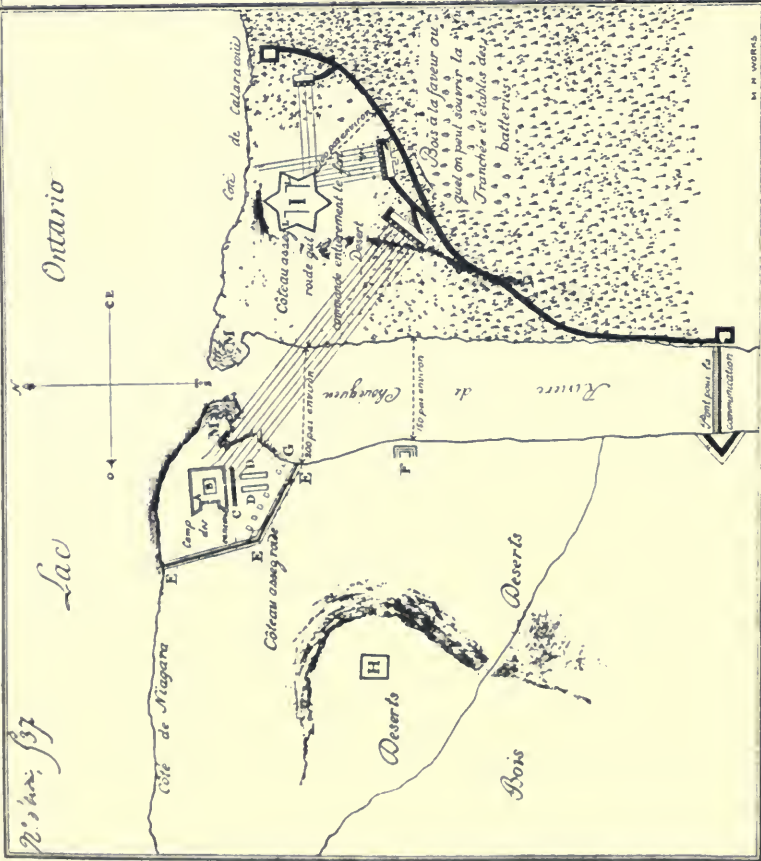
# PLAN OF RIVER AND FORTS OF OSWEGO

FROM THE RECONNOISSANCE I MADE JULY 25, 1756

## REFERENCE

- A—Old fort, of poor masonry, 2-2½ feet thick, without ditch or covered way.
- B—Old stone house in middle of fort.
- C—Trenches opposite south gate, behind which were 18 cannon.
- DD—Traders' cabins.
- E—Entrenched camp.
- F—Entrenched guard-house.
- G—Bay and anchorage.
- H—New palisaded fort, on height west of river.
- I—Fort Ontario, palisaded, with staging for guns.
- L—Barracks.
- M—Rock flats, near water level.

The heavy line and three batteries raking the forts show the French plan of attack.



Siege Plan of Oswego  
Redrawn and Translated from De Combles' Plan, 1756





we have made to destroy our enemies,' and then took them into a Cellar and from thence into a place under ground where was laid many Barrels of Gun Powder. The Indians described it as going sometimes this way and again another way, something like a worm fence, and as far as I can learn, the mine went at least half a mile from the fort, and that there were more such places under ground, with barrels of gun powder near the Fort. Further, when the Indians came away they talked one to another, and concluded it led that way that the English would come if they attacked the Fort. All round the Fort for a distance of nearly a quarter of a mile, the ground was quite clear and free, everything being clear'd out of the way, and that from the Fort was a fine road leading to the water (I suppose Lake Ontario), made exceeding regular and fine, everything moved out of the way, and the Indians thought under this road was the mine.

“They say the fort is situate in a fork, built very strong with a ditch or moat very deep round it; the palisadoes are of large trees, and within another row of Palisadoes and then the buildings.

“When Teedyuscung and company had been two or three days at Fort Niagara, the French Captain took a large letter and laid it open before them, desiring they would give good attention to what he was going to say, *viz.*:

“This letter is from the King of England to us, and says so much: “Let us the English and you the French consider what we are about. We the English live on one side and you the French live on the other side, and we have all the Indians in the midst of us. Let us join together at a certain time and squeeze the Indians all to death at once, and then we will divide the country betwixt us.” You can see plainly by this,' continued the French captain, ‘what people the English are, and what you are to expect from their Hands.’

“As near as I could learn,” said Teedyuscung, “the number of people at Niagara are 300 French and 200 English; 100 of the English are Prisoners kept very close, not having liberty to speak to any Indian, and the other 100 are Indian traders that used to frequent Allegheny or Ohio, have now joined the

French, enjoy their full liberty and walk about as gentlemen.

“When these Indians ask’d the French captain for powder and lead they were answered: ‘We have none now to spare, else we would give you. The powder you saw under ground, we cant take it; it must be kept there for the use we have told you of.’ They gave Teedyuscung a fine dark brown cloth coat, very much laced with gold, which he now wears.

“The French chiefly depend on the help of the Twightwees and Tachwquas, who some time since were in the English interest, but afterwards were persuaded to leave the English and join the French.

“But when Teedyuscung was at Niagara there came an Indian from the Six Nations, desiring them by a large belt not to meddle in the war, neither to join the French nor the English, but if they cant help meddling to wait at least four months before they do anything to assist the French.

“The Twightwees accepted this belt, and sent word in answer, that they would do so, signifying that they had been blind this winter past, and this last summer like now, but they open now their eyes, and will follow the direction of the Six Nations herein as children.

“The before-mentioned Nations live very near to Fort Niagara, but the belt was not delivered them at Niagara, but in a place some miles off and the French knew nothing of it.”

A singular incident of the period, illustrating Indian customs and beliefs, has been preserved.

In 1756, M. Duplessis, commandant at Niagara, sent a party of 25 Mississagas to Oswego, while the women of the band remained near Fort Niagara. These women assembled every evening to “make medicine,” one old woman singing, the others replying in chorus. It was reported in the fort that these women were working a spell of some supernatural sort, in accordance with ancient forms of their people, and the French officers from the fort went out to the scene of the strange ceremony and looked on. “At the end of six or seven days, they enquired why they made no more medicine, when an old woman replied that their people had beaten; that she had juggled and that they had killed many people. An officer who knew these

juggleries, wrote down upon the spot, the day that she designated, and when the party returned, he questioned the Indians and prisoners, whose answers confirmed the old woman's account." Pouchot, who tells the story, adds: "It is at least 60 leagues from Niagara to Oswego, and no person had come either by land or water." The Indians had lost two men, took 12 scalps, and led away three ship-carpenters as prisoners. The old woman's clairvoyance did not unduly impress our engineer. Although the accuracy of it in this and other cases was "well known in the French army," he sagely reflects that "in fact their prophecy often amounts to nothing."

At Fort Johnson, November 21, 1756, John Walker told his adventures. He was of Patterson's Creek, in Pennsylvania Province, where, on May 29th last he was taken captive by four Shawanese Indians and four Frenchmen. He was carried through the woods to Fort Duquesne, a journey of ten days, and there he was put in irons and "confined in a dungeon" for five days; then, still loaded with irons, he was taken in a bateau and carried up the Ohio, and in their course they met 40 canoes bringing a war-party of Indians down from Lake Erie to Fort Duquesne, with the avowed purpose of raiding the Pennsylvania settlements. At Wynango [Venango], Walker says "there were about 14 men in a small fort and no cannon and a few Indians 'round it." He was next brought on to Fort Le Bœuf, which he reported as stockaded with 30 men and no cannon. Thence, over the portage to Presqu' Isle "by land in a cart," and here as at the other French establishments he found only a "weak, square log fort and but few men in it."

He was brought down to Lake Erie "to a small fort, 18 miles from Niagara, and from thence to Niagara by land, which is a fine wagon road." He described Niagara as a large, strong stone fort, with a palisaded ditch. Here he was told by one of the soldiers, who was a Dutchman, that they mounted only six cannon, 14-pounders. He thought there were some six hundred men at the fort when he arrived, but four hundred of them embarked on four vessels, one of which carried him as prisoner to Cadaraqui. These vessels carried, one of them 16 guns, one 12, one 8 and the other 6. A passage of thirty hours

brought them to anchorage, "close to the shoar at Cadaraqui, where there is a good landing." He was not allowed to go ashore, but from the vessels saw "a vast quantity of provisions near the landing." While detained there, he saw the French embark to attack Oswego and a French Indian trader, called Bawbee, told him there were 5500 soldiers in the expedition.

Being sent on to Montreal, he was questioned by the Governor and sent to jail; was later released, to work "at 15 livres a month," 10 of which the Governor was to have and the prisoner the rest, "which is done to all the English prisoners who would not renounce their religion." After five days of this servitude, he made his escape and finally reached Fort Johnson.

In this statement Walker said that "he saw and talked with many of our soldiers who were taken at Oswego, who often told him that if the officers had behaved well and encouraged the men, they verily believed they would have beat the French off; and he heard one of our soldiers tell one of his officers that he'd be damned if he had not sold the fort, upon which the officer turned upon his heel and said nothing; and that this was the common talk and belief of our soldiers."

## CHAPTER XXIX

### NIAGARA NEWS IN 1757

NEW DUTIES FOR CHABERT-JONCAIRE — WHAT A NIAGARA NEWS-PAPER MIGHT HAVE PUBLISHED IN 1757 — CAPTAIN POUCHOT'S JOURNAL — TRUE TALES OF THE WAR PATH.

THE winter of 1756-57 was severe and all the posts suffered much, though less by reason of extreme weather than from a shortage of the sort of supplies the wilderness could not produce. Of game there was such an abundance that at Fort Niagara a partridge cost only five sous, and a turkey or a quarter of venison 20 sous. When he learned this, Montcalm was moved to remark on the high cost of living at Montreal, where partridges sold for two francs a pair and turkeys for fifteen!

The Marquis Montcalm never visited Niagara; never indeed got west of Oswego. His news of the Niagara frontier came from Captain Pouchot and other officers, and was summarized, sometimes with a humorous turn, in the pages of his journal. He was much impressed by the hordes of Indians who in this hard winter came to live on the bounty of the French at Fort Niagara. When, in January, Pouchot reported on the large number of Delawares (Loups) who had come in on him, Montcalm wrote in his journal: "They are very affectionate." Sometimes, as was the case with a band of Mississagas, they offered bloody scalp-locks in exchange for food and powder. At more than one of the councils held this winter, the western tribes upbraided the Six Nations for not making war more vigorously against the English. January 30th, at such a council, the Delawares and Shawanese harangued at length about their fighting men who had been "killed and hanged by the English"—a curious delusion which seemed to rouse them to wrath. On more than one occasion there was hot, insulting talk at these Niagara palavers between the Ohio-river Indians and the warriors of the Six Nations, who had in ancient days,

made the Delawares and Shawanese "wear petticoats." Now there was neither meekness nor weakness in their bearing. Pouchot and Chabert would have found it easier to control a council of wildcats. The deliberations usually ended by fitting them out, when their blood was up, for new forays on the warpath.

The actual savagery of these peoples should be borne in mind. More than once the officers at Fort Niagara learned from incoming bands that white prisoners had been killed and eaten. Reports of this cannibalism reached Montcalm, who wrote to Bouchlamaque: "Among all the news from Niagara . . . the Delawares and Shawanese have made many prisoners, taken many scalps, destroyed houses, carried off families and cattle. They took a young English officer, whom they ate, he seeming quite fat."<sup>1</sup> Again he wrote that these savages "have lain waste the country, and have eaten a young officer because he was very white."<sup>2</sup> Even the French who employed them revolted against their horrible deeds. When Captain Pouchot reported from Niagara that war parties ready to fall on the English numbered 3000 [!] Bougainville exclaimed: "What a scourge! Humanity groans at being forced to use such monsters."

In November, 1756, there was a new assignment of officers and men among the posts. De la Valtrie, with 100 men of the troops of the Marine, was sent to Fort Frontenac; De Noyelles, with 10 men, to Fort Toronto; Captain Pouchot with 500 men of the regiments of La Sarre, Guienne and Béarn, and 100 of the Marine, made the garrison at Niagara. Chabert de Joncaire and Morandière, both of them ensigns in the Marine corps, were assigned to Fort Little Niagara; the actual conduct of that post, at this time, fell largely to La Morandière, so much was Chabert abroad on his unending embassies. Portneuf succeeded Benoist at Presqu' Isle, and De Lignery replaced Dumas for Fort Duquesne and its dependencies.

Late in November, numerous officers returning from the upper posts gathered at Fort Niagara: Dumas, the Cheva-

<sup>1</sup> Montcalm to Bouchlamaque, Montreal, June 13, 1757.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*

lier de Repentigny, Benoist, Godefroy, Corbière, Normandville. These and others, thus hazardously late in the season, embarked on the *Chouaguen*. It came near being a tragic hour for Canada, for the schooner was wrecked "on account of the ice";<sup>3</sup> but the officers, after great peril, reached Montreal.

Before the winter was gone, a cry of distress came from Portneuf, at Presqu' Isle; his provisions had run short, so that presently, he sent a sergeant and 43 men to subsist on the bounty of the garrison at Fort Niagara, itself none too well stocked. When the matter reached Montcalm, he made brief but pertinent record in his journal: "M. de Portneuf carried too much brandy and too little flour."

The Marquis took a lively interest in the rebuilding of Fort Niagara. Early in 1757 he proposed to M. de Vaudreuil to renew the facing of the Niagara fortifications, "which are only of earth of bad quality, liable to slide and break down; and at once to take measures for carting materials, stone being difficult to carry at Niagara."<sup>4</sup> A minute of April, 1757, states that the powder magazine — which still stands — is not completed; that the storehouses for "the King's goods" are nearly ready, that they have begun to repair the breaks which the rains of winter have made in the earthworks, and that it was planned "to cart all summer the stone and lime for continuing the fortifications in masonry."

Early in 1757 Chabert was again summoned to Montreal, where Vaudreuil confided to him that the Government was about to take new measures to hold the friendship of the Five Nations and other tribes professing attachment for the French. Vaudreuil had promised, in council, to send to the posts near their towns, "all the goods of which they had need," so "they should lack nothing," and now he turned to Chabert to make good the promise. "I shall look to you," said Vaudreuil, "for the supplying of these posts."

"To me, monsieur!" I replied to him; "I absolutely cannot charge myself with this commission. The goods are held at an exorbitant price, immense quantities of provisions are needed to

<sup>3</sup> Montcalm, Journal, Nov., 1756 to July 3, 1757.

<sup>4</sup> Journal of 1756-57.

supply these forty posts. I am not rich enough for that. Moreover, I am an officer and not a merchant, all the time trying to negotiate with the Indians, or to lead them to war. Where shall I find time to look after all these details? You have great traders more capable of carrying on such an enterprise; why not take the matter up with them?"

"It is absolutely necessary," responded M. de Vaudreuil, "that you render this service to the State. The King's storehouses are empty, the traders do not wish to risk their own property, through fear of being robbed, and themselves killed by the savages. Besides, that need not keep you from making war, since you will establish, by my order, store-keepers in all of the posts for the distribution of the goods; and still further, your name and influence among the Indians should serve as a safe-guard for your property."

"Yes, Monsieur," I answered him, "if I could be everywhere where I would have store-houses, but I can't be present at the same time throughout an extent of three hundred leagues, where these various posts are scattered, or feel sure of being respected where I am not."

We continued several times after this fashion, M. de Vaudreuil always urging me, and I not daring to embarrass myself in so costly an undertaking. Finally, the good of the service overcame the fear of being ruined, and some days later I said to him:

"Oh, well, Monsieur, if I do this that you require, and the posts get ransacked and plundered by the English or the Indians, who will bear the loss?"

"Be assured, it will be the King," he said to me at once, "since you will have acted only for the advantage of the colony and the good of the state."

Chabert's employments at this period were various. At Montreal, he had asked permission to lead his braves against the English at Carillon (Ticonderoga); but, he says, the Governor declared "he was not able to get along without me," and wished to plan with him the operations of the next campaign! The naïve conceit and self-appreciation of Chabert's memoirs is a constant delight, and tempts the chronicler to unlimited quotation. They have also the more valuable quality of supplying to the history of the period not merely details but a point of view not elsewhere to be found. He was a partisan leader of savages, whose deeds were often the horror and execration of



the English and whose conduct cannot be measured by modern standards. Yet he surveys these bloody exploits with complacency and self-applause, viewing it all as proof of his patriotic devotion to the cause of France — as indeed, according to the methods and standards of the time, it was.

Soon after his conference with the Governor, Chabert and his brother called the warriors and sachems of the Five Nations to a general council; but when the gifts from Canada were spread before them they were so displeased at the meagerness of the offering that they refused to counsel at all. "I have never received," is Chabert's comment, "except on this occasion and one other, any presents for negotiation with the Indians; in every other instance I have furnished them from my own goods." He now brought out his own stores and added them to the Government supply; whereupon the Indians were satisfied and sang the war-song. "I immediately made up fourteen war-parties, who carried their depredations and desolation afar over the English territory. As for me, I watched everywhere, I fed the villages, I equipped and provisioned the warriors, I filled the places of those who perished and I covered the dead"—a ceremony the chief feature of which was the making of gifts to the family of the slain warrior.

One of Chabert's troubles at this time was with the Indians at Niagara portage, who were so displeased because horses and carts were used in portaging, that they made an angry protest to the Governor. At a conference with Vaudreuil at Montreal, December, 1756, they said: "Formerly, when we were coming from war, we had the Niagara portage; 'twas promised us we should always possess it; 'tis now made by horses; we beg you to preserve that resource for us."<sup>5</sup>

One of the Iroquois chiefs asked permission to live near Fort Little Niagara; and the Governor, in reporting the request, expressed the hope that a village would grow up there.<sup>6</sup>

Had there been a newspaper published on the Niagara Frontier in 1757, it would not have lacked news, though the items to be chronicled would have been of a character far different

<sup>5</sup> N. Y. Col. Docs., X, 503.

<sup>6</sup> Vaudreuil to the Minister, Apr. 19, 1757.

from those over which the modern press vociferates. Then as now, war and trade engaged most of the attention of most men; two essentially primitive occupations, inspired by the efforts of the fittest (or strongest) to survive; but in their manifestations, in this mid-lake wilderness in the middle of the Eighteenth century, more elemental and perhaps more picturesque than those to which the Twentieth century devotes itself. If armed warfare is in abeyance in this part of the world, there is no assurance, either in international relations or the evolution of human conduct, that peace will be permanent; and as to trade, the same springs of conduct are at the bottom of every form of labor control, of every monopoly of supply or restriction in buying and selling, that led the English to forever press against the French monopoly of the resources of the region, and turned the Indian into a pitiable and often a dangerous tool in the unscrupulous hands of both rivals.

Were our modern news-gatherer to step back to this spring of 1757, he would need neither note-book nor pencil to jot down his impressions; assuredly, they would be vivid enough in memory. Something too of astonishment he might experience, at finding a region he had mentally pictured as a scarcely-trod wilderness, so populous and so full of activities. Of human habitations, from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario, there were few, but of coming and going, by forest path and by canoe, there was much. Many tribes and nations were represented in the numerous bands of Indians that passed up and down the Niagara. The region was much frequented by native races whose home lodges were far distant. At this period no people were more in evidence hereabouts, the Senecas possibly excepted, than the Delawares, whom the French called Loups; a race subject to the great Iroquois League, and whose villages were scattered along the rivers of Pennsylvania and Ohio. These, with the Shawanese, of somewhat similar habitat, were tools of the French in their frontier warfare, and were perpetually coming to Fort Niagara. From the north of Lake Erie came the Mississagas and Mascoutins. Not infrequently the far western tribes, or peoples of Algonquin stock, ancient foes of the Iroquois, came in greedy and often defiant mood, to make incessant

demands on the bounty of the King. To control them, to fend off the English and for the better *morale* of the garrisons, in April, 1757, Governor Vaudreuil issued an order to the commandants of Niagara, Presqu' Isle, Le Bœuf and Venango, "to send their forces in rotation, from one post to another, and to keep themselves always in readiness to afford each other mutual assistance."

The close of 1756 found Captain Pouchot with much unfinished work on his hands, but during the winter that followed he completed the chapel, the magazines, the new barracks and the hospital. On Lewiston Heights he built sheds<sup>7</sup> for goods in transit over the portage, and protected them from Indian attack by a ditch and stockade. There are occasional references to this work as the fort at the foot of the portage.<sup>8</sup>

Some of the occupations of the garrison were less essential but none the less interesting. When inclement weather prevented work on the fortifications, Pouchot permitted amateur theatricals. They even composed and acted a little comedy, "The Old Man Duped" ("*Le Vieillard dupé*"), beyond question the first dramatic representation staged on this old frontier of France — even then long famous for scenes dramatic and tragic, not however arranged according to the rules of French histrionic art. It is Montcalm himself who in his journal mentions this soldiers' play at Fort Niagara, in March, 1757. It needs little imagination to set the stage in the gray, dismal old fort; or to assemble the actors, children of France as they were, whom Fate had sent into a far and forbidding wilderness; concocting a play of crude mirth, no doubt somewhat broad in its humor, to suit a soldier taste, and, who shall say, with what fantastics of feminine make-up, as the plot must have demanded. Would that "*Le Vieillard dupé*" were preserved! "The officers there," adds Montcalm, "make very good cheer, the region

<sup>7</sup> "*Angars du platon*," as written in a report dated Apr. 19, 1757; MS. in Can. Arch.

<sup>8</sup> It was no doubt in reference to this work, that Mrs. John Graves Simcoe wrote in her journal under date of Aug. 6, 1792: "The Governor crossed the water from thence [Queenstown] and ascended a very steep road to see the remains of the French fort at Lewistbn."

abounding with deer, bears and wild turkeys, which are superior to the ordinary kind."

In February, a great council of Cayugas, Delawares and Shawanese was held at the fort, at which Captain Pouchot was told what had taken place at a recent council held at Sir William Johnson's stronghold on the Mohawk.

Much news of Niagara reached Montcalm, of which he made sententious and often entertaining note in his journal. Word came that on February 14th, Joncaire and Chabert had just gone on an embassy to the Six Nations. "A council was held between the Senecas and Iroquois of the Ohio, at which the latter upbraided the Senecas, 'since the earth was covered with their dead who cried out for vengeance against the English.' On that, one chief jumped up, sang the war-song, and was followed by sixty others. They sang, drank, danced, and beat their drums all night long; in consequence of which, next morning, twenty savages begged to join them, and they reckoned that the war party would go, 120 strong, by way of Théoga, to strike the English."<sup>9</sup>

Such were the daily scenes at old Niagara, and such the ways of warfare waged therefrom.

Pouchot was popular with the Indians, who named him *Sategayogen*, meaning, "In the midst of affairs." Yet, with all his popularity, he often found it hard to handle them. There was no such thing as satisfying their insatiate demands; oftentimes their distress was dire and the urgency of their needs obvious; but as Niagara itself was at the mercy of an erratic and uncertain supply service from Montreal and Quebec, it sometimes happened that even the deserving among the savage suppliants were perforce denied. In August, Bigot sent word to the Minister that the Indians at Niagara were "furious" at Pouchot, because he could not meet all their demands for food and merchandise. The lack of supplies was general that summer, throughout Canada the harvest was meager, and Bigot did not overstate the case when he wrote: "There is no resource whatever but the supplies from France." Montcalm

<sup>9</sup> Montcalm, Journal, March 8, 1757.

noted in his journal that the lack of provisions retarded the work at Niagara.

And when provisions were low and storehouses empty there had come in one early spring day a band of hungry Munseys led by their "king." That they were not merely hungry but bold and insolent is shown by a contemporary record of what took place. They "differed" with the commandant, "and told him that they could no longer be amused with his false speeches, for we now see your designs. You look on us only as your Dogs; for every old man who is scarce able to walk, or a young boy, who comes among you, you immediately give him a hatchet and say, 'Here, child, take this and go and kill the English,' while you stay at home yourselves and laugh at us, but I tell you we will be Fools no more. You put the hatchet into our hands, and I would have you take care how you behave or perhaps you may feel it soon."<sup>10</sup>

This was but one of several stormy scenes. According to "French Margaret's husband, a Six Nation Indian and a man of good character," there went to Niagara this spring a principal man of the Senecas, with a party of warriors, and demanded of the commanding officer "where he got the hatchet he was giving the Indians to go to war against the English." The officer made answer he could not tell where it was got; it was sent him from the Governor.

To which the Seneca chief said: "In old times and when we made peace with the French and took them for our Fathers, we agreed to sink the bloody Hatchet in the Bottomless Pit, and it was agreed, whoever took it out and made use of it, all nations should rise up and strike him that took up the Hatchet as a disturber of the public peace and tranquility of his neighbors."

As soon as the chief returned to his own country their council sent a deputation to the Governor of Canada to know where he got the hatchet!<sup>11</sup> This was not wholly a spontaneous re-

<sup>10</sup> Croghan's deposition before Edmund Atkyn, Supt. of Indian Affairs, Southern Dept., Winchester, Va., June 20, 1757. Col. Geo. Washington was present.

<sup>11</sup> Croghan's report, June 20, 1757.

sentment on the part of the red man, but was suggested and stimulated on all occasions by the English.

In fact, the military occupancy of the Niagara by the French was always a thorn in the flesh of the British, and their speakers and writers never ceased to harp on it, quite down to the Conquest. Bishop Edmund Gibson, to whom is ascribed the anonymous political pamphlet, "A Letter to a Friend in the Country, upon the News of the Town," published in London about 1757, wrote:

"The French have hitherto committed no hostilities, but in America. Their encroachments there were many months, if not many years, antecedent to our opposition to them; and might, as I am credibly informed, have been amicably check'd before a single subject of His Majesty could be truly said to be molested; for tho' the forts they built were a direct violation even of the Peace of Utrecht, yet they were built at a considerable distance from the habitable part of the British Dominions.

"An Englishman should blush to confess how long the fort on the east of the Falls of Niagara has been built. It was so manifestly erected upon the British territory, that is in the country of the Iroquois, that the only possible claim our enemies can make to it, is a most disgraceful one to us, I mean the Claim of Proscription. An encroachment like this, with a fort to defend it, must have been either not considered at all, or considered as a National Act of Defiance, by those who received the intelligence. It may indeed be so long ago, that no person now living may think himself responsible for it." The reverend pamphleteer attacks the Ministry which permitted the French to build here, and at Crown Point: "What obstruction," he asks, "was given on our part to the execution of their plan in this as well as the other forts, which command the Lakes Erie, and Ontario, and the river Ohio!"

There exists an unsigned "Journal of Niagara," from June 6th to August 2, 1757. It was probably written by Captain Pouchot, and contains a mass of details, chiefly relating to negotiations with Indians, not recorded in his "Memoirs."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup>This journal forms a part of the "*Collection des Manuscrits du Maréchal de Lévis.*"

*Entrance to Niagara River  
at the foot of Lake Ontario where the house  
and proposed fort are marked out*



Map redrawn and translated from the original by  
 Chaussegros de Léry, endorsed:  
 "Made at Niagara, June 23, 1726"

Earliest Known Map (De Lery's) Showing Fort Niagara  
 (See Appendix)





Within the dates above given there came to Fort Niagara 51 bands of Indians, big and little, representing many tribes. They came from all directions, and on many errands, real or pretended; and there was usually a "council" with the commandant, a gift of food, clothing or equipment, and a departure with protestations of friendship. Sometimes these promises were empty, or even treacherous; but very often proof of good faith was afterwards brought, in the form of English scalp-locks and prisoners from the frontiers.

To recite in detail the coming and going of all these savages, and the speeches at their palavers, would be tedious. A few instances will suffice to illustrate the conditions of the time.

On June 6th four Cayugas arrived at the fort, and in behalf of the Onondagas, gave the commandant a wampum belt, and demanded to know, was it he who had sent some Ottawas to fall upon them, to avenge the death of a chief. Pouchot, who had heard that the English were to rebuild Oswego the coming summer, used many fine words to placate these delegates, and to hold the Five Nations in French interest. Two days later a band of Ottawas arrived from Mackinac, bringing furs and seeking trade; some of them continued on to Montreal, others betook themselves towards the Ohio.

In the afternoon of that day, two Mississagas came into the fort, with a long story of how, near the Oswego River, they had encountered two Englishmen on horseback, one of whom they had shot and scalped — and his bloody scalp-lock was generously offered in evidence. On this foray they had been as far as Albany, from which post it had taken them 22 days to reach Niagara. They had seen a negro who they said they greatly wished to capture and bring in alive — as any hunter-naturalist might covet a rare specimen unharmed — but he was near a settlement and before they could take him, other people appeared and they had to flee. These warriors wore a crude gorget and bracelets which they had made from a can taken from the slain soldier; from markings on the metal the commandant concluded the victim had belonged "to the 4th company of Halcet, No. 28, and Keniskent." They made long

report of the English efforts to hold the Iroquois in friendship; but, they added, Johnson is a liar.

A Shawanese arrived from the southward, with report of events at Fort Cumberland and the behavior of a band of Catawbas. And before they slept that night a Delaware brought word that his people at Théoga<sup>13</sup> had planted their corn, and that their chief who had been to Philadelphia found everything tranquil.

On June 8th some Onondaga deputies arrived 20 days from Albany, with much news of the English. They also averred that the snow was still knee-deep in the woods, and that in the winter it had been up to their stomachs. That evening a Mississaga warrior, who was of Paken's band, came in to tell of their raids in Pennsylvania.

June 9th some runners announced the coming of three Onondaga chiefs and of a Seneca, suspected of being an English spy. This one, who arrived on the 10th, to prove that he had quit the English, gave to the commandant two medals which the English had given him and made elaborate report of what he had learned regarding English plans and movement of forces.

Many deputies arrived, and on the 12th Pouchot held a council with representatives of the Five Nations. They declared they were trying to withdraw the Mohawks from English interest — a thing never accomplished — advised Pouchot not to send troops to the vicinity of Oswego, and asked for a gunsmith.

While this council was in progress there arrived at the fort a band of Pottawatamies, on their way to Montreal; they brought word from M. Dumuys, stationed in the Illinois, that the Cherokees had made peace with the French, as well as all the other tribes except the Chicasaws; and that all were ready to attack the English.

Before nightfall the throng at the fort was increased by the arrival of the head chief of the Théoga Delawares and 28 warriors. Pouchot introduced them to the Iroquois and the Pottawatamies; "they were well received," he says; somewhat too

<sup>13</sup> Tioga Point. Some of the Théoga Delawares had a settlement near present Sunbury, Pa.

well, evidently, for next day he was unable to talk to them because they were all drunk.

The postponed council was resumed on the 14th, with the added presence of some Ottawas, and there were the usual pledges of friendship and renewal of promises. A good many Ottawas and Sioux — these last from lodges a thousand miles distant — came down the river this day, bringing furs and seeking trade.

The council continued until the 17th, when some left for Montreal by the French barques; the Delawares were given presents and started homeward, well content. And as they went there came in messengers from Presqu' Isle, and the cadet Moncourt from Le Bœuf, who reported that in a campaign of 85 days, in which he had nearly starved, he had taken but two scalps; but other bands, foraging in Pennsylvania, had brought in four scalps and five prisoners. From Fort Machault at Venango they reported three scalps and eight prisoners; they had raided as far as Shamokin, where they found many people and cattle, but so well guarded they "could not make a blow there."

Two Delaware runners, eleven days from Duquesne, reported the arrival there of 250 French and Indians from the Illinois — Sacs, Sioux, Renards, Mascoutins and Kickapous.

Thus they came, day after day, with news good or bad; but, be it noted, the wily news-bearer generally made the message which he brought to Niagara favorable to the French; while he was there, his interests lay that way.

In the evening of June 19th there arrived down from Detroit more than a hundred men, women and children of the Ottawas, angry because they had received no brandy. Pouchot got rid of most of them in a day or so; 36 went off with La Broquerie, to seek favors at Montreal; and the commandant, who noted with interest any revelation of Indian beliefs or superstition, was so impressed by a thing an old Indian woman told him, that he wrote it down: "The mother of Techicabaoui tells me that her son has struck a blow, because, ten days ago, she felt her breasts throb,<sup>14</sup> that she has felt nothing of the sort since,

<sup>14</sup> "*Senti ses mamelles tressaillir,*" etc.

and this is a sign which always comes true." This prediction, observes Pouchot, "was right enough, for her son had made an attack at Fort George just about that time."

June 24th saw an extraordinary arrival: Captain De Mézières came in with four Acadians who had deserted from the English of Carolina. These men, "among the chief of that colony," had made their way through the back-country wilderness, over the mountains, and had wandered or floated

"far down the Beautiful river"

until, near its junction with the Mississippi, they had fallen in with people of their own language. Other homeless waifs from the great Acadian dispersion passed that way, and on down the Mississippi to share in founding the still existing Acadian colony of Louisiana; but these four, confiding in the guidance of a friendly leader, turned their faces northward, and regained Canada by way of Niagara. They gave Captain Pouchot such information as they could regarding the spot of their chance exile in Carolina; a "capital," they said, with not over 40 militia in garrison, and easy to ravage as the settlements were very scattered. They also told of an English fort among the Cherokees. Of De Mézières, the officer who brought them to Niagara, but little can be told save that he came with a party of the little-known southern tribe called Ouillas or Onillas, allied to the Miamis; and that he was seriously wounded in the battle of Quebec of April 28, 1760.

Pouchot was often hard pressed to establish friendly relations between the delegations that flocked to the fort, for like other wild animals they had their ancient, inherited enmities. July 1st he assembled at a council, Iroquois from what are now New York and Pennsylvania, Hurons from Michigan, Ottawas from Michigan and Canada, and the Ouillas who had come from the lower Ohio with the Acadians. They exchanged wampum, swore they would take up their Father's [*i.e.*, the French] hatchet, and that they would never leave him. Pouchot "made them smoke and drink to each other's health" and they were all content.

That evening a Seneca of Canestio came in to report that the Governor of Pennsylvania had invited the Senecas to hold council with him, but they had refused; that he had repeatedly sent to them medals, gorgets and, recently, a fine calumet with silver bands; but, Pouchot was assured, these presents had no effect.

On the 3d, a party of Hurons were sent off with letters for Montreal; for that part of the country, these were trusty messengers. The next few days saw much coming and going, and among the arrivals was Techicabaoui, whose mother had prophesied of his prowess. Much news was brought in by Delawares who had seen, at Johnson's place on the Mohawk, "five or six hundred men in blue uniforms, and some Scotchmen." A band of Kickapoos and Mascoutins stopped, on their way to Montreal, to ask, by the gift of wampum, that the road to Niagara be kept always open, and to beg that they might be favored in trade. On July 7th, Pouchot sent off two war-parties, one of 18, the other of 20 men, to kill and burn wherever they might, and to bring back prisoners. The next day three parties came down the river and tarried at the fort: Iroquois, Delawares from the Ohio region, Ottawas from Detroit.

A departure of more than common interest was that of Captain De Belestre with eight large canoes full of savages. He had no sooner gone than there came into the fort 40 Iroquois, with much to tell by the help of much wampum, of how the Governor of Pennsylvania had sent them three medals, two gorgets, a silver shell (? "*coquille d'argent*") and a peace-pipe. The repeated gifts of this sort indicate the desire of Pennsylvania province to gain Indian allies, but for the most part it was a wasted effort. Many of the trinkets were brought at once to Fort Niagara where the wily beggars used them as means to extort more gifts from the French.

On this 10th of July, when Pouchot met both Ottawas and Iroquois in council, the figurative language in which the Indians loved to conceal, rather than express, their sentiments, took striking form. They not only spoke of keeping the road open and the path clean: "they gave me," wrote the commandant, "branches [string-wampum] to draw the stopper of my milk,

which for some time they had noticed had been tight closed"; which was merely a polite way of asking for gifts, especially brandy. By other "branches" both warriors and women begged him to give them something — vermilion, powder, balls, for now they had no time to hunt and could not go to the English. They praised De Lignery, who, they said, "had had the breasts open on both sides for them," but that, because of the little he had, he had told them they would find all they needed at Niagara. And Pouchot, much put to it, promised to satisfy them "when the milk came."

On the day of this conference, a war-party returning from the region of the Susquehanna, brought into the fort an old woman named Muller, who had been taken prisoner May 1st on a branch of the Susquehanna, by a band of 40 Indians, sent out from Fort Niagara. Her house and barn had been burned and all her people killed. Pouchot questioned her about forts and troops in that section, but, getting little from her, seemed to explain all by the note: "She is German." Many prisoners were brought in during the next few weeks; among them one whom Pouchot records as "*Marie-Blanche, native de Schan-gen, contrée de Soupusa,*" which conjecturally is Shandaken on the Esopus, an early-settled valley midway between Albany and New York. That a war-party from Niagara should carry death and destruction into so distant and populous a region, so near to the seat of British authority, was no exception at this time, but it is a new proof of the importance of Fort Niagara as a base for these far-reaching forays.

On this same day — July 27th — an Iroquois war-party brought in a Bavarian who gave his name as Charles Peller, captured in Pennsylvania; and a day or so later some Delaware warriors arrived with a woman, Marie Catherine Heilerin, taken within two days' march of Philadelphia. Pouchot's custom was to question the captives, that he might learn of the enemy. Marie Blanche made a long statement, in which she told how her husband had been killed, how the people in her settlement had been levied on for men, horses and carts, how very poor and starved they were, winding up with the novel statement that Sir William Johnson was always meddling with their af-

fairs but did nothing because he cared only for drinking; adding, that it was said, if he did nothing this year, he would be killed and the people would join the French; from which it appears that some news on the Niagara in 1757 was about as reliable as some that has passed current since. The Bavarian, Peller, gave a more intelligent report of the state of things at Shamokin and other Pennsylvania forts. Marie Catherine Heilerin made a very clear deposition, and was afterwards adopted by the Senecas and carried off to their lodges, in place of a chief, Caitoton, who had been killed. This was a not uncommon fate of white captives, many of whom thus merged their identity with savage communities, and so far as relatives and white friends were concerned, were forever lost.

One of the most striking tales confided to the long-suffering Pouchot was the narrative of a Delaware chief who related at length his adventures on the war-path. He had set out, he said, at Pouchot's wish, to bring that officer "fresh meat," meaning English victims. At a crossing of many roads, he had come upon several scents; at one time he even saw 20 men together, but, as he had only five warriors in his party, could not attack them. Later, he had followed the "scent" of one man for three days, even to some settlements. Here he hid in a ruined cabin, and saw many people without being able to attack them; but at night he set fire to their houses; a man appearing in the door with a gun, he struck him down; a woman trying to run away, he took her — and this was Marie Blanche, no other name for her being given. She may have been Mary White, or simply "white Mary." He had brought her 400 miles over forest trails to Niagara. The brave added that the bodies of others were burned in the house to which he set fire.

Here, then, is the tale of an "Indian atrocity," told by the atrocious Indian himself. For two centuries or so, American history and romance have been recording attacks on the American pioneer's cabin, and all the dreadful work of the Indian's torch, gun, tomahawk and scalping-knife. Here we have the same sad picture from the other side, the statement of the savage who explains his bloody deeds as having been accomplished at the wish of the white man at Fort Niagara.

The latter days of July were very busy ones at the old fort. Not only were there daily arrivals and departures of war-parties, but there came in a horde of people with their women and children, protesting they were naked and starving. Another council was held, more war-parties were equipped and sent out, and the King's stores were heavily drawn on to silence the clamor. The good offices of Joncaire were helpful in these matters. On the 24th a great council was opened with Iroquois, Delawares and Shawanese, the latter from the Ohio, on their way to Montreal with Montizambert de Niverville; and in the midst of it, on the 25th, arrived M. La Moëlle with another band from the Ohio. The first-named was for many years active in this back-country warfare. In this summer of '57 he had led a party of 200, mostly Indians, in the vicinity of Fort Cumberland, but falling ill had accomplished little against the English.

Several other partisan leaders tarried briefly at the old fort at this period; among them Baby, with a band of Shawanese. Prisoners and scalps were almost daily receipts. Some of the former were passed along to be disposed of by the Governor; others were left to their savage captors, who adopted them in place of relatives lost in the war, the Indian mode of life often proving so acceptable that the white captives refused to return to their kindred when opportunity was offered. This was especially true of white women who by marriage among the Indians gained a position of comparative respect and comfort.

One record mentions that several warriors gave Chabert a notable collection of scalps: "They sent him 38, in a bag, taken by the Five Nations, in proof of the blows they had struck against the English." He passed it on to Pouchot. One of the chiefs asked permission to establish himself at Fort Little Niagara, and the hope is expressed that the village he might establish there would prove useful.

In exchange for scalps the officers at Fort Niagara gave supplies, guns and powder; but what they did with the scalps, history saith not.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> When held a prisoner by the English at Winchester, Va., in 1757, Ensign Belestre, speaking of conditions at Niagara, said the French "gave nothing for scalps but a little spirits."



The unsigned journal from which many of the foregoing incidents are drawn breaks off with the entry for August 2d; but there is no reason to suppose that the coming and going of Indian peoples up and down the Niagara, over the neighboring lakes and by the forest trails, at all abated, at least until the deep snows of winter somewhat checked their travel.

Nor were the English of New York and Pennsylvania colonies unmindful of what was going on. By practically the same methods that were used by the commandant at Niagara, and by Joncaire and Chabert, they sought to gain and keep the friendship of the Indians. The activities of Joncaire and his brother caused the English much trouble and cost them many presents. In December, 1756, Johnson had dispatched Captain Jelles Fonda and Thomas Butler into the Seneca country, but they got no further west than Onondaga. Among the Mohawks Brant told them they would be killed or captured if they went further. John Abeel, with a party of Senecas and Cayugas, met them and asked if they had goods or presents for the Indians. When they replied, "No," he laughed and said, "Jone Clair [Joncaire] is coming to Sinakas<sup>16</sup> with several horses loaded with goods and a party of men with him. If you go on you will about meet him there." "He told us further," said Fonda in a subsequent report, "that there were five of the French Indians hired at Nigra to come and kill or take him or any other English they might meet with."

The English traders, who had come with nothing but messages, could not compete with "Jone Cair's coming to the Senecas with his loads," and it was obviously the part of caution not to penetrate further to the westward; so they sent their messages to the Cayugas and to Niagara by Indians and returned to Fort Johnson.

For the English, Western New York was hopelessly hostile; we find no record that (save a trader or two like Wemp) they ventured into the region where Joncaire went and came like a native. With four other Frenchmen, in October, 1756, he went to Chenussio [Geneseo], where he tarried 20 days. The Senecas assured him that no English would be suffered there,

<sup>16</sup> Probably the old Seneca Castle near present Geneva, N. Y.

and even consented that a fort should be built the coming spring. In the beginning of winter 70 Delawares called at that town, on their way to Niagara, where they confidently expected to receive clothes and provisions. They had with them an English captive, who afterwards reported that at Fort Niagara the following colloquy took place:

“Father,” said the chief of the Delawares, “we are now at war with the English. When we first began we struck them with billets of wood, being very poor.”

The French commandant said he knew that was true, and now gave them a hatchet to strike with; and desired them to tell any of the English who might ask the reason of their striking them, it was because the English did not keep the Indians' arms clean and in good order.

The French officer clothed them all and gave them arms and ammunition, besides 14 gold-laced coats. Several of the arms were those taken at Oswego. He gave each man 150 rounds of powder and ball.

A Delaware Indian, Shamokin Peter, told this same Englishman that it was agreed at Niagara that all the French Indians from the north shore were to join the French and destroy the Mohawk country, in the spring of '57.

One Job Chilloway, Indian or half-breed, though allied to what tribe is not clear, appeared at Fort Niagara in March and offered a parcel of skins for sale. He later reported to Colonel Joseph Shippen at Fort Augusta that while he was at the fort there were but five officers, and he computed the number of soldiers not to exceed 150, whom he took to be regulars; “they mounted in the fort 45 pieces of cannon, some of which were the brass field pieces taken from General Braddock, which they intended in the summer to send to Fort Frontenac; that the fort was strong and pretty large, having in it a great stone house, three stories high, where the officers lived.”<sup>17</sup>

Still another report that reached the English was a letter from Thomas Butler at Oneida to Sir William Johnson, in

<sup>17</sup> Col. Jos. Shippen to Maj. James Burd, letter dated “Ft. Augusta, Jan. 20, 1758.” Pa. Archives, 3d ser., vol. 3.

which, after stating that the Senecas had taken up the hatchet against the English, he continued:

Several Sinakass are gone with Jan Cair to Nigra to be fitted out with Presents. Among them is the Great Man you wrote to me of, should make the Speech. I hear when this fellow took the Hatchett he danced the War Dance and said he would go kill the English at Pennsylvania but was desired by Cair to use the Hatchett at Lake George.

In the colonial correspondence not only of New York, but especially of Pennsylvania and Virginia, there are many reports of incidents of this character, all tending to show, not merely what was happening on the Niagara, but the wide and prompt spread of intelligence regarding it.

A somewhat celebrated case of the time was thus reported in the *New York Mercury*, July 25, 1757:

Monday last came to town in 31 days from Niagara, two young men, one named Peter Luney, belonging to Virginia, and the other William Phelps, an apprentice to Jones Wright, of this city, shipwright. The latter was taken at Oswego, the 11th of May, 1756, in company with Charles Carter of Philadelphia and James Flanagan and Lewis Dunning of New Jersey, cutting timber for the vessels, then building on Lake Ontario; and informs us, that Dunning being wounded by a shot from the Indians, and unable to keep pace with them in their march, they killed and scalped him, on their way to Niagara, where they arrived in four days after they were taken; that Carter and Flanagan were soon sent to Montreal; but one of the Indians adopting him [Phelps] for his son, he was obliged to go with them to their country, where he remained all the summer, and was used extremely well by them. They often intreated him to forget his own country and be contented to live with them, but as he always testified his unwillingness to remain in that situation, they delivered him up to the Commander of Niagara, the 28th of September last; that he remained there till the 19th ultimo, when he and Peter Luney above mentioned (who came there with a few Indians from the westward to trade) contrived means to facilitate their escape, and accordingly set out with only one gun, about 30 charges of powder and ball, and not the least morsel of provisions, being obliged to subsist for six days on two rotten fish, they not daring

to fire a gun, for fear of being discovered; that they walked several miles in the water to prevent being tracked by the Indians, sleeping all day in the woods and traveling at night; that they came by Oswego, where there was nothing to be seen but the ruins of the place. Two days before they left Niagara two French schooners and an English brig, taken at Oswego, arrived there from Fort Frontenac, with 280 of the militia of Canada, and 'twas said 400 more were expected, but their destination not known, though it was generally imagined they were designed for the Ohio.

A Philadelphia record of about this time gives the names of these prisoners as Peter Lewney and William Phillips, and adds that Lewney was an ensign of Captain John Smith's company of rangers "from the back of Virginia." He was captured by the Indians June 25, 1756, carried to Detroit and afterwards adopted by the Indians. "About the middle of June [1757] he left Detroit with a small party of Indians who were going to Niagara with some furs, in order to purchase Indian goods. He found a small fort with 30 men above the falls; and at Niagara a fort of 24 guns, 6, 9, and 12-pounders, and in it about 300 men."

Still another account carries the story further. Captain (or Major) John Smith, commanding a small blockhouse on the Virginia frontier, on June 25th, surrendered with his entire force of 12 men, after nine were killed or wounded, to 25 French and 105 Indians. On July 20th the prisoners arrived at "Fort Miamec" [Miami, *i.e.*, Vincennes], where De Belestre commanded; two months later they were transferred to Fort Joseph, where there were 22 soldiers and a priest. They were taken thence to "Fort Egery" [Erie, *i.e.*, Presqu' Isle], from there to Niagara, where they arrived in May, 1757. Major Smith was carried to Quebec, where Colonel Peter Schuyler gave him £52, 5 shillings, 6 pence, and he and other Virginians sailed for England, July 23d.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Peter Lewney's deposition regarding his captivity is contained in "The Military History of Great Britain in 1756-57," printed in London, 1757; also in Niles' history of the Indian and French Wars, in Mass. Hist. Coll., 4th ser., vol. V, p. 438. Gov. Sharpe of Maryland made Lewney's case the subject of some correspondence; *see* Sharpe to Lord Baltimore, Aug. 1, 1757;

From such refugees even London itself had opportunity to form a true idea of the state of affairs on this frontier; and a writer in a London journal<sup>19</sup> commented in a singularly modern tone on the American situation:

We talk much of driving the French out of their encroachments, but it does not seem to be so easily done. We have been three whole years in only going to attack them, and have not yet been able to do that. . . . How easy might it be to take Fort Duquesne and secure the river Ohio, at least; by which we might have access to Niagara, root them out of all their encroachments about Lake Erie, and drive their force from our frontiers. We are not afraid, I hope, that every one is to meet the fate of the unfortunate Braddock, and those places never be attempted more.

The writer might have spared himself both sarcasm and solicitude. Before he wrote, Pitt's letter of February 4th had been read at the Council in New York, May 9th; from which date a new and more vigorous campaign is begun.

Before leaving Niagara, in October, Pouchot accomplished much for the strengthening of the works. It had 30 cannon, 12 of which were 12-pounders. Its artillery was mounted, the fort was sodded and "in other respects 'tis pretty well provided."<sup>20</sup> Pouchot went down to Montreal, and for the next year and a half the Colonial, Vassan, had command on the Niagara.

Sharpe to Dinwiddie, Aug. 10, 1757. He feared the French were preparing to attack Fort Cumberland.

<sup>19</sup> *London Chronicle*, July 30, 1757.

<sup>20</sup> Report of Le Mercier, Quebec, Oct. 30, 1757.

## CHAPTER XXX

### “SEA POWER” INLAND

EXPLOITS OF CHABERT-JONCAIRE — DESTRUCTION OF FORT FRONTENAC BY BRADSTREET IN 1758 — CLINTON’S JOURNAL — ANXIOUS DAYS AT FORT NIAGARA — PONTLEROY’S REPORT.

THE one familiar event in the region we are studying, during the year 1758, was the destruction of Fort Frontenac by an English expedition led by Colonel John Bradstreet. This was in August. The dash and boldness of it have appealed to many writers, so that the story is told, with something of detail, in many popular pages. Most of the narrators record little else as happening in the Ontario region during this year; and their admiration for Bradstreet would be somewhat better founded had there been less of disparity between the force he led across the lake and that of the garrison he fell upon. When the records remind us that the English numbered 2952, against which the French could oppose but 110 white men and a few unreliable savages, the overwhelming odds make extravagant praise of the exploit somewhat superfluous.

The thing of greatest significance in the region, this year, was not the destruction of the feeble fortifications at Frontenac. It was not even the English capture of nine vessels from the French, and destruction of seven of them. It was the fuller realization into which the English tardily came, that the paramount thing was the control of Lake Ontario. Not the possession, or battering down, of a few earthworks on its shores, but domination of the water way, was the surest means of throttling the enemy. “Sea power,” which has come to read large in the studies of modern historians, is a term not then in use; but the thing it stands for was recognized, and was now to be exemplified, even if on a small scale, on the waters of Ontario. The English neglect promptly to rid those waters of every French sail, greatly hampered their plans and prolonged the

struggle, some unfamiliar incidents of which are here submitted.

As soon as navigation was open in the spring, M. Despinassy,<sup>1</sup> a lieutenant of the Royal Engineers, was sent to Fort Niagara to make repairs. They were much needed. Accustomed as he was to the massive and substantial fortifications of Europe, even such work as he found at Niagara, where Captain Pouchot had so exercised his skill, seemed to him utterly inadequate. De Pontleroy, engineer in chief, had previously reported on the needs of Niagara, and, on his advice, De Vaudreuil had ordered that the earthworks should be faced with masonry. The accomplishment of this order was entrusted to Despinassy.<sup>2</sup> A plan of Fort Niagara was at this time sent to Paris, showing it as it was, and as Despinassy changed it. The revetment was built of stone, and great thickness given to the walls. “Not wishing to overthrow everything that has been done there, *contresorts* have been established to lessen the breaking down of the earthworks.<sup>3</sup> Despinassy carried from the vicinity of Fort Frontenac the stone which he used at Niagara.<sup>4</sup>

Of Fort Frontenac Pontleroy had more contempt than even for Fort Niagara; he declared its position was not tenable, as it was dominated by neighboring heights —“at a distance of 150 toises; the walls not two feet thick, without terreplain, ditch or covered way. Behold, Monsieur, an example of what they call forts in this country! Sufficient, ’tis true, to make war on savages, or forces without artillery; but to-day the strength of the English and their artillery greatly changes the method of warfare, and consequently the defense of the frontiers.”<sup>5</sup>

Oldest and most historic of Lake Ontario posts, Frontenac had never been a fortress capable of defense against any but an Indian foe. La Salle’s original strong house was built of logs surrounded by an oblong of palisades, with bastions. Aban-

<sup>1</sup> Several spellings occur in the documents.

<sup>2</sup> M. de Pontleroy to the Minister, Apr. 24, 1758.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.*

<sup>4</sup> Vaudreuil to M. de Massiac, Montreal, Sept. 2, 1758.

<sup>5</sup> Pontleroy to the Minister, Oct. 28, 1758.

done in 1689 by Denonville, it was soon after destroyed by the Iroquois. Rebuilt again of logs, it is described in 1720 as having its bastions connected by a wooden gallery. When the war of 1756 was declared, Frontenac was a quadrangle of some 300 feet, a bastion at each angle; the curtain-wall connecting the bastions, was of stone, two and a half feet thick and five feet high, and surmounting it was a wooden gallery pierced with loopholes for musketry. A circular stone tower, 37 feet in diameter at the base, stood within the southwestern bastion; its foundations are still shown to visitors in the barrack square. Other ancient foundations, some of them probably of barracks, can still be traced. Numerous buildings were outside the walls; and the present Queen's wharf is said to be located at the site of the boat landing used in Montcalm's time.<sup>6</sup>

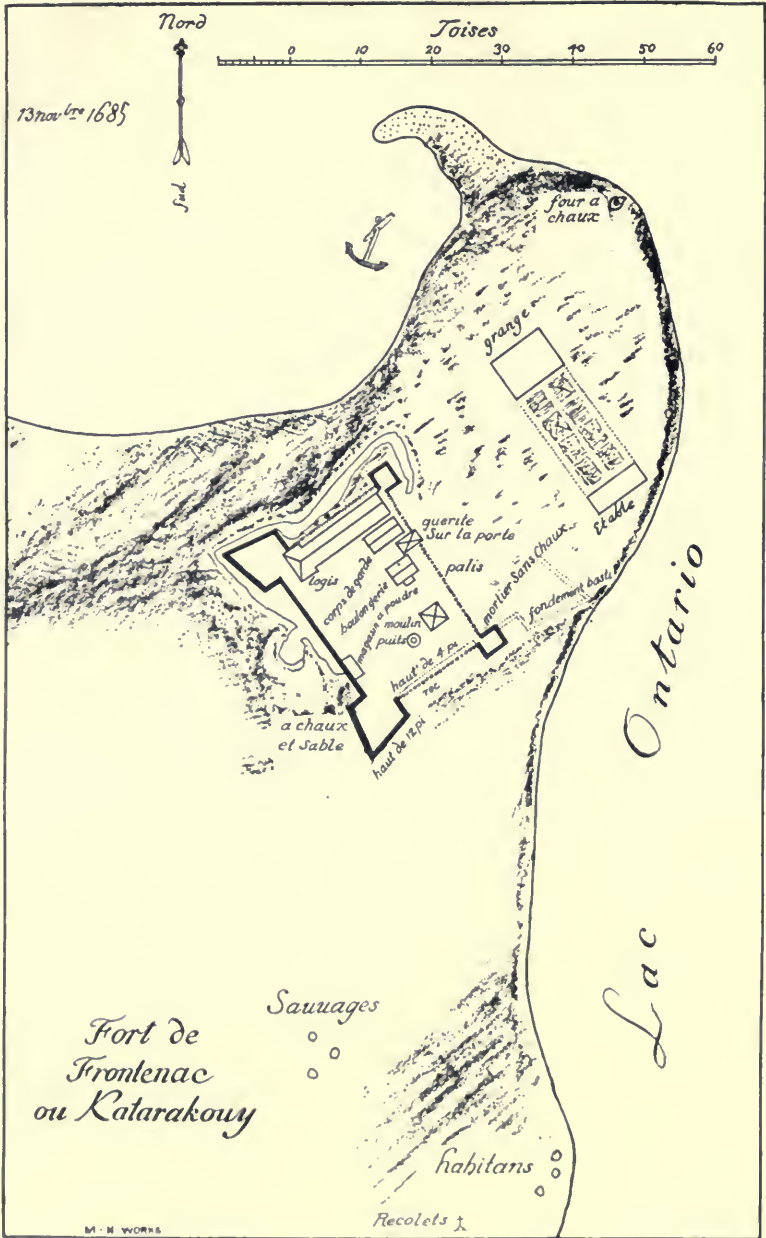
Fort Frontenac — the "Catarqui" of earlier days and the Kingston of later ones — had become something of a settlement. There was a chapel, there were the homes of numerous traders, and there too was a varying village of aborigines. As a depot of goods for Niagara and the upper posts, it was one of the most active and essential centers in the colony. Here was the first shipyard on all the Great Lakes, and here the rendezvous of scores of expeditions, trading or military, for the Ohio or the far West. But Frontenac as a fortification merited the contempt Pontleroy conceived for it. Prior to 1755, it appears to have had no ditches, no revetment or protective earthworks. In 1755, under the engineers, Lombard des Combles and Desandrouins, the place was somewhat strengthened and its approaches protected.

The upper posts had much deteriorated. In November an Indian reported to Frederick Post that Presqu' Isle was so much out of repair "that a strong man might pull up any Logg out of the earth." Two officers and 35 men formed the garrison, for whom 10 Indians were kept hunting. Le Bœuf was in much the same condition, and Venango weakest of all, with one officer and 25 men; all were much distressed for lack of provisions.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Many historic sites of Kingston have been carefully determined by students of Canadian history.

<sup>7</sup> Post's Journal, 1758.





Fort Frontenac or Katarakouy, 1685

From an Original Plan, French Colonial Archives, Paris



Chabert had spent the winter and early spring of 1758 in ceaseless journeys and negotiations among the tribes.<sup>8</sup> From one of these missions he returned, May 20th, to his fort at the Portage, to find it the center of an uncommon influx of savages from the west and south; he complains of the heavy drain they made on his stock of provisions. Three days later he posted off again, to stir up the warriors of the Five Nations. To the Renards of Kanestio (Canestio) he took a blacksmith with a supply of iron “in the Governor’s behalf but at my own expense.”

It was the 20th of July before he was again on the Niagara; and he had scarcely arrived when there came to him three letters from De Vaudreuil: “one in the morning, another at evening, and a third the next day, urging me to hasten to the aid of Fort Duquesne which was being besieged.” Brigadier General Forbes, with a force of 2500 men, was undertaking the task in which Braddock three years before had so dismally failed. The story of Forbes’ march and ultimate occupation of Fort Duquesne, after the French had burned and abandoned it, as told from English sources, is not unfamiliar to students. Some chronicles of the campaign, giving the French viewpoint, are available. But in Chabert’s memoirs we have what may be called the Indian side of it; for, although in the French employ, his command was composed of savages, and his own service was wholly concerned with them. Here, as in many another episode, he supplies facts not elsewhere given — filling in the dim background, or, rather, showing us the reverse of the picture as usually painted.

It will be recalled that a detachment of Forbes’ army, under Major Grant, was composed of some 300 Highlanders, 100 Royal Americans, and 350 Colonials; that with this force Grant advanced into the vicinity of the fort, where after many miscarriages of orders and plans, on September 14th, they engaged a considerable force of French and Indians, who, attacking from all directions, utterly routed them, carrying Grant

<sup>8</sup> One brief record of the time will illustrate the character of many. Montcalm wrote, Mar. 28, 1758: “Chabert set out, about the 10th, for the Five Nations, with 50,000 francs of merchandise.”

and several officers prisoners into the fort, while the savages made off with many captives. Chabert is the historian who gives a glimpse of the savages' side of it. We condense from his memoir:

By making forced marches I arrived there [Duquesne], August 1st, with 216 Frenchmen and Indians, all equipped at my own expense, with the exception of ten soldiers. I had scarcely arrived at the fort when I was dispatched with a force of 500 men, to discover the enemy. I had no sooner led back my detachment, than I was hurried off into the country of the Delawares, Shawanese<sup>9</sup> and others, to draw new reinforcements from them. . . . As soon as my new recruits were on the march, I alone took them forward, and I made haste to rejoin my soldiers who impatiently awaited me. I was much pleased with myself for my promptitude.

Arrived on the evening of the 13th, I found myself on the 14th in a fight which gave over to us the Scotch. They were beaten, and nearly all tomahawked or taken prisoner.<sup>10</sup>

The Highlanders of Grant's command, whom Chabert calls "the Scotch," went into action wearing their Highland dress. A story survives that the Indians put the heads of the slain Highlanders on poles and hung their kilts around them. A somewhat similar exhibition of savage humor was to be seen later on the banks of the Niagara. Chabert does not mention it, but does record that at a war-council held in the fort he was designated as safe-guard for the Scotch officers who were prisoners; "in fact," he adds, "no other escort could guarantee them against insults from the savages." It was no light commission to execute; but with a guard of only 10 soldiers, by way of Venango, Le Bœuf and Presqu' Isle, he brought the prisoners safely through to Fort Little Niagara. There he found an order from De Vaudreuil to send them on to Montreal:

<sup>9</sup> He writes: "Loups, Chauasmons," etc. Their villages were on the Ohio below Fort Duquesne.

<sup>10</sup> Chabert adds a footnote in appreciation of his own valor, too characteristic to omit: "Here, as elsewhere, although it is not to be expected that I speak of the courage which I have shown in action, there is testimony enough as to my conduct. The valor natural to the French was so common a merit in the colony, that I do not know of any officer who has ever pretended to derive glory because of it. We were too familiar with danger not to scorn it, if only through habit."

The danger for the Scotch officers was past. I sent them on to their destination, and remained myself at my fort, to work in hastening the transport of provisions and goods designed for revictualling Fort Duquesne, and to arrange with the savages, that they should come together again at the Portage fort about the time when the ice broke up [spring of '59]; after which, I went to a village of the Sauteux, 30 leagues from the fort, on Lake Erie. I carried the Governor's message to them and tried to make sure of their warriors for the springtime. I then gave a wampum belt, with a present of powder, balls, knives, vermilion, shirts, blankets, and several barrels of brandy. At that time brandy was worth 40 francs the quart. I believe I have already remarked that these things were like letters of credit to a merchant.

The savage playfulness of Chabert's Indians was a typical barbarity of the times. Chabert himself no doubt witnessed many a scene of torture, though there is nothing to indicate that he ever did so willingly. He was, however, the leader of savages capable of every atrocity.<sup>11</sup> Of such warfare a New England poet, Samuel Davies, A.M., of Portsmouth, N. H., wrote, about this time, a so-called poem on “The Barbarities of the French and their savage allies and proselytes on the Frontiers,” which found favor and was printed by many a colonial editor of the time. The following lines sufficiently show the character of this remarkable production:

Long had a mongrel French and Indian brood  
Our peaceful frontiers drenched with British blood.  
There horror rang'd, and her dire ensigns bore,  
Raw scalps her trophies, stiff with clotted gore,  
The heart and bowels smoaking on the ground,  
Still warm with life, and mangled corpses round.<sup>12</sup>

It is well to remember that Indian atrocities were by no means all on one side. It is only in English histories that we read of the “French and Indian” war. Oftentimes, with equal accuracy, it might have been called the English and Indian war.

<sup>11</sup> When the British came into Fort Duquesne, after the French had blown it up, they found 16 barrels of ammunition and “about a cart-load of scalping knives.”

<sup>12</sup> Here transcribed from the *Boston Gazette*, Jan. 23, 1758.

In 1745, the New York General Assembly voted a reward of £10 for the scalp of every male enemy above the age of 16 and £20 for live prisoners. February 26, 1746, in New York Colony, was a day of fasting and prayer "to protect the colony from barbarities of the Indians and detestable plots of the French." The very next day, February 27th, in retaliation for many cruelties, the General Assembly passed an Act giving a reward "for such scalps and prisoners of the enemy as shall be taken by the inhabitants of (or Indians in alliance with) this colony." The preamble sets forth that "to encourage the Six Nations of Indians to enter vigorously into the war," the Commissioners of Indian Affairs at Albany would pay £10 for the scalp of every male above the age of 16, and £5 for scalps of boys under 16. The same Act offered £20 for every enemy prisoner over 16, brought in alive, and £10 for every male under 16, brought in alive. This remarkable Act, its rewards being so adjusted as to discourage murder, was prompted by the massacres at Saratoga, the work of Indians in French interest.

General Shirley, by proclamation, June 12, 1755, offered £50 for Indian male prisoners over 12; £40 for Indian male scalps; £25 for Indian female prisoners, and for males under 12; £20 were offered for the scalps of Indian women, or of boys under 12, if brought to the authorities at Boston. This measure was especially directed against the New England Indians.<sup>13</sup> In 1747 Johnson (later Sir William) paid £60 for six scalps brought from Crown Point.<sup>14</sup>

For some years, until a proclamation by Governor Clinton in July, 1749, forbade it, it was a common practice to take Indian children as pledges for debt. If the English made less use of the Indians than did the French, it was because of lack of ability and opportunity. That they were not averse to the employment of Indian war-parties, with all the horrors of toma-

<sup>13</sup> George Park Fisher, in "The Colonial Era," says the New York Assembly "offered a large bounty for Indian scalps." (P. 251.) In some cases, the bounty was for "enemy" scalps, with the expectation that they would be Canadian or French, gathered by Indians.

<sup>14</sup> Johnson to Gov. Clinton, May 7, 1747.

hawk and scalping knife, the border annals of the Revolution abundantly attest.

After the British defeat at Ticonderoga, an expedition against Fort Frontenac was determined upon. It was entrusted to the capable conduct of John Bradstreet, who had been one of Shirley's adjutants in 1755, and who in 1756 had successfully convoyed a supply train to Oswego. In March, 1757, he was appointed to a company in the 60th or Royal Americans, and became lieutenant colonel in the regular army December 27th of that year. His career, long since the subject of ample biographies, need not be further followed here. He was acquainted with the road to Oswego, had the confidence of New York Colony, and found little difficulty in gathering some 3000 provincials, among them representatives of New York's most famous families, as the Schuylers and Clintons. One of these, Colonel Charles Clinton, kept a journal of the campaign, from June to October. Graphic and intimate in its record, and virtually unknown or unused by writers, it is here drawn on for the story of the expedition.<sup>15</sup>

Forewarned by the vast notoriety which had heralded alike to friend and foe every plan and movement of Shirley, three years before, extraordinary precautions were taken to keep Bradstreet's objective a secret. "Never," said a writer of that period, "was there an expedition undertaken, the destination of which, the individuals who composed the army, were more profoundly ignorant of; even the commanding officers of corps were uncertain, at leaving the Oneida station, whether they were to be led against Niagara, Oswegatchie or Cadaraqui; by which extraordinary secrecy the enemy were beyond doubt prevented from succouring or reinforcing the garrison of Fort Frontenac."<sup>16</sup>

June 19th, Clinton was given command of six companies of the New York regiment. A company of rangers commanded

<sup>15</sup> The original manuscript, preserved in the N. Y. State Library at Albany, was copied for the present work, prior to the fire of March 29, 1911, in which it was destroyed. The author has since supplied to the State Library a transcript of the copy in his possession.

<sup>16</sup> "An impartial account of Lieut.-Col. Bradstreet's expedition to Fort Frontenac . . . by a volunteer of the expedition," London, 1759.

by Captain Wendell and the independent companies headed by Captain Oglevie and Captain Gates were also under his command. His journal affords picturesque glimpses of the expedition. He dwells on the difficulties of the Mohawk passage. There were alarms of Indian attacks, delays and difficulties at every point. The responsibilities of his command evidently got on Colonel Clinton's nerves, for at Fort Harkeman [as he writes it, for Herkimer], Sunday, June 25th, he records:

"Dreamt that my Father was dead and laid in his Coffin, that my Mother was by & it was to be closed but I said it should not till I would Strow over him some sweet herbs Georg had Gather'd for that purpose and Left in the Coffin which herbs I thought I shaked over him and waked. It gave me Great Con[cern] as I expect it relates to some Death in my Family."

Troubled in mind and sick in body, but eager in the discharge of duty, Colonel Clinton made camp at Fort Craven at the Oneida carrying-place, August 12th, with orders to be ready to march "at a Minute's warning." His journal gives many particulars about the progress to Oswego, which he reached apparently August 21st. That day and night they were busy loading the whale-boats, and the whole fleet sailed "about 11 of the clock," August 23d. They did not stop for camp until 2 o'clock that night, in a cove. The next day, being "pretty far advanced into the lake, and the pilots observing the wind likely to blow, which upon this lake raises a very great sea, it was thought best to make into shore and stay to see what the weather would do. This lake," he adds, "is very large, the Sun Rises and Setts in it often in the year." He notes its many species of fish, the trees about their camp, and character of the soil.

On the 25th they camped at an island near Fort Frontenac. The journal gives the orders under which the camp was broken and the troops advanced by boat for the attack. The whole force was "to range the shore in one line within six feet of each other if possible, and when the signal is given for landing the whole to turn the heads of their boats in to the shore and push to it with the greatest resolution and dispatch, taking



care not to fire a single shot until landed and formed two deep in the front of their boats and then push forward on the enemy, except the regulars and those in the train battoes who are to remain a guard to the boats and provisions."

These orders were successfully carried out. Bradstreet held back his Indians, landing them last and sending them into the woods to flank the enemy. To distinguish them, and protect them from the fire of his own troops, they were all supplied with red guimp, to tie in their hair.

That night the troops rested. Clinton makes no mention of any firing by the French. The next day, two days' provisions were cooked and distributed to the several commands. There was the usual making of fascines and gabions. In the afternoon 1200 of the best men were paraded, for the guard of the trenches. Their cartridge-boxes were filled and those who had powder horns were given a pound of powder and two pounds of balls. At dusk, silently and unopposed, they entered the entrenchments which the French had thrown up before the fort, and that night they extended the trenches, planted two cannon and threw some shells into the fort.

All the next day they battered the walls, but were at too great distance to do much damage. From the fort, a steady fire of cannon and small arms was now maintained against the besiegers. "They had above 60 pieces of cannon," wrote Clinton, "some very large, but had only as many as there was room for on the fort wall-mount. They fired grape shott and their small arms while the last approach was a-making into the aforesaid intrenchment, but did not kill a man nor wound above three or four."

The next day, Sunday the 27th, "our cannon and hoets [howitzers] began to play, and having thrown in some shells which did great execution and the French finding us so near that every ball and shell took place, they took down their colors and sent to capitulate.

"In the meantime a large brig carrying 16 guns, taken from us at Oswego, being loaded with fur, bale goods, etc., and a large schooner likewise loaded, set sail to go off to Niagara,

but as soon as they set sail our cannon fired upon them and hull'd them with every shott, and having killed some on board the French left the vessels and fled in their boats ashore.

“The fort capitulated, to have their money and clothes and to be prisoners of war. Colonel Broadstreet<sup>17</sup> told me this was the articles, but I did not see them, being written in French, nor any of the officers, but the French took all their money, clothes and the best of everything they had in boats with them, and were admitted to go to any of their own garrisons; were not insulted or in any respect treated but with the greatest civility.”

Colonel Bradstreet reasoned that he would best let them go, as he lacked boats to transport them and their baggage to Oswego; and to send them down by the Mohawk route meant trouble and cost.

The fort supplied much plunder — arms, bale goods, furs, etc. “After we took out of the fort what we thought we could carry of the best things,” continues the Clinton journal, “we broke the trunnions of their cannon, broke down the wall of the fort and burned all the houses, barracks and buildings in and about it [and] a vast quantity of provisions which were immediately to be sent to Niagara and other forts to the southward.”

Clinton added to his narrative what he styles “a piece of Popish superstition” told to him by a young man, “one of Captain Oglevie’s men who was taken by the Indians and sold to the governor of Fort Frontinack, was in his service when we took the place”:

“He says that when we invested the place their priest or some of ye people set the Lady Mary’s Image on a table standing, and a number of the people were praying earnestly to her to deliver and save them and the garrison from us hereticks, but in the height of their devotion a boom fell near the place, burst and broke into the windows and without any regard to the image drove it in pieces of[f] the table. This struck them with such terror they all look’d up and cried, ‘*Mon Dieu, mon*

<sup>17</sup> A frequent contemporary spelling.

*Dieu!* All was lost, the Virgin Mary was gone, the Hereticks would take the place!’”

Colonel Clinton alludes to a brig and schooner which were about to sail for Niagara when he attacked them. The official French report<sup>18</sup> says:

The Ohio would not lack supplies this year, but for the heavy loss we met with at Fort Frontenac. The three boats, which carried from 300 to 400 tons, were loading for Niagara when the enemy appeared. If these barques had been spared, we would quickly have filled them, emptying all our storehouses at Montreal; instead of which, we were compelled to use bateaux to carry what was needed to Niagara. Fifteen hundred men have been employed since September 1st, and most of them have not returned. These 1500 consume more provisions than would have been needed to defend and preserve the posts of the Ohio river.

Before Bradstreet sailed away he unloaded the brig and schooner of their most valuable effects, and then, much against his wish, he burned them.

An English report says: “Colonel Bradstreet has taken nine vessels, from 18 to 8 guns, being all they have upon Lake Ontario, two of which he has brought to Oswego, one of them richly laden, the rest with the fort, provisions, ammunition, artillery, stores, etc., burnt and destroyed. The garrison makes no scruple to own that their troops to the southward and their garrisons will suffer greatly for want of provisions and vessels destroyed, as they have none left to bring them home from Niagara.”<sup>19</sup>

The troops left Oswego for the East, August 30th. The Clinton journal ends at Fort Herkimer, September 28th. Of the return of the army it gives many graphic details, over which we may not linger. It was not a pleasure jaunt, and at times the toil was killing. “None can guess the slavery of it that never saw it,” wrote Clinton of the passage up the river near Oswego Falls. The heavy laden bateaux made hard work at the portages, “the men being all the time they wrought with

<sup>18</sup> Bigot to the Minister, Nov. 2, 1758.

<sup>19</sup> “Camp at Onida station, head of Mohawk River, 17th Sept., 1758.”

them up to their breasts in the rapid current"; and again, further along, "they were often wet up to their armpits. It was a toylsome Slavish Expedition to the men tho' in the End a successful one to the Publick." At Fort Bull, September 8th, all the plunder taken from the French (except what the Indians carried off) was put on shore, then reloaded and carried to Fort Newport, to be divided among the troops. Colonel Bradstreet appointed certain officers to superintend this distribution and see that "strict justice" was done. The division of the French plunder which they had brought from Frontenac occupied five or six days "but it was divided in such a manner that all I got of it I offered for 30 shillings. They [the appointed officers] took among themselves all the fine guns and left the best things undivided which were to be sold by vandue in large pieces of cloth or such other parcels as few of the common men could buy. I never saw any account yet how they managed it, or what the whole came to though the expected strict justice would be done, I wish we had never stirred one penny worth out of the fort but had consumed the whole with the provisions. We would not had the trouble of carrying it for Greedy R——ks."

It was a splendid stroke, and could it have been followed up with energy, and the establishment of happier relations with the Indians, the control of everything to the westward would soon have fallen into the hands of the English. The situation is ably presented by an officer who served with Bradstreet. In a letter to Pitt<sup>20</sup> he pointed out that Frontenac had long been an important mart for the Indians, some of whom came a thousand miles to trade there. This trade, he thought, could readily be transferred to Oswego: "It will be absolutely necessary to build a few frigates, to cruise continually on the lake, which will hinder any communication between the northern and southern settlements on this lake; and with good management, I make no doubt, but we might make all the trade, which is now confined to Montreal, centre at Oswego. If one considers the country we shall not wonder at this, since most of the Indians

<sup>20</sup> "A Letter to the Right Honourable William Pitt, Esq.: from an Officer at Fort Frontenac"; London, 1759.

who trade to Montreal, are obliged to carry their furs in canoes over this lake; which would be impossible for them to do, if we had any frigates to cruise on it.” After enlarging on the way to win Indian friendship, he adds: “I don’t see why we should not engross the whole fur trade of the five Lakes; if this once comes to be the case, the French settlement of Canada would not pay the charges of keeping.” He urged upon the Minister the need of more forts in the Ohio country, and on the Lakes, especially another “at Niagara, near the lake Ontario”; that is, across the river, or above the old French fort:

This last will prevent the communication between Louisiana and Canada, by that Lake and the Erie, and oblige the French to abandon their forts on the southeast side of this last lake, by rendering them useless, as well as save us the expense of erecting a fort at Irondequai on the lake Ontario, about 60 miles to the east of Niagara streight, a place which they have long had their eyes upon for erecting a fort; and which we must be under the necessity of fortifying in case the French remain at Niagara, in order to prevent their taking possession of it.

This anonymous officer was not the only one to offer advice to Pitt, who was little in need of it, as the following campaign showed.

In urging upon Pitt the erection of a British fort on the Niagara, Arthur Young pointed out that it would prevent communication between Canada and Louisiana, and oblige the French to abandon their forts to the southward, by rendering them useless, “as well as save us the expense of erecting a fort at Irondequoit on the Lake Ontario, about 60 miles to the east of Niagara streight, a place which they [the French] have long had their eyes upon for erecting a fort; and which we must be under the necessity of fortifying in case the French remain at Niagara, in order to prevent their taking possession of it.” Incidentally he remarked of Lake Erie: “This is certainly the finest lake upon earth,” which, although gratifying to local pride, suggests, notwithstanding his long and ardent description, that he was but imperfectly acquainted with Lake Erie.

The elucidation, more or less intelligent, of American conditions, by many writers, while not without its influence on the policy of the Ministry, exercised its greatest effect in hastening a united action on the part of the English colonies. No one cause had more to do with bringing about the ultimate union of the colonies than the activities of the French in the region here under study.

When Bradstreet had set out from Albany, in August, it was not generally known whether he was to attack Frontenac or Niagara. After his success at Frontenac, it was anticipated in more than one quarter that he would complete his work by taking Niagara. It was even reported in New York City that this was determined on, and Canada held the same expectation. "If the English are established at Niagara," Bigot wrote to De Lévis, September 6th, "it must be retaken. If they have abandoned it, they must be prevented from establishing themselves at Oswego; and then we must retake our post at Frontenac, and rebuild there. M. de Vaudreuil has asked my opinion. Here it is: It will cost much labor and money; but what is one to do? Niagara cannot be abandoned except we lose all that region."

It may be considered, whether Bradstreet might not at this time have taken Niagara, which could have been destroyed, if he were not able to leave a garrison there. At Frontenac, according to an English report, he destroyed 8000 barrels of provisions. He also burned and sunk seven vessels of from eight to 18 guns each. The goods and provisions at Frontenac were valued at 800,000 livres, exclusive of the vessels, guns, etc. One report places the total loss at £40,000. Two vessels Bradstreet did take back to Oswego, and some of the cannon which had been taken from Braddock at Fort Duquesne. Had he preserved even a part of the stores thus wasted, and saved more of the vessels, he might have left a temporary garrison at Oswego, and gone against Niagara with little to fear. Perhaps he would have done so, had he known the actual weakness of that post. One report says that when Frontenac was taken, neither Fort Duquesne nor Niagara had more than three weeks' provisions. According to some English prisoners, brought out



Fort Frontenac and Vicinity, 1758  
 From a Map in the British Museum





of Canada in this summer by Colonel Peter Schuyler, there were only 15 men at Niagara, in August, most of that garrison having gone to reinforce De Lignery; these prisoners thought it “an unlucky thing” that Bradstreet did not go on to Niagara.<sup>21</sup> These figures can not be relied on; another report says Vassan had 40 men — a feeble garrison, even at that.

The destruction of Fort Frontenac was a stroke of some importance; but had the hero of that exploit also taken Niagara, he would have made the English masters of the Lakes; regained the wavering allegiance of the Iroquois; cut the communication between Canada and Louisiana; and opened the way for Great Britain to enjoy, undisputed, the fur trade for which it had contended unsuccessfully for well nigh a century. The “volunteer” above quoted, saw the situation clearly when he wrote: “If only 2000 provincial troops, which were kept unemployed at Lake George, had been ordered to follow us, and take post at Oswego, we might have thrown up some defensible works, and brought over and preserved all the shipping, artillery, ammunition and supplies Fort Frontenac would have amply supplied us with. We might then have had it in our power to have taken Niagara, and secure that important pass, long the object of the nation’s desire. . . . What a glorious acquisition would this have been! This, for which Great Britain has expended millions, might have been acquired without blood or money.”

Plausible conclusions these; but like all the other “might have beens” of history, impossible of proof and futile to consider.

In one of his countless palavers with the Indians, Captain Pouchot, apprehensive of the effect on them of the loss of the French fleet at Frontenac, said to them: “If the great canoes of your father, the great Onontio, had not been taken, and if he had time to make others, rest assured that his children the French would cover all this country like the trees”—a striking admission, on the part of a military engineer, of the essential need of armed control on the waters of the lake.

Montcalm’s official report of the capture of Frontenac says the loss of the fort was “immaterial”; but he adds, “what is

<sup>21</sup> *Boston Gazette*, Dec. 11, 1758.

more aggravating, they have captured considerable supplies, quantities of merchandise, 80 cannon, large and small, and have destroyed the shipping which was a result of my taking Oswego, as well as destroying five of our ships, and capturing two. That shipping assured us the supremacy on Lake Ontario, which we have lost in a moment."

It was an unhappy and apprehensive season on the Niagara. Fort Duquesne was held by the enemy, who for the first time had a foothold in the Ohio Valley. Early in August two vessels, laden with furs, had sailed from the mouth of the Niagara, for Fort Frontenac, where they were to take in a return cargo of provisions for Niagara and dependent posts, and stone for the fortifications. One of them was a Canada-built schooner, the other the prize brig taken at Oswego. Their speedy return was eagerly hoped for, but the next that was heard of them was that the English had taken and destroyed them, even as they had Fort Frontenac itself. The garrison at Fort Niagara saw their base of supplies not merely cut off but extinguished, and the enemy on both sides of them. Had Bradstreet remained on Lake Ontario for even a few weeks, Niagara would have been in desperate straits; but the early departure of the English, who left Oswego August 30th, gave De Vaudreuil opportunity to send relief.

At Montreal the Governor had been informed by courier from Fort Frontenac August 26th, that the bay of Niaouré was full of English barges, on which, he called out all the militia of Montreal and surrounding districts. On the 29th, another courier brought word that some 2000 men, in barges, had crossed over to Fort Frontenac. The next day, he learned that De Noyan had capitulated on the 27th; that he was a prisoner of war and was being sent on parole with all his garrison, down to Montreal. Before this word came, De Vaudreuil had ordered Duplessis-Fabert, with some 1500 men, to the relief of Fort Frontenac. They were slow in getting off, at Lachine, and were paddling up the river when they learned that the fort had fallen. Duplessis went into camp at La Présentation, where presently arrived De Montigny with orders to take 500 men and proceed to Niagara.

De Vaudreuil had been greatly worried as to the fate of this distant and now isolated post. Writing to the Minister a few days later <sup>22</sup> he admitted it: “As soon my Lord, as I was aware that the sloops were in the hands of the English, my uneasiness for Niagara increased, in consequence of the difficulty of getting to that place.” He tells of sending off De Montigny, and adds: “I hope that if time be given to this detachment to arrive at Niagara, it will be out of danger, and that, as the bark canoes can be hid in the woods, they will escape the vigilance of the sloops.”

De Montigny, a capable officer, proceeded cautiously. With 30 bark canoes, 20,000 weight of powder, and a force, probably nearer 300 than 500, of picked men (“*d’élite*”), several gunners among them, he advanced from the river into the open lake. He was probably well assured that the English sloops were not to be feared. At any rate, he appears to have followed the south shore, for he arrived at Fort Niagara without having seen any English,<sup>23</sup> the seventh day after his departure. A report <sup>24</sup> speaks of his having been becalmed two days, which would indicate that he made use of sails; he probably had *bat-eaux* as well as canoes.

Commandant De Vassan at Niagara had had an anxious time of it. Day after day he had looked in vain for the return of the vessels with stores from Fort Frontenac. On September 1st a Colonial officer from Detroit with six canoes passed down the Niagara; Vassan had heard nothing of the loss of Fort Frontenac, and was only concerned about the boats. The traveler himself first learned of the English raid, from some Nepissing Indians “at the Couy islands.”

When De Montigny reached Niagara with his relief force, they had known of the fall of Frontenac only eight hours; and De Vassan, expecting an attack from Bradstreet, was preparing with his 40 men, to burn whatever was outside the fort, and make the best defense he could.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> De Vaudreuil to De Massiac, Montreal, Sept. 2, 1758.

<sup>23</sup> M. Daine to Marshal de Belle Isle, Quebec, Oct. 17, 1758.

<sup>24</sup> Journal, attributed to Adjutant Malartic.

<sup>25</sup> An unsigned report, contained in the “*Collection du Maréchal de Lévis*,”

Belestre with 120 Canadians was sent to Detroit to pass the winter. St. Ours was ordered to Presqu' Isle with reinforcements for that post and Le Bœuf.

Chabert's activities among the tribes were never before so urgent and incessant. In November, he ascended the Stonon-dac — *i.e.*, the Chippewa River, going, he says, more than 30 leagues from the fort, to treat with the Mississagas. Some weeks were spent on this and like missions. Towards the end of December, he having returned to the Portage fort, several messengers arrived from De Lignery, who had burned Fort Duquesne and retreated to Venango, whence the English were unable to follow; but such was the excitement in the region, and the fickleness of the tribes, that he felt far from secure, and urged Chabert to come "to arouse new ardor in these utterly discouraged peoples." The Governor of Montreal admonished Chabert to stay at his own fort, where he was needed. But there came a fourth messenger from De Lignery, saying that he was hard pressed by the savages to evacuate Fort Machault, "and that if I did not hasten as soon as possible all that country would be irretrievably lost to the King."

This news, he says, threw him into great perplexity: "On the one hand, superior orders held me back, and on the other the urgent needs and the repeated entreaties of the commandant on the Ohio begged me to fly to his aid." He escaped from the dilemma by putting matters in the best possible shape at the Portage fort, and then going to the aid of De Lignery:

I set out on snowshoes the 1st of February [1759], notwithstanding the extreme rigor of the cold, and at the risk of falling into the hands of hostile parties. I found several of these unsettled peoples, and gained their allegiance. . . . I supplied them abundantly with goods, equipped their braves, provisioned the villages, and distributed to them, at my own expense, all that they needed. . . . They raised the hatchet against the English, and I immediately sought the commandant on the Ohio at Fort Machault, where he had with him only 80 men.

Chabert rested here 15 days, because it was reported that giving news of Niagara and upper Ohio posts, Nov.-Dec., 1758, was probably written either by M. de Vassan, at Niagara, or M. de Lignery, at Duquesne.

the English were coming up the river from Fort Pitt — as they had already named their reconstruction of Fort Duquesne — intending to besiege Fort Machault. They did not come; and after rallying as many Indians as possible to the aid of De Lignery, Chabert returned through the forests to the Niagara.

The last French commander of Fort Frontenac, Captain Pierre Jacques Payen de Noyan, was a survivor of an earlier generation. In his final years on Lake Ontario he was associated with sons of the men with whom he began that service. He was of an old Normandy family, and as early as 1721 was in command of the feeble and precarious post of Catarauqui, which later we know as Fort Frontenac. He was intimate with the elder Joncaire, whose first trading-house by the Niagara rapids he visited in 1721 (*See* Chap. XII). He was again on the Niagara in 1726, and probably at other times. For many years he was one of a few chosen men of ability on whom France relied for the maintenance of friendly relations with the Iroquois. The younger Le Moyne (2d Baron de Longueuil), La Chauvignerie, and the Joncaires, father and sons, were others. They were all adopted into one or another of the Iroquois tribes and were designated by the Indians as “our children.” To the cause of France, under the peculiar policy she thought it necessary to pursue, they were worth more than an army.

In 1745, after an employment among the Six Nations, De Noyan was given command at Crown Point. After two years at Fort St. Frédéric a high official reported of him: “A man of talent; has governed well.” We do not linger to trace his varied services. In 1756, while he was Governor at Three Rivers, a great Indian council was held at Montreal, at which the Onondagas begged that “our son,” De Noyan, be again sent to command at Fort Frontenac. “He loves us,” they said; “we therefore prefer applying to him rather than to any other, to supply our wants.” Such a request would have some weight; but it is said he was reappointed to Frontenac because the place, which was below his station, gave opportunity for money-making, De Noyan’s fortune being at low ebb. He continued in command until the fatal August 27th

when Bradstreet compelled his surrender of the post with which his connection had begun nearly 40 years before. What he might have done, in his last administration, to strengthen that post, may be left to military experts. As a fortress it was notoriously defenseless. De Vaudreuil, largely responsible for its neglect, sought to shift the blame wholly to De Noyan, and reproached him, justly enough, for so readily giving up the sloops and other craft. It was from De Noyan's feeble hand that the English for the first time seized control of Lake Ontario. The old man — he was 68 when he signed the capitulation — appears to have attempted no defense in his own behalf, from the accusations of Vaudreuil or others. Bradstreet allowed him to go to Montreal, where he was exchanged for Colonel Peter Schuyler.

His life passed in frontier warfare and amid savages, De Noyan is said to have been of exceptional culture; something of a scientist; a student of medicine; and so clever a poet that his satirical *vers de société* made him many enemies — assuredly, a superfluous achievement. After the Conquest, the scoop-net of justice gathered him in, with many worse men; only to let him go, after a long detention in Paris, with no heavier punishment than a public reprimand and a small fine.<sup>26</sup>

Late in November, M. de St. Ours, returning from the Ohio country, passed down the Niagara with a small detachment. The season was late, and they suffered much in passing through Lake Ontario.

As soon as the departure of the English was beyond doubt, the engineer, Pontleroy, was sent up to the ruined Frontenac, to see what could be done. His report<sup>27</sup> was altogether unfavorable. He found the location of the old fort dominated by neighboring heights at a distance of 150 *toises*, and the construction so bad as not to be worth restoring: "The walls only two feet thick, without terre-plain, ditch or covered way. Behold, Monseigneur," he exclaims, "a sample of what they call forts in this country! Adequate, perhaps, for war with In-

<sup>26</sup> I have not found any official record of his last years or death. The name occurs quite as often "De Noyan" as "De Noyan."

<sup>27</sup> Dated, Oct. 28, 1758.

dians, or an enemy without artillery, but to-day the numerous forces of English with their artillery must radically change the system of war, and consequently of the defense of our frontiers.” He expressed himself strongly on the extravagant cost of the Lake Ontario posts, and ventured the hope that when peace was restored a capable engineer might be employed in putting these frontiers in a proper state of defense. His cheerful assumption was that this work would devolve on the French, when peace came, and that he would be the engineer selected.

The purpose of Vaudreuil regarding the restoration of Fort Frontenac, is none too clear. He had sent Duplessis-Fabert to its relief. After Bradstreet’s army was out of the lake, Duplessis visited the scene of havoc but did little if anything towards reconstruction and soon returned to La Présentation. September 7th the Governor ordered Benoist “to take command of the post of Frontenac, as soon as M. Duplessis thinks best to come down to Montreal.” Benoist was to have a force of some 600 soldiers, militia and laborers, and was ordered to build barracks for them. He was to do nothing to interfere with the Niagara communication. At the same time, the Sieur Cressé was under orders to build two vessels for the Niagara service under Captain La Force; and Pontleroy was to decide where and how they should be built.

These were the men to whom, in the autumn of 1758, Canada entrusted the task of reëstablishing a base for the supply of Fort Niagara and the Ohio posts.

In his instructions to Benoist, the Governor wrote that “the new establishment may be at Frontenac, at Montreal Point, or some place in the vicinity.” It was the engineer, Pontleroy, who fixed upon Point au Baril, on the north shore some eight miles above La Présentation. At this point, 50 miles from the ruined fort, three keels were laid and vessel-building went rapidly forward under the Sieur Cressé; and there in the early spring of 1759, two vessels were launched and put into commission. It does not appear that the third was completed.

If Captain Benoist followed the instructions of Vaudreuil, he spent the winter at Frontenac; but spring found him back

again at La Présentation in intimate association with the Abbé Picquet. One Sieur D'Albergaty had asked for service at Frontenac; Vaudreuil appointed him to that post, to serve under Benoist. As long as weather permitted, they were busy in sending supplies by bateaux to Niagara, under the conduct of two officers, Montigny and Porlier; the only mention of the latter noted in official documents, is in connection with this service.

How much restoration work was attempted at Fort Frontenac cannot be stated. Bradstreet had left most of the walls standing, but they had never been a strong fortification. A half dozen cannon had been left there, but they would have amounted to little, had the English chosen to come back. Among other directions, Vaudreuil had written:

M. Douville has been ordered to engage the Mississagas to go to Frontenac. M. Benoist will do what he can to draw them thither, and if he thinks necessary to employ them as scouts. If any Iroquois of the Five Nations should come to Frontenac, M. Benoist must give them a kind reception, but without trusting them; and he shall report to us all that he learns.

No doubt, in pursuance of our orders, they have begun to cut the hay.<sup>28</sup> It will be needed for at least 20 horses which have been sent off and for which oats are being sent to Frontenac. As for the rest, M. Benoist must see to it that the troops and the Canadians live in harmony, and take every precaution against surprise. In any matter which cannot be foreseen, we rely on the judgment, prudence, experience and zeal of M. Benoist.<sup>29</sup>

These and other details indicate the Governor's purpose, in September, to restore Frontenac and maintain a garrison there during the winter; but nowhere is evidence found that this was done. The lack of suitable timber near the old fort caused a transfer of the shipbuilding operations, as already stated, to Point au Baril; and the next we learn of Captain Benoist, he is back at La Présentation, replacing De Lorimier. From this time on for many years, Fort Frontenac was abandoned to roving Indians, to the wolves and bears.

<sup>28</sup> In September!

<sup>29</sup> Vaudreuil to Benoist, Montreal, Sept. 7, 1758.



In the following April, Vaudreuil wrote to Benoist: “I am much gratified with all you have done relative to the command I entrusted to you,” an indication that the abandonment of Fort Frontenac had the Governor’s approval. Benoist is further commended “for the coöperation and agreement between you and the Abbé Picquet.” After discussing Indian relations at length the Governor says: “It is much to be wished that we might know the result of the great council which the English have held at Fort Bull. We shall have true report of it, either through your efforts, or those of M. Chabert or M. de Joncaire, who has been among the Senecas.”<sup>30</sup>

With characteristic complaisance, Vaudreuil approved whatever Benoist did, and appears to have given him well nigh a free hand. This is the more important since, as will be borne in mind, the sustenance of Fort Niagara and the further posts now depended on La Présentation. Benoist had moved to that post the guns which Bradstreet had left at Frontenac. “I have no doubt,” the Governor wrote to him, “that you have made the best possible disposition of the artillery which came to you from Frontenac. No doubt you have taken the wisest precautions against a surprise, and to discover the movements of our enemies.”

Strange were the services of those little brass cannon. They had crossed the Atlantic with Braddock, to send death and destruction among the encroaching French and pestiferous savages. Instead of doing that, after being hauled with infinite toil through the miry forest roads, up and down the Allegheny mountains, they easily fell into the hands of the enemy at Fort Duquesne. Thence, to Fort Niagara as trophies of war, by wilderness and water way, was another arduous episode. Apparently some of them remained at Fort Niagara. Others were sent down the lake to Fort Frontenac; and when Montcalm besieged Oswego in 1756, he pounded the works to pieces with six of those same brass cannon.<sup>31</sup> If, as

<sup>30</sup> Vaudreuil to Benoist, Montreal, Apr. 24, 1759.

<sup>31</sup> Ensign De Belestre, carried prisoner to Winchester, Va., in 1757, testified before George Washington and others, that the train of artillery which the French took from Braddock “was sent, after his defeat, to Niagara, and that it was the same train the French had used at the taking of Oswego.”

appears to have been the case, they went back to Fort Frontenac, they again fell into the hands of the English when Bradstreet took the place in 1758. As the records expressly state that he left six cannon behind, they may have been these same peripatetic guns, impartially efficient (or inefficient), now for Great Britain, now for France, which Benoist brought over to the old fort where Ogdensburg now stands. Can not some antiquarian trace them further, some relic hunter yet rescue them, if not to point a moral and adorn a tale, at least to adorn a park and keep alive the memory of old days!

Captain Benoist was busy this spring, giving such aid as he could to Captain Pouchot, in his preparations for the defense of Niagara. He sent his son there, to be under Pouchot's care. With the Abbé Picquet he sought to draw Indians to his own post, and to pledge them to keep the English away from Oswego. "As the work on the Niagara fortifications is in great danger," wrote Vaudreuil, "through lack of horses, and as, for the same reason, the [Niagara] portage is very slow, according to what you report, I shall send up the horses which are at Point au Baril, as soon as the work there is finished, which will be so much the better as they are no longer needed, and are likely to die for lack of grass."<sup>32</sup>

In the same letter — the last he ever wrote to Benoist — he said: "I expect that the third boat will be ready to sail by the end of May." If it was, no clear indication of its services has been noted. The other two which were built at Point au Baril — the *Iroquoise* and *Outaouaise* — had been launched early in April, and may have carried these horses to Niagara, though no mention of them is found in connection with Pouchot's defensive work.

The next we hear of Captain Benoist is at Oswego. When the Niagara expedition of Prideaux and Johnson set out from Oswego, July 1st, Colonel Haldimand and some 500 provincials were left as a guard. Most of them were busy building stockades when, on July 5th, they were attacked by a body of French and Indians. This force, led by the Chevalier de La Corne, had organized at La Présentation, and included

<sup>32</sup> Vaudreuil to Benoist, Apr. 24, 1759.

Captain Benoist and the Abbé Picquet. The English were taken wholly by surprise, and it is said would have lost everything had not the Abbé Picquet delayed the attack in order to exhort the French troops and give them absolution. The English took advantage of this act of devotion, so to strengthen themselves that the French could only withdraw, with some loss.<sup>33</sup>

Among those wounded in this affair was Captain Benoist, who was shot through the thigh; so seriously wounded, according to his eulogistic biographer, "as to confine him for 15 months on a bed of pain." At any rate, his active service in the war was at an end.

In the City Hall at New York, November 21, 1758, Lt. Gov. De Lancey, addressing the Council and General Assembly, summed up the events of the campaign. It had not been wholly favorable for the British; but the loss of Ticonderoga was in the speaker's view, more than offset by the capture of Frontenac. "This event," he said, "was attended with happy circumstances; at this place were taken all the vessels the French had on the Lake, which have been burnt. In the Fort were found a great number of arms, an immense quantity of provisions and Indian goods of all kinds, being the magazine from whence Niagara and the other French posts westward were to be furnished. These have all been destroyed or brought away, the effects of which will be severely felt by the enemy this winter."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Pouchot, I, 208-9.

<sup>34</sup> Journal, Legislative Council of N. Y., Nov. 21, 1758.

**NOTE.** To the account, in the foregoing chapter, of Col. Charles Clinton's participation in the attack on Fort Frontenac, it may be well to add that his sons James and George also shared in it. James Clinton was a captain, his brother George a lieutenant, and to them is credited the capture of one of the French vessels. George Clinton was in the Niagara expedition the following year.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### PITT AND THE NIAGARA

#### MONTCALM VERSUS VAUDREUIL — TWO PLANS OF CAMPAIGN FOR MAINTAINING FRENCH SUPREMACY ON THE LAKES — PITT AND THE PROJECTS FOR 1759.

THE names of Wolfe and Montcalm, so closely linked in the story of Quebec, are not so associated in the history of the Lake region. With the field of action which we here study, Wolfe had nothing to do. Montcalm, on the contrary, not only shared in active campaigns on Ontario, but gave much consideration to the defense of Niagara and other posts on this frontier, especially in the earlier years. By 1759 he had lost all hope of success in the West, under the policies of the Governor from whom his suggestions received nothing but contempt.

“If Niagara is besieged,” wrote Montcalm, in one of his controversies with Vaudreuil, “it will be taken. We must look forward to the siege, but it is not necessary to sacrifice too large a garrison.”

Vaudreuil replied: “The orders I have given at Niagara give me hope that with the aid which I propose for M. Pouchot, and if the junction of forces from the upper country can be made, they will be able to attack the enemy at the moment of his disembarking, before he reaches the fort. I have also ordered that, in case we are beaten, leaving only a necessary garrison at Niagara, a camp shall be established on the other side of the river, which, protecting and protected by our barques, will facilitate the retreat of the garrison if brought to that extremity.”

It was from Vaudreuil, and not Montcalm, that orders emanated under which the main movements of the campaign on this frontier were made. De Lignery was to gather his forces at Fort Machault. There was to be established an “ob-

LOUIS JOSEPH M<sup>re</sup> de MONTCALM GOZON.  
29 février 1712 + 14 Septembre 1759.



Montcalm

*From a Portrait in the Possession of the Family*



servation camp" at Presqu' Isle, to which the western tribes were to come. At Toronto, the Mississagas and other northern allies were to rendezvous, in readiness for the call to Niagara. Montcalm, overborne and disgusted by the arrogance of Vaudreuil, by 1759 had very much lapsed from the eager and helpful spirit which had inspired his counsel in earlier years. Even the spring before he had written to his confidant, Bourlamaque: "I may, in a discussion of superintendence, wish to prove that I am not considered or consulted, and that indeed they do not speak to me in any way before orders are given concerning the Ohio, St. John, Niagara, Frontenac, Présentation. In my idle fancies I always think that if the Colony is lost, they will put the three of us in the Bastille"<sup>1</sup>—one of the trio, obviously, being Vaudreuil.

Much of the correspondence of the French officers in Canada, at the opening of the year 1759, reflects the spirit of depression which pervaded the army. The best informed of them, knowing the strength of the enemy, realized that the game was up. Their devotion to the cause, in spite of the odds, is pathetic. Montcalm wrote to his mother: "We saved the Colony, last year, by a phenomenal success. Can we hope to repeat it? At least we must try." To the Minister, April 12th, he predicted the loss of Canada, "this campaign, or the next." Pouchot, in returning to Niagara, bade his fellow officers good-by, saying, "We shall next meet in England." De Bougainville wrote, in January: "Not a single strong place in the country. Niagara, the most maintainable of all, could not, if attacked, hold out more than three weeks." Captain Desandrouins, long stationed at Ticonderoga, employed his leisure in writing a journal, in which he speculated on the defense of the Colony and forecast the loss of Niagara, if not of all Canada:

The Indians must be kept by all means; give up the little forts [LeBœuf, etc.]; retain 300 men at Niagara, and even if necessary sacrifice this fort, and allow as few *voyageurs* as possible to go out for trade. The Indians, the trade and the wealth of the [upper] country will be lost; but this is less than to lose the Colony.

<sup>1</sup> Montcalm to Bourlamaque, Mar. 3, 1758.

If Niagara shall be besieged, the commandant, after a reasonable defense — for the fort is not strong enough to resist for long — will escape, at night by Lake Ontario, and fall back to the entrance to the St. Lawrence. For that retreat he should be supplied with a sufficient number of bark canoes.<sup>2</sup>

He outlines his idea of a last defense of Lake Ontario and final retreat down the river. On the value of his plans, only a military strategist could pass judgment; but they indicate the spirit, less of hopefulness than of courageous resignation, which showed itself in many quarters at the opening of this campaign.

The letters of Montcalm, always vigorously expressed and keenly interesting, are never more so than when he sets forth his views as to the control of Lake Ontario and the Niagara. He is ever striving to conceal his contempt for the military ideas of the Colonial, Vaudreuil. The latter was equally sure of himself, constantly protesting that he would never abandon Ontario, and much too ready to make querulous reports derogatory to Montcalm.

Their disagreements were so many that the Intendant, Bigot, thought it his duty to tell of them to the Minister: "I am doing my best with the one and the other to induce them to conceal from the public the little reproaches they believe themselves justified in making against one another, and I excuse them reciprocally whenever I write to them. A report of a rupture would be as dangerous to the Colony as the entrance of an English army."<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact, they were both capable men, and both devoted to the welfare and defense of Canada. Montcalm had the advantage of military training, and looked beyond the immediate action, to consider ultimate consequences. Vaudreuil was deficient in the sort of experience which made Montcalm useful, but he knew, better than the General, how to deal with the Indians and how to get efficient service from his Colonial troops. Working for the same end,

<sup>2</sup> "*Papiers du Général Desandrouins.*" His *Mémoire* is used *in extenso* in the Abbé Gabriel's work, "*Le Maréchal de Camp Desandrouins,*" Verdun, 1887.

<sup>3</sup> Bigot to M. de Massiac, Quebec, Aug. 13, 1758.



both were much hampered by the friction of their mutual intercourse, which they made as slight and formal as possible. "Their hauteur," wrote Bigot, "is too much opposed the one to the other, and for a long time they have appeared to me to associate only politically." In the early stages of their intercourse there was an effort, at least on Montcalm's part, to maintain amicable relations; but he never approved of Vaudreuil or his methods. "He is well-intentioned but very ir-resolute," the Marquis wrote in June, 1756, regarding the disposition of forces which the Governor-General was making. Montcalm was at Ticonderoga when he heard that Bradstreet had taken Frontenac. "I have been as much affected at this occurrence," he wrote, "[which is owing to the desire to seize] our navy on Lake Ontario that we have lost, as if I had to reproach myself with it, and had not foreseen and not given warning of it. Niagara must experience the same fate; the same blunder was committed there of leaving, as it were, nobody at that post, but the enemy has not been informed of it, and M. de Vaudreuil has had time to send three hundred men hither."<sup>4</sup>

Six months later he wrote to the Minister of War: "The loss of Fort Frontenac is a fatal blow by the capture of our shipping on Lake Ontario. They have taken three months to deliberate as to where they can build new boats; we shall have two in 20 days, if the English do not come and burn them."<sup>5</sup>

Lieutenant Despinassy had sailed from Niagara in the barque *Marquise*, August 20, to bring a load of limestone from Frontenac, for the revetment of the Niagara fortifications. He reached Frontenac on the 22d just in time for the English to seize his vessel. The *Marquise* and a snow carrying 16 guns were kept for use; the other French vessels were burned. When Montcalm heard of it, September 6th, he exclaimed: "Again they are masters of Lake Ontario! God grant they don't go at once to Niagara!" No one realized more clearly than Montcalm the important bearing which the control of Lake Ontario would have on the final issue of the war. As for

<sup>4</sup> Montcalm to M. de Creville, "Camp at Carillon, Oct. 21, 1758."

<sup>5</sup> Montcalm to Belle-Isle, Apr. 12, 1759. In this letter, which is in cypher, he predicts the early loss of the colony.

Vaudreuil, he started De Montigny for Niagara with 500 picked men and 20,000 weight of powder, the Governor reasoning that by skirting the shore and hiding in the woods the expedition could elude the English. De Montigny in his bark canoes moved so slowly that on September 9th they had only reached La Présentation [Ogdensburg], where they were found by Captain Godefroy of the Colonials who was on his way down from Detroit. He reported that the garrison at Niagara, when he was there, August 31st, had not heard that the English had taken Frontenac. A French scout, Langy-Levrault, was sent into the lake to learn what the English were doing. Coasting down the east shore, he found the bay of Niaouré and Oswego both deserted, but at the latter place found the débris of barges and a burned barque, with much scattered rigging. Vaudreuil exerted himself to send supplies to Niagara and on the ruins of Frontenac set the Sieur de Pontleroy at work creating an intrenched post, to be garrisoned by Canadians and friendly Indians. "I think it all very useless," wrote Montcalm.

It was generally feared by the French that Bradstreet would follow up his activities at Frontenac with a raid on Niagara. Had he done so, the place would readily have fallen into his hands. Toronto was ordered to be burned and the garrison to retreat to Niagara, in case the English appeared. Seven days elapsed after the capture of Frontenac before Vassan at Niagara learned of it. He had worried because the sloops did not return; when word was brought that they were burned, he prepared with his 40 men, to burn everything outside the fort and make the best defense he could; but the English left the lake without visiting the feeble and frightened posts at the western end. Having destroyed the French sloops, they departed, knowing they could at any time return by way of Oswego.

In November, Montcalm went up to Montreal and conferred with the Governor, but with so little satisfaction that each wrote out his ideas, as to what course should be followed in regard to Lake Ontario and the Niagara and sent them to the Minister. These memoirs were also exchanged, and each wrote

down his opinion of what the other had recommended. It was all little more than a barely-tolerant bicker, and the developments of the next few months made it impossible to carry out either plan.

Vaudreuil's propositions were positive enough. He declared he would never consent to the abandonment of the Lakes; he was determined to establish "our navy," as he styled their few little barques, on Lake Ontario, and resume the superiority there: "On the preservation of Lake Ontario depended that of Niagara and all our frontier posts," and he felt sure that it was his boldness, in at once sending a force to Niagara, after the loss of Frontenac, that kept the English from remaining at Oswego. "I have profited by these forces to dispatch provisions to Niagara, and have ordered the reëstablishment of our marine at La Présentation. The necessary preparations will be made during winter to permit the rebuilding of the stores at Fort Frontenac, the repairing the walls [*enceinte*] to protect them against a *coup de main*, so that next spring Lake Ontario will, I hope, be at least in as good a condition as it was before, and the Colony will have suffered no other loss than the money it will cost the King and the fatigue of the colonists who have coöperated therein with the best grace, knowing the necessity of preserving that lake for the security of the Colony."

The force of gunners, soldiers, Canadians and Indians that De Montigny led to Niagara carried only 40 days' provisions; but Vaudreuil proposed to send other convoys. The wheat harvest being ended, he counted on being able to send thither 1000 to 1500 men, and from various sources, east and west, he thought he could bring an army of more than 5000 men for rendezvous there; in these vague estimates he figured on depleting the upper posts, "inasmuch as everything will have been decided by that time at the Beautiful river"; that is, before the end of the season, Le Bœuf, Venango and western posts would either be free from threat by the enemy or lost to them. Then, with this phantom army conjured from nowhere — for nowhere could he have rallied the force he pretended — he would harass the English at Oswego and prevent them from rebuilding; or if the English proved in superior force there, he

would make a camp of light troops and Indians at the Bay of Niaouré, to harass the English at Oswego. The rest of the French force would winter at Frontenac, strengthening the place and building sloops. Convoys of 200 bateaux would be formed, "which would pass and repass along the north shore to provision Niagara and the upper countries, and in order that these convoys may arrive safe, six or eight guns would be added to them, ready to be landed at a moment's notice, which would oblige the [English] sloops to move off again, supposing they would want to bar the passage." In case the enemy had taken Niagara before De Montigny's arrival, Vaudreuil thought a French force could be sent at once to Oswego to cut off all communication of the English and prevent them from victualing Niagara. He admitted this was an extreme measure, "but it appears to me to be the only one under such circumstances."

Such in general were the plans of Vaudreuil for regaining and maintaining French supremacy on Lake Ontario; and in laying them before Montcalm, the Governor virtually announced his intention of doing as he thought best in any event.

In one and the same document, Montcalm outlined his own ideas for the defense of Lake Ontario, and tore to pieces those of Vaudreuil. The latter had vaguely added together various forces until in his mind he had summoned more than 5000 for Niagara, whence they were to fall on Oswego. Montcalm accepted the Governor's estimate of 1500 available men in the Lake Ontario district; granted, for the sake of argument, that 1500 men could be brought up from Quebec, and possibly 1000 men from other sources; "but," he added, "in regard to those on the Beautiful river, they ought not to enter into any actual project respecting Lake Ontario"; and he also deducted the 500 who had been sent to Niagara under De Montigny, reasoning that their business was to remain in that fort until the arrival of a stronger garrison, "and to be occupied there, in the meanwhile, either in coming or going for victualing that post, or at the different civil and military buildings which M. de Pouchot, whom I shall send thither immediately to command them, would judge necessary for a long and vigorous defence."

Thus Montcalm reduced Vaudreuil's theoretical 5000 to 2500 or at most 3500 men, white and Indian, available for any plan of campaign on the lake.

He next considered the feasibility of an attack on the English at Oswego — or "Choueguen," as he usually writes it. Preliminary to such an attack, he proposed to establish a military base, "a post of war and not a fort," above the rapids, near the outlet of the lake; mass his forces there, and fall on the English before the 15th of October. If, however, he found the English remained in force at Oswego until winter, his advice was that no attack be made on them, though he would establish the post at the outlet of the lake, equip it with munitions of war, and send supplies to Niagara sufficient for a garrison of 500 men. He advised the sending of small convoys through the lake, because large ones moved slowly, and if attacked, their defeat would be ruinous. He favored a more liberal policy towards the Indians, giving them what they needed; and with the maintenance of a scout system, to watch and wait.

In acknowledging receipt of Montcalm's suggestions, the Governor reiterated his purpose never to abandon the Lakes: "I am, Sir, entirely decided to reestablish the navy on Lake Ontario, and to re-acquire, if possible, the superiority we possessed there." He preferred the reestablishment of Frontenac to Montcalm's recommended base at the head of the rapids, and of Niagara wrote: "The Marquis de Montcalm is too much of a military man not to admit that no matter how well we may victual Niagara, were it reduced to the defense of its garrison alone, and should we abandon our Lakes, neither it nor any of the other little posts could fail of being taken, if the English lay siege to them."

One of the few matters on which the Governor and the General agreed was the assignment of Captain Pouchot to Niagara. When Montcalm heard of it he said: "He should have been sent there last autumn; he was capable and acceptable to the Indians; it had been promised; but," adds the Marquis, with his usual caustic touch, "how could one make

up his mind to remove a Canadian officer, however incapable or unacceptable to the Indians he may have been!"<sup>6</sup> This is our clearest setting-forth of Vassan.

Captain Pouchot came to Niagara under orders from Vaudreuil to turn over to De Lignery the corps of Canadians and Indians, if it was found on reaching Niagara that the enemy had no designs against that place; and De Lignery had orders on his part, to push on with these Canadians and Indians, in an effort to retake Fort Duquesne. In March, De Vaudreuil, considering the exigency of Niagara, wrote, that if it should really be besieged by the English, Captain Pouchot should retain under his orders the 300 Canadians destined for the Ohio; and further, if he thought necessary, he could summon all the troops from Detroit and the western posts, who should make rendezvous at Presqu' Isle; but if this force was not needed for the defense of Niagara, it was to be under orders of De Lignery for service to the southward.<sup>7</sup> The Marquis de Montcalm strongly opposed this project, which had for its end the control of the Ohio valley. He advised the evacuation of all the upper country, retaining only a garrison of 300 at Niagara; and repeatedly counseled a reduction, rather than an increase of troops, and that the frontiers of the colony be drawn in, nearer its center. That there was no disposition to accept this advice was due to the fur trade, which would have been sadly disturbed by such a course. It was this more than anything else, that made it impossible for Canada to listen to the conservative counsel of Montcalm.<sup>8</sup> When word came, June 3d, that Pouchot had held a grand council with the Indians at Niagara, and that all was tranquil there, the mistrustful Montcalm exclaimed: "God grant that it lasts!" And again, commenting on the report that the Five Nations Indians who came to Niagara appeared well disposed, Montcalm wrote in his journal: "It is much to be feared that M. Pouchot, caressed in the cabinet of the Marquis de Vaudreuil, has not gained security

<sup>6</sup> Montcalm to Belle-Isle, Apr. 12, 1759.

<sup>7</sup> De Vaudreuil to the Minister, Mch. 30, 1759.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the "*Mémoire sur la campagne de 1759*," by M. Joannes, Major of Quebec.

by it. He has gone off to Niagara impressed with the false principle that he has nothing to fear there, and that they can send 2000 men to the Ohio. He has been seduced, and the seducers have no other object than self-interest, and of more money-making when they are ready to reconquer the Ohio."

About the middle of June Captain Pouchot, following the orders of Vaudreuil, dispatched De Montigny, De Repentigny and Marin with 360 quarters of flour, 800 barrels of pork, 80 bales of merchandise, with 800 Canadians and Indians, over the Niagara and Lake Erie portages. Something of bravado, if not of confidence, attaches to this, the last of all the many expeditions sent by the French this way; but when word reached Montcalm of the departure of this laden troop, not more soldierly than peddler-like, he commented even more skeptically than usual, on their armament, "three little field-guns of two-pound balls, for accomplishing the fine romantic and chimerical project of ousting the enemy from the Ohio."

Every important event in this war was followed by a new crop of political tracts. When word of the capture of Frontenac reached England the pamphleteers did not fail anew to analyze the American situation. A sample of several prints of this period is Arthur Young's "Reflections on the Present State of Affairs at Home and Abroad,"<sup>9</sup> in which, after a fulsome dedication to Pitt, "the most worthy of mankind," and a survey of the situation in Europe, the author points out that the most strategic point now to be striven for is Niagara:

Let us not forget Niagara, which I think the most important of all the French forts; it stands in the midst of the country of the Six Nations, and is the chief and almost the only pass into the interior parts of North America, both from north and south and from east to west, either from the French settlements or ours. In short, the importance of this place is almost inconceivable; it is a key to the whole continent, it awes and commands all the Indians of North America; it secures all the inland trade of that continent; it lays our colonies open to the inroads of the French and Indians — such is the consequence of this place!

<sup>9</sup> "Reflections on the Present State of Affairs at Home and Abroad," by A. Y[oung], Esq., author of the "Theatre of the Present War in North America," London, 1759.

Niagara is even of much greater importance than the country on the Ohio, for this reason, because it commands it. If we were possessed of Niagara, the French in Canada would be cut off from all communication with the Ohio and from almost all their encroachments on us; but if we suffer the French to remain in possession of this important post, our colonies will at all times be open to their invasions.

And more in like strain. It seems absurd that Niagara was the only pass into the interior of America — as though it were a gap in a great mountain chain elsewhere impassable; but though Young, and most other English writers of his time, had little enough knowledge of American geography, it must be borne in mind that the only travel route they could conceive was a navigable water route. It is true that there were but two practicable roads to the West: one by the Lakes, the other by the Ohio,— and this was dominated by Niagara, until, after great difficulties, a road through the wilderness and over the mountains was opened to the forks of the Allegheny and Monongahela.

The English were very fond of the word “encroachment.” For years there was not a speech in Parliament, on American affairs, not a pamphlet or political paper, that did not lay emphasis on the “encroachments” of the French. Every expedition from Canada was an encroachment; and the earliest, longest-continued and most irritating of all these encroachments, was Niagara itself.

In December Pitt sent to General Amherst very full instructions for the campaign of the following year. For its thoroughness, knowledge of, or insight into American conditions, and general adequacy, it is a remarkable document.

Regarding proposed operations on the Lakes, Pitt wrote that “it is the King’s pleasure that you should give a due attention to the Lake Ontario and facilitate as far as possible consistent with other main operations of the campaign, the reestablishment of the important post of Oswego.” He dwelt at some length on the need of holding Oswego, no doubt drawing his information of the locality largely from letters received from Lieutenant Governor De Lancey. In all the coming campaign,



if we seek the source of many important projects, we come to the very capable Lieutenant Governor of New York Colony.

Of another phase of the proposed campaign, Pitt wrote:

It were much to be wished that any operations on the side of Lake Ontario could be pushed on as far as Niagara and that you may find it practicable to set on foot some enterprise against the fort there, the success of which would so greatly contribute to establishing the uninterrupted dominion of that lake and at the same time effectually cut off the communication between Canada and the French settlements to the south; and the utility and importance of such an enterprise against Niagara is of itself so apparent that I am persuaded it is unnecessary to add anything to enforce your giving all proper attention to the same.

In the same instructions Amherst was also authorized to refit and build boats on the Lakes, either sailing craft or bateaux, as he should judge necessary for the movement of troops. He was, in fact, given a free hand for the conduct of operations in these quarters the coming year.

The campaign, so far as relates to the Lakes and the Niagara-Ohio territory, included three movements:

Pouchot was to relieve De Vassan at Niagara, strengthen and maintain that post.

A body of Canadians and Indians, stated as "a corps of 800 or 900," was to set out at the same time — early in May — for Niagara, under orders to proceed to Presqu' Isle, Le Bœuf and Venango. "De Lignery, who last year after the evacuation of Duquesne, retired to Machault, is to have command of this force."<sup>10</sup>

Also at the same time the Chevalier de La Corne, Captain of Colonial troops, was to lead some 1500 of the troops of the Marine, Canadians and Indians, "to take command of the frontier of Lake Ontario."

In May, Sir William Johnson sent to the Board of Trade an account of his latest conference with the Indians, at which ten tribes were represented. He also discussed the proposed

<sup>10</sup> From a journal of the campaign of 1759, by "M.M."—probably Montcalm's *aide de camp*, Marcel. It is printed in Doughty and Parmelee's "Siege of Quebec," vol. V.

campaign against Niagara. So confident was he of Indian support, that he assured their lordships he could lead against the French not only the warriors of the Iroquois, but also the so-called French Indians at La Galette and elsewhere: "I flatter myself I could prevail on many of the aforesaid Indians to join with us in our operations from Lake Ontario, the Six Nations in general and the Chenossio Indians in particular." Johnson represented these last-named savages, who were the Senecas living nearest to Niagara, as very desirous of driving the French away from there. He added that he felt confident of success, and dwelt at length on the advantage Niagara would be to the English, with the control it would give of the trade with far western tribes. So able and earnest a plea<sup>11</sup> could not fail of influence.

It was Pitt who proposed the English movement against Niagara. It was Lord Amherst who developed the plan of campaign; and among his counselors on whose expert knowledge and sound judgment he relied, was Colonel James Montresor, chief engineer in the Department of New York. As early as December, 1758, Montresor submitted to Amherst a very comprehensive plan<sup>12</sup> which it is worth while briefly to consider, as many of its provisions were retained in the subsequent operations.

Montresor proposed that as soon as the season permitted, in the spring of 1759, 9500 men should make camp at Lake Oneida, or Fort Stanwix; that 6500 be sent on to Oswego; 4000 of these were to proceed, with artillery, to the site of Fort Frontenac, and when established there, 3000 of that force were to take La Galette, making themselves masters of the river, and proceeding to Montreal.

Thus secured from enemy attack in the rear, the Oswego garrison was to be reduced to 500, "2000 to embark for Niagara, with an engineer, a lieutenant of artillery, two *bombardiers*, four *canoniers*, 12 artillerymen, two 12's, two 6's, a

<sup>11</sup> Johnson to "the Rt. Hon. the Lords Commissioners of Trade & Plantations," May 17, 1759.

<sup>12</sup> Dated, "New York, 22d Dec., 1758."

6-inch howitzer, four cohorns. . . . This corps will debarque at a place the safest and nearest to the fort"; they were to order it to surrender, "making known that they have cut off all communication by the river, that the English are masters at La Galette, and that their army is marching toward Montreal. If they do not surrender at once, attack them vigorously. The enemy will not dare resist considering their situation after the loss of Fort Duquesne. When they (the English) are masters of this place, they should fortify and provision it and leave a garrison to guard the outlet and communication of the Upper Lakes with the Lower, and of all this vast country through which runs the Ohio and Mississippi. This," adds Montresor, referring to Fort Niagara, "has always been a famous market-place for trade with the savages." He had never been to the Niagara (where his son, Captain John Montresor, was destined a few years later, to render to his King important service); but his plan, as laid before Amherst, showed a capable grasp of the strategic elements of the problem.

That the French were expecting aggressive action, by their enemy, early in the season, is shown by various orders of Vaudreuil and Montcalm. A "Précis of proposed operations," unsigned, but dated Montreal, April 1, 1759, contains these directions: De Lignery was to stay at Fort Machault, to keep the enemy from advancing to Lake Eric; Presqu' Isle was to be made a base; Detroit and the Illinois posts were to send there all the provisions they could gather. In the autumn of 1758 orders had been sent out that Presqu' Isle should be the rendezvous for French and Canadian forces from all the Western posts.

The Ohio valley and Illinois Indians were to be gathered at Fort Machault. The tribes north of Lake Eric, the Mississagas, Ottawas and Hurons, were to resort to Toronto, and come to the aid of Niagara if it were besieged.

By April, the two vessels which the French were building at Point au Baril were well towards completion; each was to carry ten 12's, 25 soldiers of the Marine and 25 Canadians; and their commanders had particular orders, in case of storm or attack,

to burn or sink them, sooner than yield.<sup>13</sup> That their end was not so gallant as this might indicate, the sequel will show.

With many fine soldierly qualities, Lord Amherst was criticised for being slow. He certainly was not precipitate, but his delay was due to an habitual thoroughness, which, if deliberate, usually gained the desired end. It was not early in the spring as Montresor had urged but the 9th of May, before he outlined his plan of campaign. On that date, he says, "as I had now determined with myself the expedition to Oswego and Niagara, and that the corps for that service should consist of Abercromby's, Lieutenant General Murray's 4th Battalion of Royal Americans and the 2680 New York Provincials, and that Brigadier-General Prideaux should have the command, I wrote to Brigadier-General Stanwix and sent an aid-de-camp that he might have the earliest notice and be prepared to act, as the expedition to Niagara must undoubtedly greatly facilitate any attack he may make on the French posts between Pittsburg and Lake Erie."<sup>14</sup> Prideaux's commission as brigadier-general is dated Albany, May 5, 1759.

Much of the delay in getting the Niagara expedition organized was due to the dilatory and reluctant attitude of the colonies. They had all been summoned by Pitt, months before,<sup>15</sup> to provide for their quota of men, to serve as needed; and Amherst, on taking command of his Majesty's forces in North America, had sent to the Governors a circular letter, asking them to levy at least as many men as for the campaign of 1758. Pitt's close study of the situation is shown by instructions which he sent to General Forbes, and to Amherst, regarding an English expedition from Pittsburg to Lake Erie; and he asked if it were practicable to capture Presqu' Isle or even "to carry some operations as far as Cayahoga, or the more western parts of the Lake."<sup>16</sup> The mention of Cayahoga — the present city of Cleveland — is unusual, for it was not a point of French operations, and is rarely referred to until after the French were driven from the Lakes.

<sup>13</sup> Orders of Vaudreuil, Apr. 8, 1759.

<sup>14</sup> Amherst to Pitt, Fort Edward, June 19, 1759.

<sup>15</sup> Pitt to the Governors, with Royal mandate, Dec. 9, 1758.

<sup>16</sup> Pitt to Amherst, Whitehall, Jan. 23, 1759.

The General Assembly of New York Colony, sitting at New York City, very early had the matter of colonial levies for the Niagara expedition pressed upon their attention. February 20th, Lieutenant-Governor De Lancey sent them an urgent message: "It is his Majesty's pleasure, that I should forthwith use my utmost Endeavours and Influence with you, to raise with all possible Dispatch, with this Government, as large a Body of Men as you did the last year."<sup>17</sup> And much more to like effect. The next day a committee reported in favor of "raising, paying and cloathing 2680 effective Men, Officers included." A sum of £100,000 was to be raised by taxation on real and personal property, spread over the next nine years, the committee deeming it impossible to raise it sooner, "by reason of the great and heavy Burthen of Taxes now laying on this colony." The sum of £12,000 was to be raised in 1759, and £11,000 in each of the succeeding eight years.

Thus did New York Colony undertake to finance her part in the task of driving the French from the Niagara and adjacent Lakes.

The Act making the appropriation passed the General Assembly March 2d. The total draft was reduced to 2580, apportioned among the New York counties as follows: City and County of New York, 312 "effective men"; Albany, 424; Kings, 68; Queens, 300; Suffolk, 289; Richmond, 51; Westchester, 389; Dutchess, 389; Ulster, 228; Orange, 130. Albany's large quota was "in consideration of the peculiar Hardships and Calamities of War, under which the City and County of Albany labours," for the French in the Champlain valley made Albany almost an outpost.

The various steps in the legislative and financial history of the campaign could be traced, with much of illuminating interest, in the yellow pages of the old Journals of the General Assembly; but we here confine the study to a few notes bearing directly on the Niagara expedition.

Lieutenant-Governor De Lancey was authorized to make up any deficiencies in the draft, by transfer of men from the militia. To stimulate enlistment, each officer was to receive 20 shillings

<sup>17</sup> Journal, N. Y. General Assembly, Feb. 20, 1759.

for every volunteer he should enlist. To further encourage men to engage for the expedition, £15 gratuity was to be given each volunteer.<sup>18</sup> Contractors for army supplies, lacking ready money, sought and received loans from the public funds; bills of credit amounting to £150,000, were thus granted,<sup>19</sup> both General Amherst and the Lieutenant-Governor favoring the action.

On May 10th, Amherst wrote to several Governors, to hasten the march of troops from their respective colonies. May 12th, at Albany, he conferred with Montresor, and considered that officer's plans. As engineers for the expedition he appointed Lieut. Thomas Sowers from Fort Edward, Lieut. John Williams from Fort Stanwix. It was Montresor who determined the proportion and weight of stores for the expedition. We linger over details, since it is only by details that the conditions of the time are made vivid. What modern general, planning a campaign, has to do as Amherst did, and personally see that the oxen, worked out with hard hauling, are put to grass to recuperate before being sent forward over the deep-rutted wilderness track, scarce worthy the name of road, up the Mohawk valley?

General Prideaux reached Albany from New York, May 15th, and that very day the artillery and ammunition allotted for Oswego and Niagara were sent in ox-carts to Schenectady, where they were loaded in bateaux. The next day Sir William Johnson arrived. "He came to me," wrote Amherst to Pitt, "with some demands and promised great things for the Indians. I thought it right to keep my intended operations secret to the last moment, for if the Indians know it the French will have it."<sup>20</sup> A few days later he wrote, of this arm of the service: "I have amply supplied everything for the service at Oswego and Niagara, and furnished Sir Wm. Johnson with everything he has asked for, for the Indians, though the demands were not

<sup>18</sup> That these measures were ultimately carried out, is not clear; but a committee report in favor of them passed the Assembly.

<sup>19</sup> Jour. Gen. Ass. N. Y., June 26, 1759.

<sup>20</sup> At the Canajoharie congress, in April, Johnson had already told the Indians that Niagara was to be attacked.

small." On the 27th he notes that "a party of Indians was to have marched out of town, but rum stoped them."

Both Johnson and Prideaux had their hands full, from the outset. The latter loaded his bateaux at Schenectady and was ready to proceed, when a sudden rise of the river set many of them adrift. Sixty were rescued, but many others were swept over Cohoes falls, wrecked and lost. By May 27th the Inniskilling regiment and part of the Royal Highlanders were moving up the Mohawk, with bateaux and provisions. The Provincial troops made the most trouble. They came in slowly, and the detachments often did not come up to the allotment. Amherst complained that they "desert most shamefully and they have left a great many men behind in the meazles." Two deserters were sentenced to be shot, but only one was executed, the other being pardoned, May 29th, "in the hope that one example may be sufficient." The number of bateau-men and teamsters was far less than needed, so that the general had to supply them from other troops. By May 30th he had in camp 2550 men, exclusive of the New York troops, who, since they were first to arrive, had been allotted to the corps under Prideaux. "I had likewise destined the Jersey troops for that service in my mind," Amherst reported to Pitt, "but they not arriving as soon as I expected, the bateau-men and teamsters failing, I thought it would retard the service to wait for them."

While the force was thus being gathered, and making tedious and difficult progress up the Mohawk, many disturbing reports were brought into camp. June 7th a prisoner from "Swe-gatchie" told of the activities of the French: 30 large bateaux, loaded, had gone to Niagara, as had the two brigs which the French had built, heavily armed; and, said the prisoner, they are building more. More disturbing was the news that enemy Indians were scalping whites below Sir William Johnson's. All these items of news, good and bad, were faithfully sent over seas to Pitt, to whom Amherst, in the letter above quoted, also wrote: "The great discontent among many people employed in the Government service, for want of pay-

ment, there not being money sufficient for it; I have judged it for the good of his Majesty's service to make application to the Lt. Governor of New York to borrow a sum, which I hope you will approve."



## CHAPTER XXXII

### COMING OF THE ENGLISH

THE KEEPER OF THE PORTAGE AND HIS PERPLEXITIES — FICKLENESS OF THE TRIBES — AT NIAGARA WITH POUCHOT — THE SIEGE BEGUN — THE ENGLISH SPY SYSTEM.

FROM his fort at the head of the portage, Chabert set out, February 1, 1759, on snowshoes, notwithstanding the severe cold and the danger of falling into hostile hands. He visited several Indian towns, among them the Iroquois settlement of Kananouangon.<sup>1</sup> They claimed to be at peace with the French, and received him at their lodges in friendly fashion; but, they said, they had nothing. The French had not supplied them with food, nor goods, nor outfit for war; they lacked everything, and now saw a superior enemy ready to fall on them. Chabert satisfied their demands for food and clothing, equipped their braves, "and distributed to them, at my own expense, all the goods they needed"; whereupon they promised to "raise the hatchet" against the English, and Chabert went on to Fort Machault, where he found a garrison of 80 men, and rested 15 days, lingering, he tells us, because it was reported the English were coming to attack the place, but as they did not, he set out, visiting several villages of Loups and Iroquois, and pledging the warriors to go to the aid of De Lignery.

Chabert was back at his fort on the Niagara at the end of March. April 12th he went to Tananouangadé,<sup>2</sup> and when he returned to his fort, a week later, three chiefs came with him. From many directions and from many tribes Indians flocked to Niagara this spring, and lingered in uncertain fashion, to profit by the emergency of the French. Every record of the time shows that they were uncommonly restless and apprehensive. On April 28th Chabert came up to the Little Rapid, the outlet of Lake Eric. "I returned," he writes, "May 2d to the fort

<sup>1</sup> A Seneca village near the mouth of the Conewongo.

<sup>2</sup> Not identified.

at the Portage, which I could no longer leave, there having gathered there a great number of Indians, with their families." They pitched their wigwams outside the stockades and along the margin of the river; built their lodges among the great trees that hung over Gill creek; lurked about the portage road or the gates of the fort, and when fortune favored and gifts were bestowed, feasted on food for which the peasants of France were taxed, or the *habitant* of Quebec was in dire need. If Chabert's bounty for the moment failed, they could feast equally well on the reeking entrails of a dead horse they might find on the plain. Here they begged, debated and threatened, gambled and smoked; or wrapping the King's blankets about them, slept the sunny hours away, or solemnly stalked about the neighborhood which now is the very heart of the upper factory district of Niagara Falls city.

The demands of these people were boundless and their support a burden. Chabert complains that the Governor, in order to attach the tribes to the cause of the French, had ordered that they should be supplied with everything they wished. "Thus it became necessary for three months, not only to feed them, men, women and children, but to satisfy all their whims; they had new ones every day, and of all sorts." To get what they wished, these wily sons of the forest, profiting by the obvious necessities of the French, resorted to the old device of dreaming. Chabert understood these "dreams," to his cost, as he has recorded: "When they have 'dreamed' that some one will give them brandy, a blanket, a feast, etc., the dream must be verified, otherwise it forebodes evil. There is perhaps more of malice and avarice than superstition in this tradition; but it has been none the less ruinous for those who entertained such dreamers at their own expense." If their demands were denied, they grew insolent, not hesitating to tell Chabert or his storekeeper that their Father in France was rich and powerful, to whom these things were as nothing, and that it was his order they should be supplied. To quiet them and keep them in bounds Chabert says he ruined himself, giving out his own goods, for which he was never reimbursed.

A like wasteful and futile policy was followed by Pouchot at

Fort Niagara, and, to a less extent, at Presqu' Isle, Le Bœuf and Venango. But even such bounty could not restrain these irresponsible savages. On March 20th Chabert found that a band of his warriors, on whom he had relied, had suddenly decamped. "The example was contagious. One moment of caprice or vexation suffices in this country to scatter an army of the natives. I hastened after them, came up to them 30 leagues from the fort, and led them back." A like errand soon after brought him to the vicinity of Buffalo where at the "Little Rapid" he found 60 braves who refused to follow him. "A wampum belt, a harangue and a feast rekindled their courage, and I made them set out." This errand to the outlet of Lake Erie was to be last of his countless expeditions on this frontier in the Indian service under the French rule. He had counted on being given command of the expedition against Fort Pitt, which Pouchot sent off, June 1st, under the leadership of De Montigny. Had the command been intrusted to Chabert, more Indians might have been mustered. "I had counted on leading this numerous body of allies to the fort," he writes, "but other arrangements were made and I was charged with announcing to them the new chief officer who was selected. This news angered them, and they refused to march. They had left their villages for me, they said, but they did not wish to set out with any other leader. The most I could do was to pledge 150, who went to the Ohio, the rest remained obstinate"; and he adds, with a grim philosophy based on an abundant experience: "Obstinacy pervaded all, and in trying to retain some of the allies by force, one made of them only enemies."

Had Pouchot confided the conduct of this ill-timed expedition to Chabert, while the following would have been larger, the outcome would not have been different. Next to the defense of Fort Niagara, nothing was more important than the control of the portage, and for that service Chabert was better qualified than any other man on the frontier.

Long before this the upper posts had received orders to strengthen Pouchot on the Niagara, but Prideaux had begun its siege before any sign of reinforcements reached him. In fact, much of the expected help never did come. De Lignery

at Fort Machault was drawing what help he might from Le Bœuf and Presqu' Isle, and from the Indian villages of the region, for the proposed expedition against Fort Pitt.

There arrived at Fort Niagara, June 29th, a courier from Portneuf, commanding at Presqu' Isle, with word that 100 French and 150 Indians would soon arrive from Detroit; 600 or more Indians under M. Lintot, 100 under M. Bayeul, and 600 or 700 more under Aubry from the Illinois and the Mississippi. Messengers from Mackinac came in the same evening, reporting that 1200 of the more distant tribes, Christinaux, Sioux, Sakis, Folles-Avoines, Sauteux and Reynards, were coming down by the Ottawa, led by La Verandrie and Langlade, and would soon be at Niagara. Pouchot and Chabert received these assurances with some misgivings. While the prospect of reinforcements was cheering, they wondered how such a horde might be fed.

Pouchot had arrived at Fort Niagara, April 30th, and De Montigny, May 2d. Three days later the commandant sent off a letter to De Lévis, full of news of the region, of De Ligny, and of various war parties. "I find much work here," he adds, "but like one who understands nothing about it, it is for me to find a remedy. . . . If no paper is sent us, we can write no more; there is only one quire here."<sup>3</sup>

There were only care and trouble in store for him, but he sent frequent reports to Quebec. A letter of June 17th informed officials there of the success of two war parties, one of which had brought in six scalps and two prisoners from the vicinity of Fort Bull, while the other had captured a train of eight carts loaded with provisions near "Loyal-Annon"—later Fort Ligonier, Westmoreland Co., Pa.

Less pleasing at Quebec was Captain Pouchot's report of the adventure of Joncaire and Lieutenant La Milletière, his son-in-law, who, like the elder man, was an adoptive member of the Seneca nation. Pouchot reported that they were trapped in a Seneca hut, and after an all-day fight, only escaped by favor of night. The incident is nowhere very clearly recorded, but seems to have been serious enough for our two Frenchmen. In

<sup>3</sup> Pouchot to the Chevalier de Lévis, Niagara, May 5, 1759.

one of his last letters <sup>4</sup> from Fort Niagara, Pouchot wrote that the Senecas were "angry, because La Milletière had escaped" — though as it appears, he had not — and that they had even turned against Joncaire, who had not returned; "but," added Pouchot, "he will not lose himself." The allusion is evidently to the elder brother, for in the next sentence Pouchot says: "One of Chabert's men has been killed. They have stolen his goods and burned his cabin. It is a bad uprising on the part of one faction of the Iroquois. . . . They have dissuaded our nations all they could from going to war; they have said to our Mississagas, who were going to Fort Bull, that they were praised by the English for preventing them from passing."

These incidents make it clear that before Johnson's army reached Fort Niagara, his Indians, especially the Mohawks, had undermined the allegiance of the Senecas to the French. When the lives of the Joncaires were threatened, no Frenchman could be safe. Knowing this, Pouchot's last defense appears the more gallant.

The letter quoted from tells of his reliance on De Lignery for a relief party, and adds: "I have ordered M. de Portneuf to stop at Presqu' Isle all the French and Indians who come to him, that they may come to me at the first news. Our greatest evil is the provisions, of which we are very short. If they are not sent to us very soon, our army will be obliged to disband in the care of God."

Montcalm had no illusions. "The neutrality of the Five Nations," he wrote, "is very wavering; they are by turns for and against." July 16th — when Pouchot was being hotly besieged — belated word from him again reached Montcalm: "News from M. Pouchot, who begins to doubt the good faith of the Five Nations, especially since M. de La Milletière, an officer of Languedoc, has been taken by these savages, who have not yet returned him."

It was, in fact, a band of Johnson's Mohawks who captured La Milletière. He was carried prisoner to New York, where a correspondent of the *Boston Gazette* wrote of him:

<sup>4</sup> To De Lévis, June 27th.

Mons. Jonquier's [Joncaire's] son-in-law, whose father is a noted man among the French Indians, arrived here from Albany since our last; being taken prisoner some time ago in the Seneca's country by a party of Mohawks sent out by Sir William Johnson. He is a lieutenant in the regiment of Languedoc, now in Canada, and has been from France three years.<sup>5</sup>

Johnson had long tried to get one of the Joncaires in his hands, but the capture of this son-in-law was the nearest he came to it. At New York, La Milletière, no doubt owing his escape from massacre to his famous connections, answered the questions of the English with a fine spirit. He told them that Montcalm was ready for three attacks by the British — at Quebec, at Fort Carillon and Niagara; “but that he had concerted measures in such a manner, that he would be able to repel his enemies at least at some of the above places.”<sup>6</sup>

The region between Niagara and Pittsburg — French at one end, English at the other — was at this period in an uncertain and apprehensive situation. In June the English sent out from Fort Pitt two Indians, to spy on the upper posts. These came as far as Venango, and, returning, reported that there were at that post not above 200 French and resident Indians; that they were “scarce of provisions, have no cannon, and appear to be dull and low-spirited.” There were Ottawas, Mississagas and Wyandots, camped near the fort, who told the English emissaries that a few miles up the Venango River, where the bark was plenty, 50 canoes had been made; and the spies concluded the French were getting ready to attack Fort Pitt. Indian runners from Johnson arrived at Fort Pitt with the news of his plans against Niagara; he called on all the Ohio In-

<sup>5</sup> *Boston Gazette*, July 30, 1759.

<sup>6</sup> *Ib.* I find nothing further regarding Lieutenant La Milletière in the documents, save a mention of his marriage to a Canadian girl — Joncaire's daughter — in a letter of Montcalm to M. de Paulmy, Apr. 18, 1758. The General adds: “He is a young officer who has no property in France; is well liked by the Indians, whom he often accompanies on an expedition, and has easily learned the Iroquois. The Marquis de Vaudreuil proposes to transfer him, some day, with his rank, to the Colonial troops.” Nov. 1, 1759, Bourlamaque wrote to Lévis that Mme. de La Milletière had been to him, lamenting that her husband had not returned, and begging that Vaudreuil should ask for his exchange.



**REFERENCE**

- A—The Flag Bastion.
- B—The Gate Bastion.
- C—The Racelin.
- D—The Lunettes.
- E—Covered Way.
- F—Lime Kiln.
- G—Gateway and Drawbridge.
- H—Capponiere.
- I—A work to cover the small gate.
- K—Batteries en Barbet with the number of cannon that were mounted on them during the siege.
- L—Embrasures made of Gabions during the attack.
- M—An Epaulment before the flag bastion.
- N—An Epaulment to prevent an enemy from wading into the Works. It is made of fascines.

- (a) The Governor's House; (b) The Bokehous; (c) Barracks; (d) The Chapel; (e) Guard Room; (f) Powder Magazine; (g) Store Houses; (h) The Hospital; (i) Smith's Shop; (k) Shed for Artillery Carriages; (l) Artificers' Huts.

M. N. VOYLES

Fort Niagara in 1759

From Captain Pouchot's Map in the British Museum, and Other Sources





dians to join the Six Nations and "cut off the French on this side of the lake." The result of this summons was, that a council of Indians was held at Fort Pitt, who gave their allegiance to the English. "We only want a few troops and provisions," wrote a correspondent at Fort Pitt, "to be able to go and take the forts on this side of Niagara, as we shall be joined by the Indians here.<sup>7</sup> This very day other Indians arrived from "Chinesse" [Geneseo] with the exciting news that the Six Nations near that place had taken "Jon Cour the famous French interpreter, with another officer, and killed a third, whose scalp, with the two French officers and some French soldiers, they had sent to Sir William Johnson." If Joncaire were taken, surely the day of the French was at an end!

Aubry and De Lignery had no easy task to rally an Indian following for Niagara. Indeed, had there been any adequate force of British troops at Fort Pitt, ready to attack the rendezvous at Venango, most of the Indian allies of the French would have joined them, and instead of a relief army marching down the Niagara portage, to be killed in the neighborhood of the fort, the slaughter and dispersion would have occurred in the valley of the Allegheny. French influence in the region was thoroughly undermined by July 1st, when 10 Delawares from Venango came into Fort Pitt and reported that the French with all their forces had withdrawn from Le Bœuf and Presqu' Isle.

In March, 1759, when Captain Pouchot was assigned to the command at Fort Niagara, his knowledge of conditions on this frontier gave him grave doubts as to the outcome of the campaign. When there were allowed to him only 149 men of the French troops, he said to Montcalm as he had said to others: "It appears that we shall never meet again, except in England." Setting out from Montreal, March 27th, he was at Pointe au Baril — near the present Canadian village of Maitland — on April 4th. Here two barques were building. One of them, the *Iroquoise*, launched April 9th, was put in command of the Sieur La Force<sup>8</sup>; the other, named the *Outaouaise*, launched on the

<sup>7</sup> Letter in *Boston Evening Post*, July 30, 1759, dated "Pittsburgh, June 26."

<sup>8</sup> His first name has not been noted in any document; it does not appear in his own journal of the siege of Niagara.

12th, was commanded by Captain La Broquière — or La Broquerie, for the name occurs both ways. They were both armed with ten 12-pounders, and continued to cruise Lake Ontario until the conquest of 1760. Though their opportunities for effective blows were many, as our narrative presently shows, their service for the most part was ineffective. La Force in particular appears to have had a genius for missing opportunities.

On April 25th, Captains Pouchot, Villars and Serviès, with their detachments, and M. de Bonnafox, an artillery officer, sailed in the two corvettes for the Niagara, where they arrived on the 30th. A great flotilla of bateaux brought up the rest of the troops, provisions and munitions of war. M. de Vassan handed over the command of the post to Pouchot May 5th, and sailed down the lake on one of the new corvettes. Four days later the new commandant set about strengthening the fortifications, on which, he tells us in his memoirs, nothing had been done since he had left Niagara in July, 1756. He found "the ramparts giving way, the turfing all crumbled off, and the escarpment and counter-escarpment of the fosses much filled up." He promptly mounted two guns, "to keep up appearances in case of a siege," and a day or so later learned from Joncaire, just in from his perpetual journeys, that the Five Nations had all declared for the English, who were on the march westward.

It was indeed a grave situation. The near-by Indians, the Senecas, were never more shiftily and uncertain than now. They and the neighboring tribes vaguely felt that some great change was impending, and knew not which way their own interest lay. On May 17th a large deputation of Senecas came in upon Pouchot, who reproached them for their loss of zeal in behalf of the French. In spite of all efforts of high officials of Government, in spite of all the labors of the Joncaires, father and sons, through these many years, the Iroquois of New York virtually turned against the French in the issue where their support would have counted for much, and gave their allegiance to Sir William Johnson. For Indian allies, the French could only look to the western tribes: the Mississagas, to the west of the

Niagara and north of Lake Erie; the Sauteurs and Loups of the Huron and Michigan region, and the tribes of the Ohio and Illinois.

On May 14th, 40 Mississagas led by a warrior called Pakens,<sup>9</sup> came to Fort Niagara; and three days later came a Sauteur from Saginaw Bay. Their news was, that Captain Belestre would come from Detroit, as well as other western captains and tribes, when summoned, to aid in the defense of Fort Niagara. Before leaving Montreal Pouchot had been authorized, in case he was hard pressed, to retreat to the Ohio. Now, in May, having no certain word of a British advance west of Oswego, he sent off a detachment of troops and officers, with goods and provisions for Presqu' Isle and Venango, and even cherished a plan for carrying through an expedition to attack the forts of Loyal-Anon and Pittsburg. There may have been need of provisioning Presqu' Isle and Venango, but to project an expedition to the southward, or in any way needlessly to weaken the garrison at Niagara, was to invite disaster. On June 1st, when Prideaux and Johnson were already advancing up the Mohawk, to attack Niagara, Pouchot with unwarrantable confidence or sheer fatuity sent off De Montigny with a considerable detachment for the Ohio. This officer had the usual difficulties at the portage. Among other things, he carried a quantity of flour in sacks, destined for posts in the Illinois country. He was further burdened with 40 cases of merchandise, bales of blankets, ten cases of guns, 300 shovels, axes, pickaxes, and a store of other things, the transport of which around the falls was slow and arduous, notwithstanding Chabert's labor-saving devices.

The French thus wasting their energy towards Pittsburg, rather than in conserving their resources for the safe-guarding of all the upper posts by maintaining Niagara, did not lack repeated proofs that a crisis was at hand. On June 17th, a company of Cayuga chiefs visited the fort and informed Pouchot that their nation had decided to follow Johnson. Although some Senecas assured him that they wished to remain on

<sup>9</sup> This name suggests neither Indian nor French, yet so it stands in various old documents.

the Niagara, "as they were of that country," Pouchot now realized the great danger in which the frontier was placed. His first thought was of the portage and the upper fort, where he sent 100 men to guard, and to build new stockades. At any cost the French must keep open this path. Over that path, on June 17th, came a band of Onondagas bringing scalps of Englishmen and news of a victory won near Loyal-Anon by the Iroquois under Saint-Blin. The incident illustrates the divided allegiance of the Six Nations; these Onondagas brought in scalps and professed friendship for the French, against whom their own tribesmen were even then advancing.

Captain Pouchot was first of all a military engineer, and never neglected the improvement of fortifications under his command. He appears to have done all that was humanly possible to strengthen Fort Niagara and prepare it for siege or assault. But in strategic and precautionary measures he was singularly dilatory and inefficient. With all the tribes about him suspicious, uneasy and threatening, and with the woods full of Indian runners and spies, he continued for some weeks without trustworthy intelligence of the enemy. On June 27th he dispatched a party of Mississagas, under M. Blainville, a colonial cadet, on board the *Outaouaise*, to discover the whereabouts of the English. The cruise proved a grotesque failure. The barque was caught in a gale, which so frightened the Indians, who had never been afloat in such a storm, that they threw overboard their ornaments, weapons and even their tobacco, to appease the Manitou of the lake. There happened to be a Canadian on board, who was a dwarf; the Indians, having never seen so small a man, took him for an evil Manitou, and could scarcely be restrained from killing him or throwing him overboard alive, like another Jonah. The gale broke the mainmast and bowsprit of the vessel, which ran down to La Présentation for repairs; and when finally they skirted the south shore, and the Indian spies went some distance up the Oswego River, they found nothing, and so reported at Niagara. Had they gone a little farther, they would have encountered Prideaux's army getting their boats down Oswego Falls. Pouchot concluded, from their report, that no attack was imminent; he

explained afterwards that he thought the English would intrench at Oswego; but they did not, moving on so rapidly that ten days later they were throwing up earthworks within cannon-shot of his own quarters.

As late as July 6th the other vessel, the *Iroquoise*, entered the mouth of the Niagara and reported that there were no English at Oswego. A more worthless scout service could not have existed. Had she sailed near enough the south shore to observe, she would have discovered the English barges, keeping as close to land as possible; and taking them thus at disadvantage, with her ten or twelve guns, which were placed on her for just such a use, might have sunk or turned back the expedition.

Pouchot employed the days of May and June in strengthening the fortifications of Niagara. The buildings and grounds of the fort occupied an angle, protected on the north by the lake, on the west and southwest by the river. A third side of this rough triangle, facing approximately east, was formed by the fortifications, reaching from the lake shore at the northeast to the high bank of the river on the southwest. On this front Pouchot concentrated his defensive works. There were three bastions: one near the lake, another known as the bastion of the Gate of the Five Nations, on the river end of the ramparts; and, between them, the flag bastion. The batteries of the bastions which were *en barbette*, had not been finished, being built of casks filled with earth. On the north or lake side of the great stone house, the most sheltered place in the fort, Pouchot erected a hospital of oak timbers. A barbette battery of five guns, at the northwest angle, commanded the entrance to the river. Along the faces of the powder magazine, to cover the walls and serve as casemates, was built a large storehouse.<sup>10</sup>

The garrison, July 1st, consisted of 149 men drawn from the regiments of Sarre, commanded by Captain de Villars; Royal Roussillon, Captain de Serviès;<sup>11</sup> Guienne, Lieutenant de Morambert; Béarn, Lieutenant Salvignac, and Lieutenant

<sup>10</sup> Other details may be found in the *Mémoire*.

<sup>11</sup> Variouslly spelled in the documents: *Cervies*, *Servier*, *Serviez*, etc. He was appointed Captain *en second* of the Royal Roussillon, Feb. 13, 1755.

La Milletière of the Languedoc regiment. There were also 183 men of colonial companies under Captain De la Roch, and Lieutenants De Cornoyer and Larminac; 133 militia, and 21 artillerymen under orders of Lieutenant Bonnefoux of the Royal corps. The men who served the guns were later increased to 100. According to Captain Pouchot there were in the fort under his command at the beginning of the siege, 486 soldiers and 39 employees, of whom five were women or children. "They served in the infirmary, as did also two Douville ladies, and sewed cartridge bags, and made bags for earth."

The map which accompanies Pouchot's published memoir gives but meager data regarding buildings within the fortifications. This information is much more fully set forth on a large map in the British Museum, evidently made by Pouchot or at his order.<sup>12</sup>

The fort was an irregular triangle, the base being the fortified easterly side, the apex the angle of lake and river. Within the defensive works, the open ground was about 650 feet in extent on the lake and river sides, somewhat more on the easterly line. There still remained vestiges of the earlier fort of Chaussegros De Léry, a quadrangular work of some 225 feet east and west by 250 feet north and south, with bastions at the four corners. The northerly side of this old line of defense embraced the stone house still standing. It was then two stories high, with two small extensions or wings, beyond the line of its easterly wall. From its northerly wall to the edge of the high bank of the lake the distance was more than 60 feet. The old stone house, which had been built in 1726, and an adjoining out-building near its east end, formed the northerly side of a group of structures arranged around a square parade. First on the river side, and next to the stone house, was a stone bakery.<sup>13</sup> Next to it, and in line with it on the south, was a long

<sup>12</sup> B.M. Addit'l Mss. 15332, H. It is an original colored drawing, 38½ by 35½ inches. A part of the title is torn away, but there remains the bottom half of the word "Niagara," in large letters, and the following legend: "*Cette Place à été Commencée le 14 Janvier 1756 et finie le 12 octobre 1757 avec 80 Travailleurs par tours Par Mr. de Pouchot, Capitaine au Regiment de Béarn.*" A key to the various structures follows, as explained in the text.

<sup>13</sup> The stone bake-house now standing has on its chimney, and on a stone

building used as quarters for various employees. Between these two buildings and the fortifications on the lake side was a long row of barracks. On the south side of this little square were two barracks, and back of them two other lodgings for employees. The easterly side of the square was one long building, the quarters of the commissary and of the employees of M. de Joncaire. This quadrangular group was compassed by the old line of earthworks, which comprised not more than a quarter of the space within the works as completed by Pouchot.

South of the barracks was a large storehouse, and between it and the river front the King's stables. Proceeding south from these, past the Niagara-river gate, one came to a storehouse for traders' goods; beyond it, the powder magazine now standing. A date cut in the stone lintel still attests that it was built in 1757. At right angles with the magazine, its easterly end near the bastion of the Gate of the Five Nations, was a long building marked on the map "storehouses for provisions." Its site is to-day covered by an ancient one-story stone structure. From the easterly end of this building there zigzagged through the grounds a drainage-ditch, emptying into the lake some 200 feet east of the large stone house. About as much farther to the east, its main axis parallel with the lake-shore line, was the hospital and surgeons' quarters. This stood not far from the entrance to the lake bastion. Across the grounds, at the entrance to the bastion of the Five Nations, was the guard-house and prison. Two long barracks ran parallel with the inner line of the defensive works on the east; between them opened the gallery communicating with the outer works. Opposite this passage, but within the grounds beyond the barracks, was the chapel; and near it, on the west side, the blacksmith shop. The plan shows the chapel as a rectangular building, its principal dimension north and south, its northerly end — probably the chancel — being truncated.

In Captain Pouchot's time, the large stone house was not only the commandant's headquarters, but was also the quarters for several other officers, and King's storehouse as well. At in the east wall, the date "1762." The British may have restored the bake-house which Pouchot's map shows stood there in 1757.

its southwesterly corner is still to be traced the curbing of a filled-up well, which probably was dug and used by the French. At the point of the river was a barbette of five pieces; there were four pieces at the Five Nations bastion and seven at the Lake or eastern bastion. The plan in the British Museum shows many rows of piling of stockades at the point of lake and river, and in general around the whole fortification. On the river bank below the fort were two or more barracks for Indians; another stood in the woods near the portage road south of the fort. At the river's edge near the Five Nations Gate were lime-kilns, and a little farther up-stream, a brick-kiln. A burial-ground was about 200 yards from the outworks of the fort, east of the portage road.

The dock and harbor were much as at present, being located at the upper end of the low land at the river-side under the fort. The portage road followed the river-bank to the southward but at times made considerable detours around deep lateral gullies, cut by rivulets.

During the action of July, 1759, there were two British batteries on the west side of the river; one at Montreal Point, commanding the lake; the other directly across the river, southwest from the fort. This battery was near the river's edge; south from it, between a marshy fringe of the stream and a high natural terrace to the westward, were plowed fields.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> A fire at Fort Niagara, May 19, 1850, destroyed several buildings on the north side of the old parade, near the bank of the lake. Among them were an old hospital, a new hospital, barracks and a wooden block-house; also about two thirds of a line of old palisades on the lake wall. Traces of foundation walls, in the grassy slope under ancient Lombardy poplars, indicate the site of some of these buildings, but records are lacking as to the date of their erection. The Post records preserved in the surgeon's office, Fort Niagara, state (giving no source authority) that the second story of the mess hall (called the "Castle") was built by the English. Compare with this the testimony of Lt. Yates as given in our narrative. The hospital records add that the ancient building was used as officers' quarters until 1871. In more recent years it has been at times quarters for soldiers and their families, used for storage, and, at other times, left largely empty and locked up. The land between it and the lake, where the French had gardens and perhaps orchards, had so crumbled and caved into the encroaching lake that the United States Government built a seawall. Post records of about 1870 state that this wall was built "about 30 or 40 years ago." The recession had then carried the edge of the high bank back, at one point,





U. S. Government Sea-Wall, Fort Niagara

From a Photograph of About 1895. The "Castle" is located by Two Chimneys at the Right of Trees



The spring of 1759 found Sir William Johnson active in measures looking towards a campaign against Niagara. If such an expedition were undertaken, he had no reason to expect anything save a subordinate command. Happily, his relations with Amherst, and, apparently, with Prideaux, were more cordial than they had been, four years before, with Shirley. His especial field of influence lay with the Indians, and it was to them that he addressed himself, with all the tact, the sincerity, and the lavish bestowal of gifts, that he knew so well how to use.

In April, he met the chiefs of the Six Nations and of several other tribes, at a great congress, convened at Canajoharie;<sup>15</sup> told them he had word from General Amherst that a campaign was to be opened against the French, especially at Niagara; and solicited their support. In the course of much speech-making, Sir William was informed that the "Chenussic Indians"—that is, the Senecas of the Genesee valley, especially in the vicinity of Genesee—had the past winter determined among themselves to attack Niagara, as it was built in their country; but now they would give up the project, and join in with the English. They added, that their plans against Niagara had been kept a secret from the rest of the Confederacy and even from "the Drunkard himself,"<sup>16</sup> the head of the whole Seneca nation," but now, since the English were to go against Niagara, they made the Seneca plot known at this conference. "In their opinion," says the record of the congress, "the reduction of Niagara would be a proper plaister to heal all the wounds we complained of."

That night (April 20th) the war dance was danced, "which was continued till morning by the several nations, and all the Indians throughout the whole ceremony expressed themselves, and behaved, with marks of the warmest zeal and sincerity." It will be noted that Sir William had gathered on this occasion within 15 feet of the north face of the old mess-house. Since the seawall was built, no further recession has occurred, though the unprotected banks, east of the fort, have greatly changed.

<sup>15</sup> Held there because the small-pox among the Mohawks made it inadvisable to meet at Johnson Castle.

<sup>16</sup> Not otherwise indentified.

the head men not merely of the Six Nations, but of several Pennsylvania, Ohio and Western tribes, some of which the French counted as allies. The next day, when speech-making was resumed, the sachems of all the assembled tribes held a council, and through their spokesman assured Sir William: "It is the earnest and unanimous request of all the nations present that you march as speedily as you can with an army against Niagara, which is in the country of the Senecas, and which they now give up, to be destroyed or taken by you; the sooner the thing is done, the better"; and they gave him a belt of wampum "with the Figure of Niagara at the end of it, and Sir William's name worked thereon." Impressive replies, another war-dance, and plenty to eat and drink confirmed the compact.

Although not all of the nations present gave help in the ensuing campaign, many of them did. When the English advance began, Johnson's following of savages gradually increased. War-parties and bands attached themselves to the army as it moved westward; or, hastening by the forest trails, come into camp as it intrenched before Niagara. By the time siege operations began, more than 900 savages were under Johnson's orders — one of the greatest bands of Indians, and perhaps the most formidable, that a white man ever led into conflict. That the following was so large was in great part due to the Canajoharie congress.

Sir William reported the result of his Indian conference to General Amherst, and to the Lords of Trade. Never had the need of British control at Niagara been presented with greater practical knowledge of the situation. He gave assurance that, if an attempt upon Niagara through Lake Ontario was to be a part of the plan of operations for the year, he could join the King's troops "with the main body of the warriors of the Five Nations, together with many others of their allies and dependants"; he added that "the Six Nations in general and the Chenusio Indians in particular (who are a brave and powerful tribe of the Six Nations and live near Niagara) are very desirous of driving the French from Niagara, and equally pressing that we should undertake it." Sir William wrote at length on

the importance of the Niagara fort and river to the English, in controlling the trade routes to the west and south — a subject which one would suppose had been by this time well drilled into the English comprehension. A brief extract from the letter in question <sup>17</sup> will illustrate Sir William's method of argument:

The reduction of Niagara — and if well conducted, I think we cannot fail of success — will be in the light I view it a point of inestimable advantage to the security and welfare of these His Majesty's Dominions, and, if the Conquest is rightly improved, will throw such an extensive Indian trade and interest into our hands, as will in my humble opinion oversett all those ambitions and lucrative schemes which the French have projected, in pursuit of which they were interrupted by the present war in this part of the world.

Whilst the French are in possession of Niagara, in vain will be our repossession of Oswego, and reëstablishing an Indian trade there [will] enable us to hold the Ballance from them either in Indian Interest or Trade.

The many nations of westward Indians, in comparison with whom the Six Nations are but a handful, must pass by Niagara in order to come to Oswego, where the French stop them and their goods, secure them by negotiations and engross their trade. This we felt for some years before the War began when very few of those Indians came to trade with us at Oswego, and latterly the chief trade there was rather carried on with the French than Indians, by which means our enemies procured assortments and supplies of Goods from us to support their Trade at and from Niagara.

In this vein he enlarged on the vast trade which would accrue to the English when the French shall be "absolutely extirpated," and concluded with an assurance of good faith on the part of the Six Nations in the proposed attack on Niagara.

Never before had the Six Nations pledged themselves so ardently to the English cause. Never before had Sir William Johnson so guaranteed their support, as in this instance. The Lords of Trade, the Ministry, Pitt, even the King himself, must have felt something of re-assurance and new power from these savage forces pledged to England's cause; — just as France

<sup>17</sup> Johnson to the Lords of Trade, May 17, 1759.

herself, had prescience been hers, might have felt a foreboding of disaster from that forest congress of orators and warriors of the wilderness, gathered in solemn conclave around the council fire of Canajoharie.

To Colonel Hugh Mercer, at Pittsburg, this spring, Indian spies had constantly brought reports of the state of things at Niagara. One, with the Cooperesque name of Killbuck, went down from Venango in May, and told how that post — so badly placed that from the hills behind all that went on in it could be seen — was being strengthened, that several hundred soldiers were coming to reënforce the garrison; and that, if the English went that way, “Le Narie” [De Lignery] would fight them in the woods. Killbuck was especially impressed, at Venango, with “one great Gun of the size of a Quart Pot which they fire off by a train of Powder.”

A band of Mingoes — Iroquois of the Ohio — who came from Fort Niagara gave interesting details: “Near a thousand men are there. The fort is a square with four bastions, built of stone, a ditch and glacis, Ballesadoed [palisaded] in; sluices to let the river into the ditch at pleasure; the ground clear and level for a considerable distance, rough and hard; about 60 pieces of cannon, most of them mounted; the largest toward the lake. At the portage near the Falls is a small stockaded fort, with 80 men in it.”

The elevation of Fort Niagara above the lake and river level makes it unlikely that any surrounding ditch was flooded, unless water was drawn from the swamp to the eastward; but that was under control of the English, as soon as they arrived. No other report noted mentions such a condition.

The English spy system was well exemplified by the work carried on this spring from Fort Pitt. One of their most intelligent and active spies was an Indian known throughout the extent of the frontiers as Tom Bull. Another was Delaware George. One appears in the records merely as The Beaver; and yet another was Kikisuskung, a Delaware spy, who in February, 1759, returned from Presqu’ Isle to Pittsburg, and regaled Hugh Mercer with a tale of 10,000 Frenchmen coming over the lake; but Mercer was in doubt. “It is much easier,”

he wrote to Bouquet, "to relate the intelligence I receive than reconcile the inconsistencies of it; to say we hear of a body of French being on their march against us, and perhaps tomorrow accounts will be brought that the French are running away from Venango. It is our business to prepare for the worst."

More confidence was felt in the reports brought in by Tom Bull. He followed the forest paths from Fort Pitt to Fort Niagara; was received and apparently trusted by the French officers, and fraternized among the French Indians; then, returning to Fort Pitt, he told the English of all he had seen and heard.

In March of this year we find him at Presqu' Isle, taking keen note of fortifications, garrison and supplies. When he returned to Fort Pitt he reported having seen at Presqu' Isle two officers, two traders, a clerk, a priest and 103 soldiers, who were not at any work. He gave the commandant's name as "La Burinol"; this officer treated Bull cordially and without suspicion, and told him that "300 towns,"—bands of tribesmen—from the West, had engaged to come and make war on the English; and he saw 1500 war billets prepared for their equipment.

More valuable was the description he gave of Presqu' Isle:

The fort is a square with four bastions, square log work, no platforms raised yet, so that they can't be used, only a small platform in each bastion, for a sentry. No guns upon the wall, but four 4-pound pieces lie in one of the bastions, not mounted on carriages. The wall only single logs, no banquette within nor ditch without. Two gates of equal size, about 10 feet wide; one fronts the lake about 300 [feet?] distant, the other the road to LaBeef. The magazine is a stone house covered with shingles and not sunk in the ground, standing in the right bastion near the lake, going from Presqu' Isle to Le Bœuf.<sup>18</sup> The other houses, square logs. A considerable quantity of Indian goods, but little flour. Twelve battoes are every day expected to arrive from Niagara with provisions, the lake being open to within 300 yards of the shore. No body of French is expected soon from Niagara, but about 400 from a fort on the north side of Lake Erie.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *I. e.*, the northwest angle of the fort.

<sup>19</sup> Detroit

Much else did Tom Bull see ; and much, rather too much, was he told by the officer whom he calls La Burinol. When asked regarding Fort Pitt, the spy replied that he had not been there since last year ; so the French officer gave him a pair of stockings, and saw him off on a long journey to Wyoming, to visit his father ; but instead, the mendacious spy hastened to Le Bœuf, which he described as like Presqu' Isle but smaller :

The bastions and stockades are joined by houses [*i.e.*, for curtains], the logs mostly rotten. Platforms are erected in the bastions, and loopholes properly cut. The gun is mounted on one of the bastions and points down the river. Only one gate, and that pointing this way [*i.e.*, towards Pittsburg], on the side opposite the creek. The magazine is on the right of the gate going in, part of it sunk in the ground, and above is some casks of powder to serve the Indians. There are two officers, a storekeeper, a clerk, a priest and 50 soldiers, the men not employed. At Le Bœuf are 24 battoes, none of them made lately, and but one repaired lately. One Le Sanbrow [?] is the commanding officer. They have a larger stock of provisions here than at Presqu' Isle.

Having gathered this and other information, Tom Bull passed on to Venango, where he found only 40 men under "Le Naris" (De Lignery). Arriving at Fort Pitt, March 17th, he made report of all he had seen, even to the state of the roads and the ice in the Ohio.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Bull's report on the forts is contained in letters of Col. Mercer to ——. See Bouquet MSS.



## CHAPTER XXXIII

### SIEGE OF FORT NIAGARA

ADVANCE OF THE BRITISH ARMY AS TOLD IN JOURNALS AND ORDERLY BOOKS—SERVICE IN THE TRENCHES—DEATH OF PRIDEAUX AND COLONEL JOHNSTONE—THE CRUISING OF CAPTAIN LA FORCE.

OFFICIALLY, the Niagara campaign of 1759 may be said to date from December 29th of the preceding year, when Pitt wrote to Amherst: "It is also the King's pleasure that you should give a due attention to the Lake Ontario, and facilitate, as far as possible . . . the reëstablishment of the important post of Oswego," and he was admonished to work with Lieutenant-Governor De Lancey to this end. Pitt further wrote:

It were much to be wished, that any operations on the side of Lake Ontario could be pushed on as far as Niagara, and that you may find it practicable to set on foot some enterprise against the fort there, the success of which would so greatly contribute to establish the uninterrupted dominion of that lake, and at the same time, effectually cut off the communication between Canada and the French settlements to the South; and the utility and importance of such an enterprise against Niagara is of itself so apparent, that I am persuaded, it is unnecessary to add anything to enforce your giving all proper attention to the same.

Major-General Amherst wrote in his journal, May 7, 1759: "As I had now determined with myself the Expedition to Oswego and Niagara, and that the Corps for that service should consist of Abercromby's, Lt. General Murrays, 4th Battn. of R. Americans and the 2680 New York Provincials, & that Br. General Prideaux should have the command and be joynd by all the Indians under Sr. Wm. Johnson, I wrote to Br. General Stanwix and sent an Aid de Camp that he might have the earliest notice and be prepared to act as the Expedition to Niagara must undoubtedly greatly facilitate any attack he

may make on the french Posts between Pittsburg and Lake Erie."

It is worthy of note that the Niagara campaign was planned, not merely to drive the French from the mid-lake region, but to make it easy for Stanwix to conquer the country between Pittsburg and Lake Erie.

As ultimately organized, the force sent against Niagara consisted of the 44th (Abercromby's); the 46th; the 4th Battalion (two companies) of the 60th — the famous Royal Americans — and a poor detachment of the Royal Artillery — so poor, in guns and engineers, that Prideaux himself complained of it, and the officers under him — when they saw how inadequate was this part of the equipment, which for siege operations should have been the army's most efficient arm — cursed it roundly with all the ample profanity of Eighteenth century English.

The regular troops above indicated numbered 2200 men. Besides these, were Johnson's Indians, not over 600 at the outset, but more than 900 at the time of the surrender.

August 2d, before news was had of the outcome of the siege at Niagara, the 2d Battalion of Royal Americans was sent from Ticonderoga to Oswego, to reënforce the army before Niagara; but their further advance toward that frontier was not required.

General Amherst was at Schenectady May 7th. On the 15th Prideaux arrived from New York, and the next day they were joined by Johnson.

By the middle of May troops were laboring up the Mohawk, the bateaux laden with guns and stores. The New York troops, arriving at Schenectady on the 17th, numbered 2560 instead of the expected 2680. Colonel Henry Babcock brought 700 Rhode Island troops instead of the expected 1000, saying "it was the fault of their Government." Prideaux assumed command on the 20th, and Amherst's journal — which was in fact his detailed report to Pitt — from this date on is chiefly devoted to the campaign which he personally conducted. We turn to other records for the further fortunes of the Niagara expedition.

A journal of Colonel William Amherst, brother of the Commander-in-Chief, mentions that of the troops sent up the Mohawk, 1300 men, under Colonel Haldimand, were stopped at Oswego to fortify that point; and that the rest of the corps, under Prideaux, left Oswego for Niagara July 1st. It is to this little army that we confine our study, drawing the narrative from unused or unfamiliar sources.

The *morale* of the troops was high, especially of those recruited in New England communities where an upright life implied a conformity to austere and self-denying standards from which later generations have somewhat departed. But if Puritan principles appear austere, the New England application of Bible texts to existing conditions sometimes afforded sanction to a play of passions quite free enough. On April 6, 1759, being general muster-day for the Canada expedition, the ministers in the various towns preached to the troops, exhorting them to lead godly lives, even in the midst of warfare. The Rev. Silvanus Conant, of the First Church in Middleborough, took for his text that day, Psalms cvliv, 1: "Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teachest my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." With such a text it was logical to exclaim, as Parson Conant did, "Unto the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, belong the most unfeigned thanks for the inspiration of warlike principles into our hearts," and he discoursed valiantly on "war as God's service." It was a rousing sermon,<sup>1</sup> though its like nowadays would find little favor with modern advocates of peace.

With the New Hampshire regiment was Chaplain Henry True, whose journal of the campaign, written in an amazing combination of Latin and English, has been preserved.<sup>2</sup> It records the progress of the regiment up the Mohawk, with occasional entries of interest. On August 13th we read: "When in y<sup>e</sup> creek 20 miles to lake Onida, met many Indians with y<sup>e</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Art of War, the Gift of God," by Rev. Silvanus Conant. . . . Boston, 1759.

<sup>2</sup> The original manuscript in 1900 was in the possession of Henry True, a great-grandson of the author, at Marion, O. With other MSS. it was copied and published in 1900 in pamphlet form by the late Dr. Henry Ayer True of Marion.

loads encamped near y<sup>e</sup> new fort they are building y<sup>e</sup> laid in y<sup>e</sup> open air." They next day traversed "in lake Onider, and passed along on our oars." Mr. True was impressed by the beauty of the lake, and noted on one of the islands "a tree y<sup>t</sup> will in its trunk contain above 30 men." "*Pulcher Prospectus!*" he exclaims. "Though this place is far distant from the sea, yet God has so ordered it y<sup>t</sup> its soil is so fertile y<sup>t</sup> people it seems may live without much trading by sea." Oswego Falls was reached August 16th:

Here at the falls is a picquet raised. Nature has formed a beautiful dam over this river. Came from y<sup>e</sup> falls about 12 miles to Oswego, about 6 o'clock p.m., a place beautifully situated, a fine lake, a prospect limited by water, encamped this night on y<sup>e</sup> south side of y<sup>e</sup> river where y<sup>e</sup> remains of y<sup>e</sup> old fort are, blessed be God who has brought us hitherto in safety. About 230 of our men Capt. Bayley commander, are coming by land with a large drove of cattle.

On August 21st Chaplain True set down in his diary, along with his Latin lucubrations, the story of the capture of Fort Niagara, as Chaplain Ogilvie and others who shared in it, reported to him. The following extract, which illustrates the style of this remarkable journal, will suffice:

Tuesday, August 21st.— This morning y<sup>e</sup> wind very high, keeps a constant blow. This the day y<sup>e</sup> Ontarian sea which is unlimited to one's eye, is very boisterous y<sup>e</sup> raging billows from y<sup>e</sup> shore, with dreadfull surges dash y<sup>e</sup> rocks—*hodie Dominus Ogglesby me vesebat, tradidit mihi nanationem de Niagara* y<sup>e</sup> merciful appearance of providence in the reduction of it, after y<sup>e</sup> engagement about 500 of our men had with about 1700 y<sup>rs</sup>, and we defeated y<sup>m</sup>; they saw y<sup>e</sup> defeat, Gen'l told them if they would stand it to y<sup>e</sup> last extremity they must take y<sup>e</sup> fate of behavior of our Indians, &c. This terrified them and God's providence here will be regarded more especially when He designs to help people He will order things so y<sup>t</sup> they shall work for y<sup>r</sup> relief. \* \* \* Cold day. . . .

The army y<sup>t</sup> went to Niagara sat off from Oswego y<sup>e</sup> 1st of July, landed at Niagara y<sup>e</sup> 7th, y<sup>e</sup> reinforcement y<sup>t</sup> was coming to joy[n] y<sup>e</sup> French at Niagara, was y<sup>e</sup> 24th day of July—y<sup>e</sup> same day y<sup>e</sup> fort submitted to Gen'l Johnson.

The wonderful appearance of God to our forces y<sup>t</sup> went to Niagara, which was reduced July 26, 1759. Gen'l Johnson, by one of his Indians, hearing y<sup>t</sup> a large number of forces were coming over Lake Erie, musters between 400 and 500 to oppose them; there was 1700 of y<sup>e</sup> enemy. Our men suspecting which way they designed to come up to y<sup>e</sup> fort, made soon a kind of breast work and lay upon y<sup>r</sup> faces; soon after y<sup>e</sup> enemy came up and our men let y<sup>m</sup> come within about 15 yards and let y<sup>m</sup> give y<sup>e</sup> first fire, which harmed ours but little, then our men returned y<sup>e</sup> fire, and kept firing 9 minutes or more till they fired 15 rounds and y<sup>e</sup> enemy broke y<sup>r</sup> own ranks and began to retreat; y<sup>e</sup> French Indians immediately fled and our Indians rushed on with y<sup>e</sup> tomahawks and pursued y<sup>m</sup> 5 or 6 miles, killed and took many; killed a fryar y<sup>t</sup> was in y<sup>e</sup> rear, took y<sup>e</sup> most of y<sup>e</sup> principal officers, morang &c. It is supposed y<sup>t</sup> it was agreed by y<sup>e</sup> Indians on both sides to stand as neuters till they saw which would prevail, y<sup>e</sup> English or French, &c.

After this battle was over and Johnson had got y<sup>e</sup> principal officers &c, he sent into y<sup>e</sup> fort and acquainted y<sup>m</sup> with it, telling y<sup>m</sup> what a vain thing it was for y<sup>m</sup> to pretend to stand it out, loth he was to shed y<sup>r</sup> blood when it might be prevented if they would act on discretion, they had better give up, &c., but if they would stand it out to y<sup>e</sup> last extremity they might depend upon suffering y<sup>e</sup> fury of y<sup>e</sup> Mohawks, yet they would doubtless be unrestrained when he came to y<sup>e</sup> last, &c. This seemed to make y<sup>m</sup> harken to proposals, &c., and it had y<sup>e</sup> desired effect.

From the manuscript orderly-book of Lieutenant Joseph Bull<sup>3</sup> of the New York regiment, a few details may be gleaned which give us an intimate insight into the routine of duty at such a time.

The difficulties of the advance of a body of troops up the shallow Mohawk, its bed often strewn with boulders and its channel interrupted by rifts, are impressed upon one who reads

<sup>3</sup> In the author's possession. The first pages are missing, the earliest dated entry being "Schenectady, May 23, 1759," the latest at Fort Ontario, Nov. 1, 1759. The records are in several different handwritings, but those from which we quote were apparently written by Lieut. Joseph Bull of the New York regiment. Regimental orders, July 17th, are followed, on the same leaf, but in a different hand, with an entry dated July 29th, the regiment being yet at Niagara. This hiatus covers the climax of the siege, the battle and the surrender of the fort. What became of Lieut. Bull the writer cannot state—but his orderly-book is deeply stained, as with blood.

the orders given from day to day. A cooper and "corkers" (calkers) were detailed to each fleet of bateaux; every possible accident was foreseen and directions given for meeting it. There was always to be at least one man in each boat. Elaborate orders were issued for the passage of Little Falls, where the portaging was arduous, and theft or other loss of oars, setting-poles, and articles of every sort always imminent. For repairing leaky bateaux, each "corker" received an extra gill of rum per day. In case of leakage, the barrels of flour were first to be rescued and reloaded. To 600 men in the boats there were "covering parties" of 18 riflemen on shore. A shortage of bateaux long detained two divisions of the New York regiment at Schenectady. One of the earliest orders issued was that no women might accompany the expedition, except a few wives of the officers, who are named. The repetition of this order later on indicates a need for it. Whether any of the few women who came up the Mohawk came on with the troops as far as Niagara does not appear.

The passage of Little Falls was from June 5th to 10th. A camp was made, court-martials held, droves of "bullocks and sheep" brought up from below; work on the riverside road employed many men. When the bateaux advanced, they were specially ordered to keep close together in crossing the rifts, "the headmost one to wait until the whole are passed over before they proceed." At landing, no soldier was to stroll about. There was gun practice at specified hours; "no man to fire his piece at any other time on any pretense whatsoever, or he will be severely punished."

The orderly whose faded and blood-stained records we trace, was with the troops who reached Fort Harkamon (Herkimer) June 10th; "Orisko," June 12th, Fort Stanwix June 14th, where they rested some days; and "Onyda" Lake was reached June 20th.

The progress of the army through Oneida Lake presents features of interest. The boats, carrying 16 men each, advanced in three columns: on the left, the New York battalions — light infantry and grenadiers of the 46th regiments; on the right, the 44th Grenadiers; in the center the 46th Artillery;

Camps before Niagara July 4<sup>th</sup> 1759

Spauld... Castel... Caudeverga... Burga

Field office for tomorrow... Lieutenant Colonel Mackay  
Deputy Do... 44th Regiment

at Detachment of you men officers to his position for the tomorrow to night  
The signal to be advanced and... in the tomorrow to night. it is expected  
that the office which tomorrow... the working parties attend... to be 4  
the membership of... and... they are not able  
The working parties will be... of the tomorrow in of morning till order

By Order of His... Camp at Niagara July 12<sup>th</sup> 1759

Joseph Bull... Ensign

... tomorrow... today  
... of 1759

Portion of Page from Orderly-Book of Lieutenant Joseph Bull in the Niagara Campaign





and in the rear, grenadiers of the Royal Americans — the celebrated 60th — in whale-boats. The boats came through the lake ten abreast, and the men were under orders to observe strict silence. "When any Orders is given from the front It is to be Past from boat to boat and immediately executed." As the army advanced into the wilderness, disciplinary efforts, instead of relaxing, were increased. Beyond Oneida Lake no woman might go "but such as belong to the hospital, except the cooks who go with the sutlers." Any soldier "who shall fire or flash his gun" was to receive 100 lashes, and any one detected in thievishly opening a barrel of provisions was to receive 1000 lashes, without court-martial.<sup>4</sup>

On June 23rd camp was made at the western end of Oneida Lake, the army holding itself ready for an ambush and attack at any moment. On this day they reached "Tres Rivers,"— a singular form, in an English orderly's minutes, for what we know as Three-River Point. The next day they camped at Oswego Falls, and June 27th were at "Oswago" itself. Here they were joined by Johnson and his horde of Indians, and orders were given to be extra careful in the use of rum.

Four days were spent at Oswego, but there was little rest. The carpenters and other artisans were employed on the boats. Equipment was overhauled, provisions and ammunition newly stowed. The boats filled with barrels of pork were covered with "bows" as protection from the sun. On Sunday, July 1st, with four days' cooked provisions, the army set out from the mouth of the Oswego. The weather was favorable and the flotilla made good progress, camping the first night at "Osenodus" (Great Sodus Bay), and the second and third at "Nideninequeate river," by which we understand Irondequoit. On the night of Wednesday the 4th camp was pitched at Prideaux

<sup>4</sup> Flogging was a common punishment in the army at this time. In the journal of Sergt. David Holden of Groton, Mass., of the expedition to Canada, 1760, one reads under July 11: "A man Reed 50 Lashes for Using the word to one of his Sergeants Dam ye to hell & wishing him there." July 12: "A man of ye Massachusetts Troops Reed. 500 Lashes for Inlisting twice & Disarting after wards." Aug. 2: "A follower of the army Reed. 1000 Lashes for Stealing & was Drumd out of Camp with a Halter about his Neck & his Crime wrote & Pind upon his Brest & So Sent to Albany." Desertion was also punished by death.

Bay, some 7 or 8 miles west of the mouth of the Genesee; and the next night at Johnson's Creek, which still retains that name in memory of this camp. Prideaux Bay, in the town of Greece, Monroe Co., usually appears on modern maps as Braddock's Bay.

The delay at Irondequoit was in part to cook more rations, in part to gather in stragglers. July 3d a regimental order was issued, that "notwithstanding it has been strongly recommended to all the officers of this regiment to observe strictly the orders given out by the General, and the regimental orders likewise, yet I am sorry I must again repeat it, that for the future any officer having any boats in charge where there ought to be most care taken, and any of them drift away, they will be used in such a manner as he wont like." The grammar was uncertain, but there was no doubt as to the meaning of the order. Lieutenant-Colonel Mercer, who was field officer for the day, added: "As the general is determined to put any officer in arrest who does not perform to a Tittle what his orders Express, I wou'd have every officer in going out from this observe and let but one boat go at a time, and on y<sup>e</sup> Lake to be more careful to keep these Lines in order."

Volunteers were called for to be "exercised at the Great Guns" (the largest were 18-pounders!), for which duty extra pay was to be given. Before leaving Irondequoit 30 men were sent "into the woods with their Arms and Tomahawks to get Bark for the Artillery boats." Its use is conjectural.

Tents were pitched, July 5th, at the mouth of Johnson's Creek. The next day the army rowed its laborious way westward, for some 20 miles, following the shore, which for the most part has high clay and gravel banks, to the mouth of what is now known as Four-Mile Creek, that name indicating its approximate distance from the mouth of the Niagara, and consequently from the fort which was the objective of the expedition. The French had long known this place as the "little marsh" (*petit marais*); for the stream, like many another that empties into Ontario, expands into a slack-water bayou, cut off from the lake by a sandbar. The English adopted the French name,

some of them, notably Sir William Johnson, converting it with unconscious humor into *Petite Marie*.

To-day this final landing-place of Prideaux's army is a quiet, lily-padded lagoon, reaching back into woods and farmlands for a mile or so, its banks grown with oaks. Often the outlet of the stream is entirely closed by the bar which the lake alternately builds up and breaks through. The shore line from the landing to Fort Niagara has few indentations; the banks, from 25 to 50 feet high, constantly cave and crumble, so that the total recession since 1759 is considerable; yet it was probably true then as now that from Fort Niagara the landing-place at *Petit Marais* could not be seen. Only by scouts, or from Captain La Force's vessel on the lake, could the landing operations be watched.

Prideaux either found or made a passage for his boats from the great lake into the lake-like expanse of the stream, where the landing was easy, and they were for the most part secure from any cannon-balls that La Force might throw at them. As he had to stand well out, he could do little if any harm.

One mile west of the landing-place a rivulet which may have been considerable in 1759, falls into the lake, its last few rods cutting deep in the clay. By two or more sources, it drained an area which in 1759 was a considerable swamp, a mile or so in extent east and west, lying about 1000 feet south of the lake shore. An old, well-established trail ran from the head of the little bay where the army landed, westerly through the woods to this swamp; then divided, a path skirting both the north and south sides of the swamp, uniting at its westerly end and continuing to a junction with the portage road, near the Five Nations' gate of the fort. Most of the terrain, westerly from the landing, was timbered, except a considerable clearing before the fort, and at the swamp. During the siege the English headquarters were more than once moved. The Indian camp was separate from the rest of the army.

The siege operations consisted, in brief, of digging a deep trench or "approach," from the road at the swamp westerly, with some zigzags but drawing near the lake shore. Fifteen

hundred feet from the outworks of the fort the first battery was opened. Somewhat nearer the lake, and 300 feet nearer the fort, was constructed a second battery. Nine hundred feet west of battery number two was battery number three. Its guns, within 700 feet of the fort, were the most effective of any used in the siege, wrecking the lake bastion and opening a great breach in the earthworks.

The English army were no sooner landed than they established overland communication with the river above the fort. Through the woods they dragged a number of the heavy whale-boats, launching them in the vicinity of La Belle Famille, far enough up stream to be out of range from the fort. A deep, lateral gully, which here enters the river, facilitated the work. The river bank in this vicinity supplied in abundance the small growth needed for the fabrication of gabions and fascines. From this point men and guns were sent across to the west side of the river. The records of the siege speak of an English battery at Montreal Point, but a map of the period locates a battery directly across the river from the fort and much nearer to it than what we know to-day as Montreal Point. These in brief were the works by which the investment of Fort Niagara was accomplished.

The exact location of the English trenches and batteries is difficult to establish from the records of the time, because those records do not agree in their figures. The French gave the distances sometimes in *toises* (about  $6\frac{1}{3}$  feet), sometimes in yards; the English in yards or feet, or even fathoms. A French journal found in the fort speaks of four parallels or batteries, the nearest "about 100 yards from the fort." The writer evidently counted as the first parallel or battery the place where the trenches were opened and from which eight mortars were fired July 11th. That place the English did not designate as a battery; what they called the first battery, the French called the second.

The place where the mortars were fired, July 11th, was about 1000 yards from the fort (the French journal says 300 *toises*); it was close by the side of the old Oswego road, afterwards established by the English, from Oswego to Fort Niag-

ara, but long since disused.<sup>5</sup> The great trench is still (1917) traceable towards the batteries near the lake shore; possibly an expert could yet discover some trace of the battery sites. The battery called the first by the English was 300 yards from the starting point; the second was advanced 70 yards, and was plainly traceable up to the beginning of this century. The third (fourth in the French journal) was 120 yards nearer the fort, measuring in a straight line, and was 550 yards from the present (1917) brick curtain-wall of the fort, which faces east. It was of course a less distance from the outer earthworks of the French.

The second and third batteries, as counted in English records, were about 40 yards from the edge of the high bank of the lake as it is to-day. Probably some yards of earth have crumbled and fallen into the water since 1759. A low mound, still visible, appears to indicate the site of the third battery. About the middle of the last century the fields where are these battery-sites were plowed and sown to wheat<sup>6</sup>; but for many years there has been no cultivation, and a part of the terrain through which Prideaux's men advanced is overgrown with oaks, cedars and hawthorn.

From Johnson's Creek, where the tents were pitched July 5th, to the "camp at Nighhera" (*Petit Marais* or Johnson's Landing), July 7th, new conditions gave rise to new duties. A guard of 150 privates under two captains were detailed to keep watch over the boats. The front of the last named camp was cleared of brush for a space of 200 yards; and 500 men were detailed to make "fashenes and gabions, for which the men will be payd according to the usual custom." From now until the end of the siege the making of fascines was the task of many men. There was no lack of brush and small growth in the vicinity. The fascines were bundles of green twigs or small branches, of varying size; the gabions were cylinders or barrel-like fabrications loosely woven, basket-like, of sticks and

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps it is better located by stating that it is 425 yards from the present lake shore road at its bend.

<sup>6</sup> Statement of Mr. George Swain, U. S. Customs officer at Youngstown, as recorded by Ass't Surgeon Capt. John H. Bartholf, stationed at Fort Niagara, 1872-74.

reeds or willows, to be filled with earth and placed on the trenches. Several hundred men were daily detailed for making them. The gabions were two feet in diameter, three and a half feet long. The fascines varied; camp orders of July 14th called for 200, 4½ feet long, and 400 nine feet long, "the twigs of the fashenes to be smaller and the fashenes themselves to be Bigger" than they had been. Sometimes as many as 1200 were ordered to be made in a day.

While this was going on, the engineers were busy. On July 7th ground was broken for the first trench. As the siege progressed, three successive trenches or parallels were opened, fortified and manned. The first trenches opened proved to be so badly placed that they could be raked by the guns of the fort. A strong guard was daily detailed to protect the men in the trenches, and a man from each mess cooked the provisions for his comrades and carried them to the trenches.

The work advanced, under a bombardment, sometimes very heavy, from the fort. On the night of the 11th the second trench was opened, 509 rank and file throwing up the earthworks under command of Captains Van Vaughten and Morss,<sup>7</sup> Lieutenants Vandenburg, Waters, Crawfoot and Denton. A surgeon and two "mates" were sent with the party, and posted under orders of Major Beckwith. A guard of 200 men under Captain Vischer and Lieutenant Vrooman covered the workers in the trenches. The next day 700 men were detailed for the work, "the picquet to be advanced and lye in the trenches tonight," and the orders add: "It is expected that the officers which command the working parties attend constantly to see y<sup>t</sup> the men place y<sup>e</sup> gabions properly and that they are not Idle."

July 13th the party in the trenches were under Captain Clinton, Lieutenants De Frezst (?) and Denton; the guard commanded by Captains Schuyler and Vischer, Lieutenants Vischer, Middagh and Hilliard. On the 14th, "Sergt. Bradley will attend at the Tale of the Trenches to receive y<sup>e</sup> fashenes, and such as y<sup>e</sup> Engineer will reject will not be paid for"—

<sup>7</sup> So spelled in the orderly-book quoted from. The number of Dutch and German names in these regiments is noticeable.



H. M. Severance, photo, 1916

Landing Place of the British Army, July 6, 1759  
"Petit Marais," Looking Toward the Lake





an effective way of keeping the soldiers from slighting this work. "No officer to apply for Rhum for any party but such as y<sup>e</sup> General thinks fit, and he himself will see y<sup>e</sup> delivery of it."

As the English lines advanced, night by night, and casualties multiplied, we find daily orders relating to the killed and wounded. On the 14th the troops were notified: "Such mean and unsoldier Like Sculkers as shall Quit y<sup>e</sup> Trenches without Leave from his officer will be punished in a most exemplary Manner. . . . As the batteries are intended to be erected this night for the Ready making of which it will Require active and willing men, the General chuses that this work shall be Done of Volunteers only, whose Names are to be given to Engineer Demler that they may be Rewarded. 300 Volunteers are wanting for this Purpose, and from the Diligence and activity all Ready shewn by the Troops for his Majesties Service the General Doubts not of the above Required, being Completed." A court-martial was held this day, Captain Pawling presiding.

On Sunday the 15th, "All the Men of[f] Duty at 12 o'clock to be assembled at Mr. Oglesbee's to hear Divine Service."

This chaplain, to whom even Sir William Johnson refers in his journal as "Oglesbee," was the Rev. John Ogilvie, a native of New York and a graduate of Yale College. Being a Dutch scholar, he had been appointed to the mission at Albany in 1748, going thither the following year. In connection with his ministrations at Albany, he was active for several years among the Mohawks. He became a favorite with Sir William Johnson, who in 1756 asked the Lords of Trade to grant him an increase of salary. In 1755-56 we find him often in attendance at councils at Fort Johnson. He joined the expedition to Niagara, remaining with the army until the close of the war, and was the first Protestant clergyman to conduct religious services on the banks of the Niagara.<sup>8</sup>

Haldimand was popular, and it was a disappointment to

<sup>8</sup> He became rector of Trinity church, New York, and shared in translating the Book of Common Prayer into Mohawk. He died Nov. 26, 1774, aged 51, and was therefore 36 when he came to the Niagara with Johnson. His portrait, by Copley, is owned by the Corporation of Trinity Church.

many when he was assigned to duty at Oswego, instead of accompanying the army to Niagara. As the expedition was embarking for the West, he was ordered to take the 4th battalion of the Royal Americans and the 2d battalion of the New York regiment, to construct redoubts, and then to build a fort according to plans which had been given him.<sup>9</sup> Throughout the Niagara campaign his brother officers wrote to him freely and informally, their frank expressions better showing the true state of affairs than do the official reports. In an interesting letter dated "Camp before Niagara, July 13," General Prideaux wrote as follows:

I am in hopes that a few days will put me in possession of this place in spite of *friend* and foe, tho' the former is much more prevailing than the latter, as when we meet I shall convince you tho' suspected by you before we parted.

Till I can send some news of importance to Genl. Amherst I shall be silent, as what I can say at present will not appear in the best light of intelligence, having found a fort very regularly fortified and the situation very advantageous exclusive of a superiority of artillery and plenty of ammunition, the enemy having expended near 6000 shot already without having put 20 men *hors de combat*.

As the voracious Indians make a great consumption of provisions I have sent to Normandy<sup>10</sup> for a supply which I beg you will forward as fast as possible as circumstances may make them requisite.

My batteries which I have not been able to erect as yet I hope will begin to play tomorrow and give a new face to affairs and when we meet I shall give you a history which no situation ever paralleled.

In a postscript General Prideaux added: "Pray finish your vessel as soon as possible as it will be of infinite service."

On the 5th, when Prideaux's army was nearing the Niagara, a force of French and Indians variously stated as from 1200 to 1500 under La Corne de St. Luc, attacked Oswego. An English report<sup>11</sup> states that Captain Harkaman went up the lake and found the French "about a mile off." Shots were

<sup>9</sup> Prideaux to Haldimand, Oswego, June 30, 1759.

<sup>10</sup> *Qy.*: "Albany"?

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Oswego to *Boston Evening Post*, July 30, 1759.

exchanged, the English retired, and next morning the French made an attempt on the fort but were driven off. "Captain Sowers the engineer, and Lieutenant Otter of the Royal Americans, were wounded; three of the Provincials were killed and nine wounded. Five deserters came in to us; they say they had two officers killed and two wounded; and that the commanding officers of Oswegatchie and La Galette were both wounded."

The French had attempted a surprise, and fell upon the place before Haldimand had made much headway with his defenses. Behind barricades of barrels of flour and pork, he made a stout defense, and poured such a fire on the advancing French that they retired and gave up the attempt. Haldimand reported his loss as two killed and eleven wounded. He had realized the importance of Oswego as a base for the Niagara operations, and deserved the commendation he received for its defense. News of the affair soon reached the army intrenched before Niagara, and from one of his friends there came the following letter:

CAMP BEFORE NIAGARA, 14th July 1759

*Dr. Sr.* I congratulate you most sincerely on the Laurels you have acquired in repulsing the Enemy. I hope in a short time we shall be crowned with success, tho' we have had most shocking Delays thro' the incapacity of our Engineers.

We opened the Trenches on the 9th, but a considerable part was enfiladed which took us the 10th to rectify; the 11th we made a great stretch, and the 12th begun to raise a battery, where Mr. Williams was wounded. Next morning found it on a wrong direction. The 13th, began another, which was also given up, but still pushed on the Trenches which we shall continue to do this night and also finish a battery for two 18-pounders, one 12-pounder and two mortars.

The fort is large and well provided with ammunition if we may judge from their Fire and has now a garrison of 800 men, being reinforced from two Forts up the River, both abandoned and burnt by our Indians. But their Parapet is very insufficient, no Case-ments, and the Garrison mostly Canadians. However they keep a good countenance. I drank an excellent Bottle of Claret and a glass of liquor with the Commandant, *que je crois etre bon soldat et Homme d' Esprit.*

We have had in all only three men and one Indian killed, a great many wounded, mostly slightly, of our Command, Sergeant Speis and three men.

Tomorrow the Game will be serious, we have hitherto only piddled with our Cochorns and Royal, which yet have done them a considerable damage.

Please offer my Compl<sup>s</sup> to all our Gentlemen. I'm obliged to Mr. Hening for his Letter and have no more Paper or should have wrote to him.

I am &c

WAL<sup>t</sup>. RUTHERFORD

*To Coll. Haldimand, Oswego.*

Numerous letters reached Haldimand from the camp before Niagara, written by his long-time and outspoken friend Allan Maclean, destined in later years to be himself commandant at Niagara. On July 15th, after congratulating Haldimand on his success at Oswego, Maclean continued:

"Ten days of trenching without being much advanced, since we have not a single cannon in battery, nor any one who knows how to make a battery. In short, the enemy make game of us.<sup>12</sup> They will think they can do what they like, even sortie . . . Our chief engineer is badly wounded in the head, he is out of it for this year." He tells of the French enfilading the trenches, and adds: "I don't pretend to say, whether we shall take the fort, but if you still wish to fight M. La Corne here, after you come to help us we shall surely take it."

July 21st Maclean again wrote to Haldimand, this time in English:

We have had several misfortunes here since yesterday. We have lost our Generall and Coll. Johnstone, who was certainly the best man we had in our army; we are in short in a deplorable condition if you do not come to our assistance. Yesternight there was an express sent for you which gave me great joy; for tho' Sir Will<sup>m</sup> Johnson is a very worthy man he knows little about Generalship and he has nobody can help him for our Engineers god damn them Dembler has shewed himself a fool & blockhead.

<sup>12</sup> "*Enfin l'ennemi surement ses mocque de nous.*" The entire letter is in French — with lapses which may be termed Scotch French.

I was a little surprised to find this night a resolution taken of countermanding your coming here; if you are sett off before this Express comes for God sake come and save us and as the command of this army is your due and belongs to you, if you come I believe we may take the place, if not God have mercy on us. I can tell you at meeting at who's instigation this counterorder was sent, but I hope will not hinder your coming to us.

We have provisions for three weeks. . . .

ALLAN MACLEANE

The following extract from a letter, written in the trenches before Niagara during the siege, gives some details not elsewhere recorded. It may have been written by Chaplain Ogilvie:

*Niagara, July 14.* We left Oswego the 1st inst., our army consisting of the 44th and 46th Regiments, 200 of the New Yorkers, the Grenadiers and Light Infantry of the 60th Regiment, and the Indians, which were 600. After a pleasant passage we arrived and landed within five miles of the fort, the evening of the 6th.

Our Indians, the Grenadiers and Light Infantry, immediately went off towards the fort, to reconnoiter the ground. The French made a small sally, but our Indians charged them so smartly, that they soon retired. In this skirmish we had but one man slightly wounded by a cannon ball, and a Mohawk lad killed, and we took five prisoners. By our intelligence the garrison consists of 100 regulars, 500 Canadians, and about 30 Indians.

Our time has been taken up in the necessary preparations for the siege. Our approaches are ordered within 200 yards of the fort, and we shall open two batteries this night; and then we hope by the Divine Goodness, the affair will be soon determined in our favor.

The fort has kept up an incessant fire upon us. We have lost only four persons, the Indian boy included, and 12 wounded. The Indians behaved to the entire satisfaction of the General and army. The Senecas joined us here; so that we have now 876 Indians in all, who kept all quiet about us. They have made an excursion to the Falls, and found the store-house burnt, and everything destroyed; they have been likewise to the store-house eight miles off this place; the French run upon their approach. They took a great deal of plunder, and destroyed all they could not bring off.

The following letter <sup>13</sup> was written by an officer on his way from Niagara to Oswego, July 16, 1759:

Before this time I expected to have congratulated you on the reduction of Niagara, but the garrison and fort are much stronger than we expected. Without the enemy having the least notice of our approach, we landed the 6th within three miles of the fort. The Indians and light infantry immediately marched forward and took six prisoners, but had one Mohawk killed. By the prisoners we learnt that the garrison consisted of 600 men, and 200 that have got in since, making 800.

A schooner and a sloop were in the harbor. The former mounts 10 carriage guns, and has kept an incessant fire on our battoes, but as they are in a good harbor, as yet the enemy has done them little or no damage.

Our trenches are carried within 250 yards of the fort, where we expect our batteries were opened, as yesterday, to mount two 18-pounders, two brass 12's, four 6's, and five royal howits of eight inches. For three days past we have played upon them with eight pieces of cannon, and have set several of their buildings on fire. We expect to be masters of the fort in a week, unless it is reinforced.

Niagara, from our trenches, appears to be very strong, but is not yet completed. In the fort are several very good buildings. The Governor's house is built of stone, at least 45 feet front, three story high, has sash windows, and appears to be compleatly finished.

The enemy have already fired near 6,000 cannon ball, besides thousands of small arms, but as yet have only killed three men, and wounded about 20; among the latter Captain Williams, our head engineer, dangerously, and Lieutenants Allyn and Pennistone slightly. We now have 900 Indians with us, and more daily coming in.

From another orderly-book <sup>14</sup> of the "New York Regiment of Provincials" the progress of the siege may be traced to the day of the battle. A few statements are here drawn from it, to supplement data from other sources.

As the trenches advanced nearer the fort, more and more attention was given to the quality of the fascines which pro-

<sup>13</sup> Printed in the *Boston Gazette*, July 30, 1759.

<sup>14</sup> Preserved by John McKenzie of the 44th Royal Scots, later of Albany, N. Y. A copy of it is in the present writer's possession.

tected the men. On the 17th, every man was ordered "to make one fashene tomorrow morning early in the front of the Regiment," and even those who were off duty were to attend "and see that the fashenes are made of a proper thickness, and bound Tite as possible."

Dangers multiplied and precautions increased. Pouchot was constantly dropping his not very formidable cannon balls into the English earthworks, and the soldiers of Prideaux received — more accurately, perhaps, were promised — pay for all shot and shell from the enemy's guns which they might pick up and turn over to their officers.

Among the New York troops was a young lieutenant, a lad of Schenectady, by name Christopher Yates. He carried through the campaign an old parchment-bound surveyor's field-book, in which he kept a diary of events, which still being preserved,<sup>15</sup> enables us to see, as through youthful eyes, some things of this momentous campaign. The progress of the army, from the time Lieutenant Yates left his father's house in Schenectady, June 1st, to the landing of the troops near Niagara, is here passed over. They encamped (Petit Marais) July 5th. About three in the morning, "the whale boats went in order to catch the sloops, but the sloops laid under the fort so that they could not catch them. The fort shot several cannons at the boat, shot one man, taking his leg right off."

He details his work in the trenches, tells of the Indian embassy to the fort, July 11th, and of the bombardment the following night, when "we worked the attack like Smoke . . . In the morning we brought a few cannons into the trench. The 12th, at night, I went in and they said they saw hot work there. There was one of our men killed, and Indian Williams wounded very badly. Then at night, we entrenched until within 200 yards of the fort, close by their gabions."

Three batteries were begun on Saturday the 13th, and finished, after a hard rain, Sunday night. Our soldier boy was too busy the next few days to make any but the briefest entries. On the 19th, he saw the approach of a schooner

<sup>15</sup> Owned by the Yates family of Schenectady. A copy is in the writer's possession.

“from Garoqua,” meaning either Toronto or Frontenac;<sup>16</sup> “the same night we entrenched 40 yards from their breastworks, but the schooner did not come to the fort.” The final entry is as follows:

20th [July]. In the afternoon our Colonel was wounded through the leg by a musket shot, and Col. Johnson [Johnstone] was killed by a musket ball as he was laying out the ground to entrench. That night and about ten o'clock the General was killed by one of our cowhorns [cohorns] and Sir William Johnson took command. And so we marched and worked night and day, until the 24th when we were attacked by about 1500 of the enemy, under the command of Musher Delanquay [Monsieur De Lignery] about 10 o'clock in the morning. But we soon gave them their breakfast, and on the 25th we took the fort.

Something of the nervous tension of the time is discernible in the following orders, issued on the 19th by Sir William, addressed to Colonel John Johnstone. Save for the fact that they related to the Indians, Colonel Johnstone would not have been receiving orders whom the Baronet — orders which, as Fate was to decree, were the last he was to receive from any one:

#### CAMP NEAR NIAGARA, July 19.

You are hereby ordered and directed to issue out Provisions to the different nations of Indians now here, and for your assistance it is my positive orders that you take four of the battoemen to assist in carrying, or serving it out, or for any other purpose you shall think necessary; these four battoemen are to be relieved by four others every two days; also to see that the battoes are in good order, well covered, etc., so as to prevent [protect] the goods, provisions, etc., from the inclemency of the weather. And in case of their or any of their refusal or neglect of the above duty, you are immediately to confine him, or them, on the Guard at the landing place, and deliver in a written report to the officer of their disobedience of orders, and neglect of duty.

You are likewise to assure them that if they don't exert themselves to the utmost of their ability, they shall not receive any pay.

<sup>16</sup> Frontenac was still often spoken of as *Cataragui*. Present Toronto was *Ganaraski*.





*John Ogilvie*

First Protestant Minister to Hold Religious Services on the  
Niagara Frontier

*Reproduced from an Engraving, after a Portrait by Copley, Owned by  
Trinity Church Corporation, New York City*



And for so doing you have my sufficient authority. Given under my hand before Niagara.

WM. JOHNSON.

On the morning of the 20th, general orders began with a practical admonition: "As the work draws nigh the fort, much depends on the goodness of the fashenes and gabions. The Genl. recommends it therefore to the men, to make them of small wood and perfectly Tite." Officers and men were cautioned to raise no false alarm. "In Case of a real sharge from the Fort, the commanding officer of the Trenches is to send word to the Genl. who will order a proper reinforcement." Evidently the soldiers were not all "hearts of oak," for much attention is paid to "Schulkers": "An officer 200 men to be always posted at the Tail of the Trenches to prevent any schulker from quitting"; and again: "Any schulker who is taken up to be sent immediately to the proper guard, and will be punished in the most severest and publick manner."

Although most of the French cannonading was ineffective, it now and then found its mark, as did the musket fire from the fort. The most serious loss of the expedition befell on the evening of the 20th; Colonel John Johnstone was killed by a French musket-ball, and General Prideaux was fatally wounded by a fragment of shell fired from one of his own trenches, and died soon after.

It was a tragic moment, when the general who had led his army up to the very walls of the enemy, was killed by one of his own gunners; but no hint of any panic or disorder has come down to us. Amherst was at Ticonderoga, Gage at Albany, Haldimand at Oswego; but Sir William Johnson, whose part in the expedition was merely that of a leader of a horde of unorganized Indians, was on the ground; and apparently without demur or contention by brother officers, he assumed command.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> In the Rev. Samuel Niles' "Historical Narrative of the French and Indian Wars" (Mass. Hist. Coll., 4th ser., vol. V, 502), to a statement of Prideaux's death is added the remark: "In his pocket was found a written order for General Johnson to take the command of the army, in which he engaged." I have not met with the statement elsewhere; its occurrence in Niles is hardly conclusive, for his "Narrative" abounds in errors.

He at once dispatched a messenger to Haldimand at Oswego, reporting the death of the general, and of Colonel Johnstone "about two hours before, which was also a great loss, as he was a very active and good man. As the command devolves on me," he added, "I would have you immediately join the army here without loss of time."<sup>18</sup> He also asked for more ammunition, and for an officer to replace Mr. Williams who "was early wounded." The next day, having examined General Prideaux's instructions, Johnson wrote again to Haldimand: "I now countermand the orders I sent you last night and will do the best I can here with the few field officers I have left." He had regard for Haldimand's necessities as well as his own: "I am sorry you are so circumstanced . . . and wish it were in my power to reinforce you, or assist you in any shape, but as everything necessary for such an expedition as this is so very difficult and the place so much stronger than imagined it is not in my power to send you any relief, altho' my inclination would readily lead me to it. I am in hopes by tomorrow morning to have a battery of six guns opened within 140 yards of the enemy's covered way, by which I hope to bring them to my terms. If not, I shall be obliged to go greater lengths and attempt an escalade, as I am determined to take the place if possible."<sup>19</sup> And again he adds an urgent request for ammunition.

Sir William's courier reached Amherst at Ticonderoga, July 28th. Word was at once sent to Gage, to succeed Prideaux, and the Second Battalion of Royal Americans detached to Oswego, so that, in case Niagara should not yet be taken, Gage might renew the attack with vigor.

The circumstances of Colonel Johnstone's death are best given in a letter written the next day by Chaplain Ogilvie to Colonel Johnstone's brother, which runs in part as follows:

NIAGARA, July 21, 1759.

*Dear David:* I am extremely unable to express what I feel upon this melancholy Occasion: Nothing but the most perfect Resignation to [the] Will of God, I am sensible, can support you under the

<sup>18</sup> Johnson to Haldimand, "Camp before Niagara, July 20, 1759,"

<sup>19</sup> *Ib.*, "Camp before Niagara, July 21st, 1759."

loss of so worthy a Brother, who fell yesterday in his Country's Cause universally lamented by the whole Army: I sympathize with you, with the most intire Affection, & mingle my Tears with your's.

But what shall I say to your dear Mother! I cannot write to her, you must therefore introduce the heavy Tydings in the most prudent manner. I pray God support her. A very remarkable Defect in our Engineering Department, obliged the Genl. to call upon your dear Brother for his advice & Assistance in that Branch, which he cheerfully gave to the intire Satisfaction of the Army, in short our Eyes were all upon him with Regard to our Approaches, & the Construction of our Batteries. He was upon this Service yesterday Evening & pointing out to the Genl. the operation for the ensuing Night, when the fatal shot struck him & immediately put an End to his valuable Life. It was a Musquet Ball, & entered under his arm, & so through his Lungs. Our Genl. was just by him when he recd. the shot & behaved with great Signs of the most sincere Grief: But alas! poor Gentleman, about an hour after recd. his Summons to the other World, by an accident from one of [our] own shells.

It being almost dark, & the Genl. just passing one of the Batteries, as the Gunner was firing one of the Cohorns, the Shell struck him in the back of his Head, & put an immediate Period to his life. We shall interr them both in one Grave this Evening, with all the Decency we can, & if we should gain Possession of this Place, we shall remove yr. [their] Remains to the Fort with all the Honours of War.

My mind is in such a melancholy Situation that I can't write you all the Particulars of our Expedition: I make no doubt we shall soon carry the Point. We are intrenched within 80 yards of the fort, & shall open a Battery there this Night, which I trust will bring the Monsyrs. to due Submission. Our Indians are of great Consequence to us as they keep all quiet about us & have prevailed upon a Number of Indians who were coming to the Assistance of the French, to retire to yr. own Habitations. The Command is now devolved upon Sir William Johnson, who has nine hundred Indians here upon the spot. We have about 40 of our Men wounded, & about 10 or 12 killed, & blessed by God: we are in general very healthy. Col. Hodg [?] was wounded the same unhappy Day in the Leg but slightly. I am persuaded that the Consideration of the Cause in which your Brother fell, & his own good Character thro the Course of his Life, will afford you Matter of Comfort under this afflictive Dispensation. His Name will be embalmed to

Posterity & always mentioned with honour by every true lover of his Country, but I hope he is in the fruition of a glorious Immortality.

In which reviving Hope I shall commit his Remains to the dust this Evening. . . .

Your sincere & afflicted Friend

JOHN OGILVIE.

Colonel John Johnstone, killed at the taking of Fort Niagara, has been confused by some writers, with the family of Sir William Johnson. The name and lineage are distinct. Colonel John Johnstone was the son of John Johnstone and Elizabeth Jameson, and the eldest grandson of Dr. John Johnstone, at one time mayor of the city of New York. He was born at Perth Amboy, New Jersey, July 7, 1719, and was commissioned in the New Jersey provincial troops, March 10, 1758. He married his cousin, Eupheme, daughter of Andrew Johnstone and Catherine Van Cortlandt; he left no issue, and his widow is buried beside her parents in St. Peter's churchyard, Perth Amboy. A further word regarding Colonel Johnstone's ancestry may not be out of place. Dr. John Johnstone, a cadet of the old Scotch family, Earls of Hartfeldt and Annandale, came from Edinburgh in 1685, with George Scot of Pitlochie, whose daughter Eupheme Dr. Johnstone married after arriving in America. Scot of Pitlochie was the son of Sir John Scot of Scotstaroit, near Cupar, County of Fife, Scotland. Descendants of Dr. Johnstone still live in New Jersey, as well as in and near the city of New York, notably Mr. Louis Morris Johnstone of Tompkinsville, Staten Island, the custodian of the Johnstone family papers, to whom the author is indebted for the foregoing information.<sup>20</sup>

When the army was at Oswego, on its return from Niagara, Chaplain Ogilvie wrote August 21st, a very tender letter to Colonel Johnstone's mother, in which occurs the following passage:

We decently but privately laid the Remains of your Son in the same grave with the Genl. and after it pleased God to give us Pos-

<sup>20</sup> See also, N. J. Archives, XIX, 389, *note*.

session of the Fort, we removed them with all the Honours of War & buried them in the Chapel in the Fort. I performed the last Office with weeping Eyes & an afflicted Heart.

Whatever depression of spirits the troops may have experienced, in consequence of this loss of two able officers, one of them the commander-in-chief, there is no note of discouragement in the regimental orders issued the next morning by Lieutenant-Colonel Michael Thodey: <sup>21</sup>

I hope the loss the Regt. met with in Colo. Johnson [Johnstone] will give every officer and soldier in it a just resentment, and I've the pleasure hitherto both to find and hear from every body that we have done our part of the duty with the greatest exactness and punctuality and with a soldier like spirit I hope the same spirit may continue. And tho' the little wound I have met with will not permit me to head you for the present (gentlemen y<sup>o</sup> trenches) you have other officers who will lead and direct you, and as for my part as I cannot be where I would wish, with you, I hope nothing will be wanting on your part and whatever I can in Camp do you may expect.

The gravity of Lieutenant-Colonel Thodey's wound is not stated, but his place was taken that night by Lieutenant-Colonel William Farquhar, who with Lieutenant-Colonel Mercer were the most active and efficient of Johnson's staff. On the morning of the 21st Sir William issued the following to the troops:

The death of the late General Prideaux devolving on me the command of the army, I trust that as I am determined to persevere in the same just and rigorous measures, which was carried on by the Deceased General, that the troops will exert themselves to the utmost and act with the same laudable spirit which they have hitherto shown, of which I shall not fail to acquaint his Excellency General Amherst.

The business we are upon being nearly finished the completing of which will be easily effected by the continuance of the same measures and the utmost exertion of our abilities, all orders given therefore by the late general to be punctually obeyed.

<sup>21</sup> Michael Thodey appears as Muster Master for the City and Co. of New York, in May, 1760. In 1761 he was Colonel of the New York Regiment.—*Muster rolls, N. Y. Provincial troops, 1760.*

This was read to all the men in camp, and again to those who came in when the trenches were relieved. More and more care was insisted on, in the making of fascines; this day 200 of them were prepared  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet long, and 600 nine feet long. On the night of the 21st 200 men worked in the trenches, while a "covering party" of 300 others guarded them. The troops were sharply rebuked for irregular firing, both when they came out of the trenches and in camp, and were threatened with severe punishment unless it stopped. The miners and sappers under Engineer Dember had a weary time of it, for heavy rains flooded the trenches and it was hard to keep their powder dry.

On the 23d, 140 volunteers were called for, to bring ten whale-boats from the landing-place, to lie off shore near the trenches, a dangerous duty, for it brought them within range of the fort. To strengthen courage, each volunteer was to receive a gill of rum and be credited with one dollar, "which shall be paid as soon as the money can be 'got.'" Lieutenants Yates and Hilliard were assigned to direct this movement.

On this day also with the situation exceedingly tense, the New York Provincials received the following orders extraordinary:

Whereas, a number of the officers are constantly grumbling about the duty now done in the Reg't, for the future if any officer thinks himself wronged let them first do the duty ordered, and when relieved [if] they can make it appear that they are wronged they shall have all the justice done them which is required in such cases, but if they shall be mistaken they certainly shall be looked upon in such a Lite as will make them unworthy the commission they now hold in the Reg't, and which I shall take care they shall not keep long. For gentlemen to be disputing at this time about the duty, looks to me and will to the world, very bad, and will make them unworthy of the Title their Commission now gives them, even allowing they went once out of their turns of duty, because a brother officer thinks he is not able. For the time to come no officer or soldier to leave camp without leave unless on duty or to fetch water.

While the net was thus being drawn ever closer about Pouchot and his weary garrison, Captain La Force was cruising futilely up and down Lake Ontario. As we have seen



(II, 25), his exploits had won him a certain regard by the English; but in the present crisis, he accomplished nothing of consequence, even by his own account, preserved in a brief journal<sup>22</sup> which has recently come to light. La Force arrived with his vessel off the mouth of the Niagara at 6 o'clock in the evening of July 6th. That night the Indians made four or five prisoners "at the edge of the desert," that is, the clearing east of the fort. Of the skirmish in which De Serviès and 50 men engaged that night, La Force wrote: "We had captured or killed in this affair the Sieur Saumandre, Blois, interpreter for the Iroquois, and the son of the old blacksmith; Messrs. St. Martin and Pramont were wounded and brought into the fort." La Force concluded that the attack had been made by a party of Five Nations Indians "who had menaced the fort for more than a month."

The next morning at daybreak he sailed eastward along the shore, and when near the little marsh sent a boat close in, and fired a few cannon-shot from the schooner. The English challenged them, with brag and insult (*algarade*); and the French withdrew.

The next day, Sunday, as La Force cruised off the mouth of the river, he saw heavy smoke rolling up above the forest and rightly concluded that Chabert's fort was burning. The next day or so La Force cruised to little purpose up and down the coast. On the night of the 11th, a soldier, Corbin by name, reached the schooner with a letter from Captain Pouchot. "My dear La Force," it ran, "we are holding the enemy fairly well, but he pushes ahead, and is within 200 toises [some 425 yards] of the glacis, where we shall begin to make it hot for him. Hold yourself ready, if possible, to give them a cannonade across the plain; you will annoy them at the back of the trenches. If you cannot, and the wind serves, go to Frontenac and learn what is happening. Report to us with the first good wind; it is the only service you can render. Otherwise await events in this vicinity; we will make our necessities

<sup>22</sup> The original is in the possession of M. René de Kerallain, Quimper, France. A copy is in the Archives, Ottawa. The journal is of events from July 6th to 14th.

known; if we require you to land I will put a white flag in a window at the rear of the house.<sup>23</sup> If it is urgent, we will show both the large and small flags." A postscript adds: "Still no news from Presqu' Isle."

La Force sailed eastward, hoping to intercept and destroy a convoy of 500 men which was reported on the way with supplies for the English. Not meeting such a body, he contented himself with drawing in near enough shore to send a dozen shot into an English intrenchment, then bore away for Frontenac, where he arrived on Saturday the 14th, having sailed near enough to Oswego, the day before, to make out what he reported as a force of 3000 English. From first to last, during the siege, he was of no help to Pouchot except when, by holding the mouth of the Niagara, he forced the English to a roundabout way in reaching their batteries on the west side.

<sup>23</sup> The old stone mess-house still standing.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### BATTLE AND SURRENDER

RELIEF FROM THE SOUTH — BATTLE OF LA BELLE FAMILLE —  
DEATH OF THE PRIEST VIROT, AND CAPTAIN DE LIGNERY —  
THE CAPITULATION.

WHILE the English lines were thus being advanced, what was going on in the fort?

Pouchot had no definite knowledge of the enemy's movements, up to July 6th. La Force, cruising on the lake, had managed to see nothing. On the evening of the 6th, a soldier, one of three who were hunting pigeons in the clearing near the fort, came running to tell that Indians had seized his comrades. The commandant sent out a squad under Captain Selviert, who marched across the open plain, but quite willing that a dozen Canadian volunteers should precede them. As they came up to the edge of the woods, there was a volley from the thicket, which wounded two. The French returned the fire and fell back, but before they could gain the fort five or six<sup>1</sup> were carried off by the strange Indians, among them two interpreters, Aloqué and Furnace. These first captives, who could speak both French and one or more Iroquois tongues, were fine prizes for Prideaux. Pouchot covered the retreat into the fort with a few harmless cannon-shot; and all that night Captain Selviert and 100 men were posted in the demi-lune, with the whole garrison under arms on the ramparts till midnight. There was no attack, but Pouchot at last had heard from the English; and there was no more pigeon-hunting in the open.

The following morning many Indians were seen at the edge of the woods and seven barges on the lake. When a gun was fired at them from the fort they withdrew. Scouts sent after them in a barque later reported many boats and a great number of men on shore at the Little Marsh, and the woods full of

<sup>1</sup> Pouchot says five; the anonymous Journal afterwards found in the fort, says six.

camp-fires. Pouchot set all hands at work on the batteries, to make embrasures, all being heretofore *en barbette*. Indian runners were dispatched up the portage road, to tell Chabert if he saw any signs of the enemy to fall back across the Niagara to Chenondac, the Chippewa creek of to-day. The runners were also to hasten to Presqu' Isle, Le Bœuf and Venango, with the most urgent call for immediate relief. We shall presently see how their mission sped.

Pouchot relied, obviously from necessity, on the Indian allies for scout service. Chabert sent down from his post two trusty men, a Pottawatamie and a Sauteur; these, with a third man, a Huron from Fort Niagara, spent the night creeping along under the steep bank of the lake, to spy on the British. They emptied their guns upon some men in a boat, and defied the Iroquois whom they hailed by many bravadoes; but only one of the trio of scouts returned to Pouchot, and he had nothing of consequence to report.

The next day (Sunday, July 8th) the British having their trenching operations well under way, Pouchot did what he could to annoy them. The corvette cruised between the mouth of the river and the Little Marsh, threw an occasional shot shorewards, and sought to interfere with the bateaux which were bringing up artillery.

This Sunday morning brought a more important incident. A white flag was seen in the clearing. With great caution the messenger was brought in; before entering the fort his eyes were bandaged and he was led by devious ways "through the thickest and most encumbered brushwood." When he stood before Captain Pouchot, and the bandage was taken from his eyes, he presented a letter from General Prideaux, demanding surrender. Pouchot told the messenger he did not understand English, and had no reply to make; but he had well understood it; he hoped, he says, that Prideaux could never enter the fort, and that at least before he made any terms with the English, he wished an opportunity to gain their esteem. He invited the bearer to breakfast, and then sent him back with his eyes bandaged, the way he came. This messenger, the first of the



H. M. Severance, phot. c. 1916

Lake Ontario Shore Between Fort Niagara and the Little Marsh  
Illustrating the Caving of the High Banks



English army to enter Fort Niagara, is said to have been a captain of the Royal Americans, named Blaine.<sup>2</sup>

On the afternoon of this Sunday the scout whom Pouchot had sent up the river reported many of the enemy at work at La Belle Famille. This place, on the east side of the river, is variously stated at three furlongs, a short eighth of a league,<sup>3</sup> etc., from the fort. The English had come to it to cut willows or alders for their fascines, there being a scarcity of small growth in the forest. Pouchot sent a few shot that way, and redispersed his force at the bastions and batteries; but there was no attack.

In the assignment of his men this day, Pouchot states that Chabert with 60 men were stationed "on the *platon* beneath that salient in the rear of the palisade which ran into the river," thus indicating that Chabert had reached the fort Sunday the 8th. Singularly enough, neither Pouchot nor the anonymous "Journal" have any entry for the 9th; and both say that Chabert arrived at the fort on the 10th. Pouchot's statement is: "M. Chabert and his brother Joncaire arrived at noon [10th July] with 70 persons, several women and Indians, three Iroquois; among the rest the chief Kaendaé." Chabert says he entered the fort with his little band on the 9th.

As day after day had passed and no relief for the besieged garrison appeared, with the British lines ever drawing closer, the portage could no longer be defended, and Chabert's fort above the falls had become indefensible. On July 7th he was ordered to remove the horses, cattle, carts, tools, and all possible effects across the river to a secluded refuge up the Chip-pewa,<sup>4</sup> and then to burn his fort and come with his people to

<sup>2</sup> Hough so states in his translation of Pouchot, I, 166 *note*, but does not indicate the source of his information. Walter Rutherford's letter of July 14th, in which he speaks of drinking with the French commandant, suggests that he also had entered the fort.

<sup>3</sup> Pouchot's words are: "*un petit demi-quart de lieue du fort, sur la rive droite du fleuve, au dessus de la place.*" I have found no earlier writer than Pouchot using the name "La Belle Famille," nor any explanation of it.

<sup>4</sup> Chabert writes "Stonondac" for the name of this stream; Pouchot has "Chenondac." O. H. Marshall, in his "Index Rerum," apparently on Seneca authority, writes it "Jó-no-dak," meaning shallow water or fording-place.

Fort Niagara. This he did, but not easily. With his buildings and stockade abandoned and in flames "there remained only the matter of getting into Fort Niagara; but the enemy were about us so close, and had laid so many ambuscades, that we were obliged to abandon everything, provisions and supplies. My clerk, in order to follow me more quickly, left everything, records and account-books, which I most regret. Thus disburdened and having only our arms we pierced through the enemy's forces and I led my little band into the fort on the 9th, at seven o'clock in the morning. I was wounded at the trenches."<sup>5</sup>

Through the fog and rain of the early morning of the 10th, the garrison saw that a new trench had been opened "at the entrance of the wilderness, at about 300 toises from the fort," and they gave it a brisk bombardment. The next day La Roche and 60 men ventured from the fort and approached the English lines; and many soldiers, in spite of the French officers, leaped over the palisades and tried to follow. "The garrison was on the point of being engaged with the entire English army, because their Indians, numbering at least 900, and all their troops came at the moment to form themselves in order of battle at the head of the trench"; but, adds Pouchot, the French artillery fire prevented a charge by the English, and the skirmish ended with the loss of but a few men. La Roche, whose rashness had come near to settling Pouchot's hopes and ending the siege then and there, was Oliver de La Roche-Verney, a captain of the Marine. He was, later, one of the signers of the capitulation.

The French commandant makes a long story of a "singular adventure" that evening. The Iroquois, Kaendaé, who had come into the fort with Chabert, asked leave to confer with his tribesmen in the English camp. Thinking that some of the Indians might be induced to desert the English, Pouchot consented. The result of the parley was that two of Johnson's Indians, after being given a pass signed by Joncaire, whom they still professed to regard as one of themselves, were brought

<sup>5</sup> There are statements in documents of the time that indicate that Johnson's Indians, and not Chabert's own people, set fire to the portage fort.



blindfolded into the fort. The usual palaver followed, Pouchot upbraiding the Six Nations for deserting the French. He was even weak enough to boast to them of the prowess of the French, a matter on which they may well have begun to doubt. The Mississagas and Pottawatamies, who were present as allies of the French, pledged loyalty and urged the Iroquois to stand with them and "not to let go each others' hands." The speech-making continued until 9 at night, when the Iroquois were again blindfolded and led out of the fort, making vague promises of an answer on the morrow. During the parley the firing on both sides had ceased, but the English had worked like beavers at their earthworks. The duped commandant sententiously observed: "This was a lesson for M. Pouchot."

The succeeding days saw the English works ever extending, with an intermittent but at times heavy fire from both sides. In the English lines the soldiers in the trenches were served with cooked food, carried to them; and were paid for picking up and bringing in any French cannon-balls which could be fired back, — sixpence, New York currency, for every 12- and 9-lb. shot, four pence for any others. In the French fort there was no great need for thrift. Their batteries were weak but their store of ammunition — of powder, at least — so abundant that Pouchot was accused of wastefulness.<sup>6</sup> On the 12th the Iroquois, Kaendaé, asked for further councils; Pouchot consented but stipulated that this time there should be no cessation of firing, as the English took advantage of it to work. Kaendaé made his way into the English camp and talked with one of the Iroquois "in the presence of Johnson, to whom that chief spoke boldly, reproaching him with having plunged his nation into bad business. Johnson smiled, and took this reproach as a joke." Once more an Iroquois deputation were brought blindfolded into the fort; an Onondaga and two Cayugas, who after long speeches of dubious sincerity, and the presentation

<sup>6</sup> Col. Nathan Whiting, of Amherst's force, wrote from *La Galette* the next year: "The Garison is about three hundred, Comanded by Monsieur Pisheave [!] who commanded Niagara Last year & seems now determined to Rectify the error he then made of firing away the Ammunition too fast." — *Col. Nathan Whiting to his wife, from Camp at La Galette, Aug. 24, 1760; New Haven Historical Society Papers, vol. VI.*

of wampum belts, told Pouchot they would abandon the English, go into camp at La Belle Famille and keep quiet. More than this, they wanted Kaendaé and all the other Iroquois in the fort, women and children, to go with them and be neutral, "so that no kettle," as they styled the shells, "should break their heads." They even professed to wish the company of Joncaire.

All of this seems a ruse on Johnson's part to weaken the enemy. Pouchot does not appear to have seen it in that light. There was further speechmaking and many empty promises; and Pouchot finally sent the deputies back, "each with a loaf, because he knew that the English army was eating only flour baked into cakes in the ashes."

Pouchot mistrusted the Indians. He was by no means inexperienced in dealing with them, and had been popular with them; but he realized that even those who professed friendship for the French might turn against him on the first show of superior prowess by the English. Many of them in the guise of friendship were simply consuming his provisions; and they were always likely to carry information to the enemy. A day or so later Kaendaé and another, Chatacouen, again visited the English camp. On their return they reported on all they had seen and added that Johnson had persuaded his Indians to stay by him, by offering them the pillage of Fort Niagara, which was to be assaulted in two or three days. Whether Johnson ever made such an offer or not, it is plain that the prospect of pillage made them stand by.

A variety of minor incidents filled the next few days. Captain Douville, from his feeble post at Toronto, sent a canoe across the lake to learn how things fared. The French corvette cruised up and down, annoying the English as she might. Pouchot worked his tired band until they fell asleep at the guns; but steadily the net was closer drawn. On the 14th the Iroquois who had come in with Chabert, and others who claimed to be true to the French, begged to go to the west side of the river, as they were afraid of the English shells. Pouchot permitted it, glad to be rid of them; whereupon these faithless savages hastened to the mouth of the Chippewa, appropriated the oxen and cows which Chabert had sequestered there, and

carried this meat to the English camp. The English had indeed become very short of provisions. Could Pouchot have made his lake patrol more efficient, cutting off all supplies from Oswego, he could have brought the English to a desperate pass, for he himself was well provisioned. On the other hand, at no time could he have withstood such an assault as the combined English and Indians were able to make.

There were many rains with morning fogs, a thing unusual on the Niagara in July. On the 17th, when the fog lifted, the French garrison learned that the English had established a battery at Montreal Point — the west side of the river, at its mouth. It appeared to consist of two large guns and two howitzers; and presently from one of them a cannon-ball made its flight across the river, entered the chimney of the commandant's quarters, and rolled down beside the bed on which he had just lain down.<sup>7</sup> He was unharmed, but the next day a soldier was killed and four were wounded by balls which fell in the fort.

At dawn on the 19th they saw an English parallel some 80 yards long in front of the fort, 160 yards distant, though they did not know that it was at this new work that Prideaux was next day to lose his life.<sup>8</sup> The schooner *Iroquoise*, which some days before had been dispatched down the lake now reappeared off the mouth of the river, but could not pass the battery at Montreal Point. Pouchot and his people were now indeed hemmed in on every side. At sunset Pouchot sent off seven men on a bark canoe. They braved a lively fire from the west battery, one of the balls carrying away a paddle, but reached the schooner, from which they managed to return, on the night of the 20th, with dispatches from Montreal and Quebec, where no word had yet reached of the investment of Niagara. Two canoes from the fort gained the schooner, which sailed with dispatches to Toronto and Montreal.

During the night of the 20th a fourth parallel was dug about 100 yards from the fort, and a new battery brought into serv-

<sup>7</sup> Pouchot himself records the incident: "*Ils demasquerent leur artillerie par un coup de canon tiré de l'autre côté de la rivière de la pointe de Mont-Real, qui donna dans la cheminée du commandant, et roula à côté de son lit lequel il venoit de se reposer.*"

<sup>8</sup> Pouchot errs in saying he was killed on the 18th.

ice. With the shorter range, the English fire did heavier execution. The French defense, now well nigh desperate, was at times effective and deadly, but often slackened. A French gunner was killed by his own gun. The English battery on the west side of the river now began to throw red-hot shot into the fort.<sup>9</sup> The storehouses and some other buildings being of wood, numerous fires started, but Pouchot kept barrels filled with water in front of the buildings and squads of carpenters ready with axes to cut and repair, so that no blaze gained headway. This day one of his best men, Bonnafox, in charge of artillery, was wounded, and ten others killed or maimed. Never before was the British bombardment so heavy. In one bastion of the fort three of the five cannon and howitzers were dismounted. The shells, plowing into the ground and then exploding, tore away the sodding and made deep holes six to eight feet across; the bastion was well nigh ruined. At night the English poured a terrific fire of shot and grape into the breach. The batteries on the bastions, which at first were of barrels filled with earth, having been ruined, a substitute was found in bags filled with earth, "which being laid across each other, formed pretty efficient merlons, easily changed according to the direction of the fire." The wounded, even the women and children in the fort, worked day and night to replace and fill these bags, which soon became torn, burnt, and worn out. Wadding for the cannon failed, then hay was used until no more remained; finally the beds were stripped, first of their straw, then of their linen.

The soldiers' muskets were giving out; scarce one in ten was serviceable, and by the morning of the 23d, although seven gunsmiths were constantly at work, not a hundred muskets in the fort were of any use. To crown all, the Canadians refused duty in the lake bastion, leaving only a small force of exhausted soldiers to defend its covert-way. Pouchot was, in fact, in extremity.

At ten o'clock in the morning of the 23d of July a white flag was seen on the portage road near La Belle Famille. Pouchot promptly responded with a like flag, and presently

<sup>9</sup> The anonymous Journal says: "They also fired fire-poles," which may be an error of transcription.

four Indians were brought into the fort with letters from Aubry and De Lignery, in which they assured him of their speedy coming and expressed confidence they could raise the siege. These Indians said they had seen a part of the English camp; and that the fire from the fort had killed the first or second in command, and broken two of their guns and one mortar. Some spark of hope still lingered in the garrison. "We have room to hope," says the anonymous Journal, "that with such succours [the force of De Lignery and Aubry] we may oblige the Enemy to raise the siege, with the loss of men; and as they take up much ground they must be beat, not being able to rally quick enough." The writer under-rated the enemy's preparedness. That very afternoon Johnson unmasked a new battery of his biggest guns: three 18-pounders, others of 12 and 6. There was little chance for rest or repair work in the fort, for at four o'clock on the morning of the 24th all of the English batteries began a heavy cannonading and kept it up till four in the afternoon. Instead of checking his batteries, because of the approach of the enemy from the southward, Johnson gave the French fort on this day its heaviest storm of shot and shell.

He had learned on the 23d, even before Pouchot, of the approach of Aubry and De Lignery; and his preparations for their reception had been prompt and effective.

On the morning of the 23d Sir William sent Captain James De Lancey with 150 of the light infantry to encamp near the river, close to the road leading from the Falls to the fort. He took up a position about a mile from the main body of the troops, with instructions to prevent any relief force from gaining access to the fort, and to give warning if he learned of the approach of the enemy. That night he threw up a breastwork in front of his camp; and wishing to mount on it a 6-pounder which the British had at their battery on the west shore near the mouth of the river, he sent off a sergeant and ten men to bring it. Twenty-two of Johnson's bateaux had been carried overland from the Lake Ontario shore to the Niagara and were in readiness under the high bank a mile up stream from De-Lancey's breastwork. In their attempt to reach these boats

the sergeant and his squad were intercepted by advance scouts from the oncoming force of French and Indians, who fell upon the English, killed them, and cut off their heads, which they stuck on poles.<sup>10</sup> This firing was heard by De Lancey, who at once sent word to Sir William that the enemy were coming. In ten minutes he was joined by three pickets of 50 men each, and a quarter of an hour later Lieut. Colonel Massey came up with 150 of the 46th. With this force, and the 50 men from the 44th, he drew up on De Lancey's right; two other pickets, about 100 men, were stationed on the left wing, as were about 100 Indians, with orders to fall on the enemy's flank.

We turn for a little from the operations in the vicinity of the fort to note the progress and character of the expected relief from the southward.

Throughout the early summer, De Lignery had kept many Indians — Ottawas, Mississagas and Wyandots — busily occupied building canoes. Most of this work was done a few miles above Venango, "where the bark was plenty." Other Indians from Pittsburgh in English interest, haunted the region, spied on the canoe-building, and returning to Fort Pitt, reported, June 26th, that the French had 50 new canoes; the spies thought the French were preparing to go down the river and attack British escorts, bringing provisions, since supplies at Venango were very low.

About this time messengers from Sir William Johnson arrived at Fort Pitt; they announced his plans for the Niagara campaign and called on the Ohio Indians to join the Six Nations and cut off the French "on this side of the Lake." On receipt of this news a great council was held at Pittsburg, at which "all the Nations" gave allegiance to the English. "We only want a few troops and provisions, to be able to go and take the forts on this side Niagara, as we shall be joined by

<sup>10</sup> There is more than one account of this atrocity. De Lancey merely says that the sergeant and party "were all taken or killed." Pouchot says: "They killed a dozen, and having cut off their heads, set them on poles." Charles Lee, writing from Niagara, Aug. 9th, says the Indians "surprised a party of our Light Infantry, cut off their heads and arms and fix'd them upon poles. I suppose *in terrorem* to us."



An Existing Relic of Fort Little Niagara  
(See Appendix)





the Indians here," wrote some one, probably an officer at Fort Pitt.<sup>11</sup>

A few days later — July 1st — a band of 10 Delawares came to Fort Pitt and reported a great change at Venango; there were many arrivals of troops and Indians, as in preparation for a raid.

It was indeed an interesting moment. The French at Venango were preparing to attack Fort Pitt; the English at Fort Pitt were only awaiting more troops and supplies to attack Venango. The Indians were divided, ready to side with the stronger party. The French at Venango were in great danger, for Johnson's orders regarding Niagara reached Fort Pitt, two days before De Lignery received a summons which changed all his plans.

As the siege had progressed and no relief arrived, Pouchot had sent out an emergency call to the nearest posts, south and west. His messengers reached Venango at a dramatic moment. On July 12th there were assembled here 400 of the French and 1000 Indians. In a great council the commandant thanked his children (as he called the Indian allies) for joining him, and throwing down a war-belt, declared his purpose of setting off on the morrow to attack the English fort, *i.e.*, Fort Pitt. Some of the Indians were eager for the attempt, others demurred, especially two Iroquois, just arrived, who opposed it. Our Father, they said, is in too great a hurry; "let us consider what we are to do," and they delivered to the assembled Indians "a very large bunch of string wampum, which threw them into some confusion." Whatever may have been the special significance of string wampum, those who brought it were better informed than their fellows.

While the proposed foray upon Fort Pitt was thus being debated, there arrived two other Indian runners from Fort Niagara, messengers from Captain Pouchot, with a packet of letters for De Lignery, the commandant at Venango; who, when he had read them, thus addressed the council:

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Pittsburgh, June 26, in *Boston Evening Post*, July 30, 1759.

"Children, I have bad news to tell you. There is a great army of English coming against Niagara, with Sir William Johnson, who has with him all the Six Nations, and a great number of Indians that live that way. I have received orders to go directly to Niagara, and take you with me. We must therefore give over the thought of going down the river, till we have drove the English away from Niagara. You know the consequence that place is of to us; if the English take it you must be poor, as it is stopping the road to your country.

"Children, be strong and support your father at this time."

Then the French commandant ordered all the battoes to sett up the river, and turn those that were coming down, back.<sup>12</sup>

The gathering of this relief army was no slight achievement. Much was done; but records are scanty. We have seen how De Lignery rallied his forces at Venango. From his distant post in the Illinois country Aubry had made a forced and taxing march with 300 French and some 600 Indians recruited as he came along, to Venango. With forces joined, the two commanders advanced to Presqu' Isle, whence they set out for the Niagara. Second in command under Aubry was François Coulon, the Chevalier de Villiers.

We have noted the passing in earlier years of many a strange flotilla down this famous way; but none had equaled in size or surpassed in bizarre variety the endless succession of bateaux and bark canoes which, drawing close to each other at the outlet of Lake Erie, swept like a vast floating island<sup>13</sup> into the lively current of the Little Rapid which deep and

<sup>12</sup> From a report sent from Fort Pitt, July 15, published in the *Boston Gazette*, August 13, 1759. See also Craig's "History of Pittsburgh," ed. 1851, pp. 81, 82, where much the same account is given, drawn from a letter written by Col. Hugh Mercer, the commandant at Fort Pitt, July 17, 1759. Mercer's letter says that spies sent to Venango, who returned to Pittsburgh on July 15th, reported 700 Frenchmen and 400 Indians at Venango, and that 400 more Indians arrived while the spies were there. Most of this horde, which was to have descended on Fort Pitt, were turned about by Pouchot's call for help, and formed the main part of the "army" which Johnson defeated on the Niagara, July 24th.

<sup>13</sup> The comparison is Pouchot's own, though by no possibility could he have witnessed the scene.

strong gallops at an eight-mile pace past the shores where to-day Buffalo extends. A rare spectacle the passing of this army must have been. The wilderness outposts as far as the Mississippi had been stripped for recruits for this forlorn hope of France in the heart of the continent. Among the 600 or more French were traders and *coureurs de bois* who had left their Indian families on distant prairies or in the forests of Michigan and Wisconsin, to rally for the preservation of Niagara. Here were officers not unknown at the Court of France; some whose names are on the rolls of the pathfinders of America, where their wilderness service had covered many years. Here too were the half-breed and the Indian of far tribes, a thousand strong, in paint, grease and feathers, whose favorite weapons were the tomahawk and scalping-knife and who had never seen, much less shared in, "civilized" warfare. It was indeed a forlorn hope. It was also the last great on-coming of the French over the waters of the Lakes which they had discovered and explored, and had dominated for more than a hundred years.

Pouchot took hurried counsel with his officers. The Indian dispatch-bearers, on their way down from Lake Eric, had parleyed with Johnson's Indians, who promptly carried into camp news of the coming force. Feeling sure any reply he might send would also reach the enemy, the commandant wrote a brief statement of the disposition of the English force, reminded De Lignery of the advice sent him on July 10th, and left the further conduct of affairs in that officer's hands. Making four copies of his letter, he gave them to four Indians, each of a different tribe, and sent them off.

The advice which Pouchot had sent to De Lignery on July 10th was, that if he doubted his ability to overcome the English, he should advance down the west side of the Niagara where there were not more than 200 of the enemy, who could be readily handled; but this advice, either through failure to realize the conditions, or over-confidence, was not followed. The army's last halt was on one of the islands in the river. The anonymous Journal already quoted from states that the Indian messengers

of the 23d came from the army "of 2500 men, half French and half Savages," which "was arrived at the great Island, before the Little Fort." Grand Island would naturally be inferred, although it is considerably above the Little Fort. If the flotilla came down the west channel, it may have camped on Navy Island; but the crossing from the foot of Navy Island to Fort Little Niagara, for so many light craft, would not be without some peril of being drawn into the rapids and swept over the falls. We know that they followed the portage road down Lewiston Heights and came on more like a rabble than an army, into the arms of the enemy.

It amounted in fact to an ambuscade into which the French, with all their experience in Indian methods, noisily if not blindly rushed. Before the engagement was precipitated, Johnson's Indians sought, or pretended to seek, a parley with the French; what possible result could have followed, short of an ignominious laying down of arms, does not appear. But the French Indians refused to stop for peaceful counseling. They perhaps thought that the unrestrained slaughter of Braddock's Field might be here repeated; but Johnson was no Braddock. Far from holding Indian methods in contempt, he adopted them and combined them with the mass formation which European armies, until long since Johnson's day, have thought essential for success. Johnson's disposition of his forces shows plan. The advance of the French shows none. With their front and flanks protected by a wild horde, yelling the war-whoop, Aubrey and De Lignery led their men down the portage road, straight into a trap. As the English volleyed them in front, Johnson's Indians, in their turn taking up the war-cry, rushed from the woods on the flank of the advancing force. The French recoiled, then became panic-stricken. Many of these veterans of the wilderness, on whose coming Pouchot within his battered and breached fort had so fondly counted, were glad to be led off prisoners to the English camp, saved for the moment at least from the tomahawk.

Here at last was the hour for which the Six Nations had waited, submitting to some measures of discipline through all the weeks of the campaign; but now the opportunity was theirs

for warfare, not with cannon shot, against which they could not cope, but in the primitive conflict of their ancestors by methods and with weapons they thoroughly understood.

*Sauve qui peut!* The French and their red allies who were not captured, fled through the forest like frightened rabbits, and after them pursued both Iroquois and English. The swiftest got away, climbing in panic the Lewiston Heights, nor stopping until they regained their boats above the Falls and put many a league between them and the battlefield. A greater number fell victims to bullet, tomahawk and scalping-knife. The pursuit continued for five miles, across the present site of Youngstown village, its surrounding orchards and peaceful farms, whose soil had rare nourishment that day.<sup>14</sup>

The advance of Aubry and De Lignery shows not only lack of generalship, but of the craft and caution in which these wilderness warriors were supposed to excel. It is not recorded that they even sent scouts in advance. Had they gone down the west side of the river, while their own security might have been greater, their possible efficiency must have been less, for without portaging their boats they could not have reached the fort. Indeed, from the moment they passed the falls they were in a hazardous situation. All the conditions were against them.

Johnson, on the other hand, was master of the situation from the first. The fact that he was short of provisions may have proved a stimulant; at any rate, he was prompt and thorough. He first had word of the approach of "the relief army," July 23d. To meet it, without unduly weakening his force in the trenches, was a problem which tested generalship; but Sir William was equal to it. Fortunately, he had officers under him on whose bravery and judgment in emergency, he could rely.

<sup>14</sup>To the imagination of the artist who illustrated the Tours edition of Casgrain's "*Montcalm et Lévis*," this slaughter of the fugitives has proved delightfully stimulating. Taking for text the words of his author: "The end of the combat was but a massacre the horrors of which remain a secret of the Niagara solitudes," he has pictured British officers and fierce frontiersmen thrusting knives into the breasts of Indians at the very verge of the rocky abyss into which pours the great cataract; all undisturbed by the fact that several miles separated the falls from the scene of the conflict.

The siege operations were entrusted to Major John Beckwith, formerly of the 20th, later lieutenant-colonel of the 44th; and lest a sortie should be attempted from the fort, on the knowledge that a part of the English force was withdrawn from the trenches, Lieutenant-Colonel William Farquhar, with the 44th, was posted so as to sustain Beckwith, on the first alarm.

Having thus provided for the fort, Johnson, as related, took possession of the portage road on the evening of the 23d, with his light infantry, with piquets in advance and through the woods. Early the next morning this force was reënforced with the grenadiers and part of the 46th, and command of the whole was entrusted to a very capable officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Eyre Massey, who some years later became colonel of the Inniskillings — the somewhat renowned 27th Foot.

The honors of the day were Massey's, for it was due to the skill and steadiness with which he met the enemy in front, while his Indians attacked them on the flanks, that a complete victory was won.<sup>15</sup>

Of several English accounts of the battle none is better entitled to acceptance than that written by Captain De Lancey, which runs in part as follows:

Some of our Indians went to the enemy's Indians, to prevail on them not to fight, but the French told them, they did not want to fight with our Indians, but with us. On this our Indians returned and told us, the enemy was coming, which they soon did with a very great noise and shouting.

They began the attack on the right, and our men kept their ground and soon returned their fire. I ordered the Light Infantry not to fire till they were sure of their mark, which they punctually obeyed.

Part of the enemy then inclined to the left and gave us a very smart fire. We did not fire for some time, and then only about ten shot at some few of the enemy who came very near us. Very soon after this I found the enemy's fire slacken upon which I sent to Colonel Massey to desire he would let me leave the breastwork and

<sup>15</sup> A British "Plan of Niagara," here in part reproduced, shows clearly the disposition of the opposing forces at La Belle Famille, as well as the British camp approaches, etc. The original of this map, published in New York, is in the British Museum. See Appendix.

rush in on the enemy, which he granted, desired I would move slow, and advanced with his party on the right.

We jumped over the Breastwork and rushed in on the Enemy, who immediately gave way. They then endeavored to flank us on the left, but I ordered a party from the right to move to the left, which they did, and with them I pushed forwards to the enemy, who falling in with the party which was on my left, immediately ran away as fast as they could, and never offered to rally afterwards. A few of them remained behind and exchanged a few shot with us, and were either taken or killed.

Our Indians as soon as they saw the enemy give way, pursued them very briskly, and took and killed great numbers of them. We pursued about five miles and then returned.<sup>16</sup>

Captain De Lancey gives Johnson's force as 2200, besides 900 Indians. He computed the enemy's force at 850 French and 350 Indians: "We killed 200 and took 100 prisoners, five captains . . . and 12 subaltern officers." Another contemporary account<sup>17</sup> says that 120 prisoners were taken and at least 500 of the enemy were left on the field of battle. A letter dated "Niagara, 25th July" says: "We waited and received their fire five or six times before our people returned it, which they did at about 30 yards distance, then jumped over their breastwork and closed with them." This writer puts the number of prisoners, besides the officers, at "about 60 or 70 men."

A letter, printed in several papers under date of Albany, August 6th, gave the following account of Aubry's defeat:

It is said all the Indians but the brave Mohawks stood neuter the first onset the enemy made, to see, it is thought, which way the scale would turn; for I believe it was imprinted in their mind the French were invincible. As soon as they found to the contrary, and that the French gave way, it is said but a yard of ground, they fell on them like so many butchers, with their tomahawks and long knives, whooping and shouting as if Heaven and Earth were coming together, and killed abundance of the enemy. Whether the barbarities at Fort William Henry and Ohio has influenced any of our troops to

<sup>16</sup> Letter from Capt. Jas. DeLancey, Niagara, July 25, 1759. It appears to have been written to his father, the Lieutenant-Governor, but is not addressed. N. Y. Col. Docs., VII, 402.

<sup>17</sup> *Boston Gazette & Country Journal*, Aug. 13, 1759.

encourage the savages is uncertain; but sure it is that most of the French that came from Venango are encouragers of such cruelties, and I hope at this time they have satisfaction.

Another graphic account, printed in several journals of the time,<sup>18</sup> recites that the English force engaged in the battle consisted of 600 men from the 44th and 46th regiments, 100 New York Provincials, and 600 Indians; that the men in the breast-work were each supplied with "two balls and three buck-shot in his gun." They waited squatted down, while the advancing foe fired on them six times; "but as soon as the enemy came close, all the English rose up and discharged their pieces, which made the utmost slaughter imaginable among them, and repeated their fire three times, when the enemy's Indians that were left alive, left them." Of all the Indians on either side only the Mohawks showed soldierly intrepidity. "The havoc we made at the end was great, 500 of the enemy at least being left on the field of battle."

Vaudreuil's official report of the siege and battle of Fort Niagara<sup>19</sup> contains little not set forth with greater precision in the documents on which our narrative is based. It states that not until June 27th was Captain Pouchot convinced he would be attacked. On that day he sent to Presqu' Isle for reinforcements. The Governor acknowledged that Pouchot should have recalled the detachment led by De Montigny, and continues: "It is plain that if it reached Niagara before the enemy, besides the loss it would have inflicted on the English, we could have had a camp on the other side of the Niagara river, which as an outpost would have relieved the garrison, the English would not have dared cross the river, and our corvettes would have had communication with the fort." Had the French thus established themselves on the west of the river, they could have fallen back to those trenches when the fort became untenable.

Aubry and De Lignery were ordered to lead their force down

<sup>18</sup> Here taken from the *Maryland Gazette* under a New York date.

<sup>19</sup> Dated Montreal, Oct. 30, 1759. Still another account is contained in the "*Journal des Campagnes du Chevalier de Lévis*," in which the siege is erroneously begun on Aug. 7, and a few minor facts given not noted elsewhere.



the west side. Their failure to do so resulted in its annihilation.

According to Vaudreuil, Pouchot expected the army of relief from the south would number at least 1600 French and 1200 Indians, but that there were really only 1100 French and 200 Indians. As already shown, there were fewer French and more Indians, than the Governor's report indicates.

The loss of life in the battle is not known. Even Johnson himself admitted in his reports that he could not state the number of killed, they were so scattered in the woods; but he reported 63 killed and 185 wounded in the action of the 24th.<sup>20</sup> Among those who fell victims to his frenzied Iroquois was the Jesuit priest Claude Joseph Virot, whose first name in some records appears as Louis. He was a native of Toulouse province, where he was born February 15, 1722. He had entered the Order of the Society of Jesus October 10, 1738, and in America had been sent to distant and difficult missions. In 1757 he was among the Loups of the Ohio, some of whom he accompanied on the Niagara expedition. He is spoken of as the chaplain of the French army, and appears to have been the only man in holy orders in all that rough and savage horde. One writer, in a brief allusion to the tragedy, says he "was cut to pieces."<sup>21</sup>

A grievous loss to the French in this battle was Captain François Le Marchand de Lignery, whose wounds proved mortal. It was reported to Pouchot that he was carried with other wounded officers to an "arbor" near Johnson's headquarters; but according to a fellow-captive, Duverger de Saint-Blin, "the English had the hard-heartedness to abandon him in a hut, alone and without help, and he died in the greatest

<sup>20</sup> A return of killed and wounded (Btsh) during the siege was printed in the *Boston Gazette*, Sept. 10, 1759. An engineer, Williams, and several others were killed at the Landing.

<sup>21</sup> Fr. Philibert Watrin, "*Bannissements des Jésuites de la Louisiane*," Paris, 1764. Also in *Jesuit Relations*, Cleveland ed., LXX, 251. The scene of Father Virot's death, though impossible to locate precisely, was obviously not far from the river, to the north of Youngstown. At some spot within the known bounds of the battle, a commemorative marker or monument should be placed.

agony, lamenting that he was leaving nearly all his family prisoners." As De Lignery's name does not appear in any mention of the subsequent experiences of prisoners, there seems no warrant for questioning the testimony of Saint-Blin, at least as to the death of this famed partisan, whose crumbled bones no doubt long since resolved into the elements of Mother Earth in some unknown spot in the environs of old Fort Niagara. "I cannot excuse myself," was Saint-Blin's testimony, four years later, "if I fail to do homage to the valor, the ability and the uprightness of this officer. A life without blemish and a glorious death have not protected him from foul calumny, although no man of standing in all the Colony dared withhold the most honorable testimony to the memory of this brave and worthy soldier." A son of De Lignery was in the battle and was also taken prisoner. Saint-Blin had long served under De Lignery, having command at Fort Le Bœuf, when De Lignery at Duquesne was chief in command for all the upper Ohio posts.

The latter's earlier service, which need not be here traced in detail, had included many important expeditions and missions. Born in 1704, son of a veteran officer, we find him in 1731 in command at Three Rivers. He shared in the Chicasaw campaign of 1747, and also served in Acadia. In 1748, La Galissonière, knowing him as a man of force and discretion, sent him from Quebec to New York to negotiate the exchange of prisoners, a mission which involved him in some highly interesting correspondence with Governor Clinton, who finally testified that the young French lieutenant "has gained my esteem, and the esteem of the Gentlemen of this place."<sup>22</sup> In 1749 he had met Johnson in Albany and conferred with him about the liberation of French prisoners — he himself, a decade later, to be a dying prisoner in Johnson's own hands. He had shared in the capture of Fort Duquesne; and in the battle of July 9, 1755, after the death of Beaujeu had made him second in command, with his only superior officer, Dumas, he achieved the victory of that day. He it was who had sent to Fort Niagara from Duquesne the history-making cannon which had been taken from Oswego, some of which, even as he lay dying, sounded in his ears from

<sup>22</sup> Clinton to La Galissonière, New York, Oct. 10, 1748.



Scene of the Siege of Fort Niagara and Battle of July 24, 1759  
 (See Appendix)



Fort Niagara, where these guns boomed a requiem for him, and for all brave soldiers who here gave their lives for France in the hopeless struggle. In October, 1758, he had burned Duquesne and with 200 men retreated to Venango — that poor “pretended fort,” as Montcalm justly dubbed it; but it was the last scene of De Lignery’s activities, until at the cry of distress from Pouchot, he had rallied as many followers as possible from Detroit and Presqu’ Isle and marched to his death at Niagara.<sup>23</sup>

Among other French officers killed at Niagara, were Hertel de Beulac, Hertel de Becancour, Rockloyade, De Richerville, and Douville (not Douville la Saussaye).<sup>24</sup>

De Lignery’s mortal wound was a shot through the thigh. Aubry received a bullet wound on the right side of his head. De Montigny had a hand broken.<sup>25</sup> The Chevalier de Villiers was taken prisoner, sent to New York and thence to France. Louisiana had been the scene of his earlier service, and to that colony he returned, apparently in 1761. He died in New Orleans, May 22, 1794.

The firing above La Belle Famille, when the English going to the boats were slain, drew Captain Pouchot to the Five Nations bastion, the southernmost angle of the fort, which best commanded the portage road; and from this lookout, like another *Ivanhoe*, *sans Rebecca*, on the battlements of Front-de-Bœuf, he saw something of the battle as it developed; saw movements of Indians with a white flag, and thought it only a trick; saw troops moving in close formation, and saw them press forward toward an abattis of trees which had been felled, and

<sup>23</sup> I do not find that any writer has traced out the career of De Lignery, the most distinguished who lost his life in the French cause at Niagara. Canadian born, he devoted a lifetime to the military service of France in America, much of it consisting of destructive raids on the English frontiers. He was of the large family Le Marchand. Of the many ways in which he is designated in French documents — Des Ligneris, DesLigneris, etc., I have preferred the simplest. Tanguay gives the form “Desligneris.” In a letter of Col. Mercer, Pittsburgh, Apr. 25, 1759, it is transformed into “Le Naric.” He had lost the sight of one eye, and is occasionally referred to as “the blind captain.”

<sup>24</sup> “*Liste des officiers des troupes detachés de la Marine servants en Canada*,” etc. Can. Arch.

<sup>25</sup> List of officers killed and wounded. Can. Arch.

fire two or three volleys, with sharp firing by the enemy in return. The attacking party dropped upon one knee to fire into the abattis; when one half of the battalion was firing the other half broke and fell back under the English fire. As the attack was made a shower fell. "About 50 appeared to fire and retire, and they often came to the ground upon one knee. Then the English came out of their abattis almost in a file, with fixed bayonets and running, but by the little firing we heard, we judged that all the battalion had retired."

The whole affair, being distant and imperfectly seen, appeared so small to Pouchot he thought it merely a skirmish between the English and a reconnoitering party led by Marin or some other bold officer.

While he was considering it a sergeant came running to report that the English trenches were all evacuated, and asked leave to make a sortie. Captain Pouchot, grown wary, mistrusted the stillness in the enemy's lines, but willing, he tells us, to excite the emulation of the soldiers and to please them, he called for 150 volunteers, "all that could be found except the officers and sergeants." There were still, it seems, some of the garrison with a spirit for daring, who with De Villars<sup>26</sup> at their head ventured forth from the covert-way. As a precaution, Pouchot made other soldiers climb the palisades with orders to give warning if they saw signs of the enemy; but no sooner were these fellows astride their palisades, than they were seen by the English, "whose trench at once appeared full of men, who showed themselves stripped to the waist, with companies of grenadiers at the head of the trenches." One or two warning cannon-shots were fired and De Villars and his band came scampering back to cover. There was no effective sortie from Fort Niagara.

Far from weakening his trenches, during the diversion up the river, Johnson had posted a strong guard of the 44th, under Lieutenant-Colonel Farquhar, ready on the first alarm to sustain Major Beckwith, who commanded the force in the trenches.

<sup>26</sup> Of the regiment of La Sarre; not to be confused with Coulon de Villiers of the Canadian troops.

On the heels of this affair, came an Onondaga Indian with news that De Lignery and his force were utterly routed, and that the officers were wounded and captive. "We hoped," says Pouchot, "this man was telling a lie," and he still made shift to work his crippled and feeble batteries; but the English returned the fire with such vigor that the garrison suffered heavy loss. And at 4 o'clock, Captain Pouchot, still watching from the Five Nations bastion, heard the *rappel* beaten in the English trenches. Soon an officer appeared under a white flag, who was admitted and gave to the commandant a letter from Sir William Johnson with names of the French officers he was holding as prisoners. The commandant, pretending to be ignorant of it, sent Captain De Serviès of the Royal-Roussillon to the English camp to verify the report. Meanwhile he detained Johnson's messenger.

This young officer was one of the ablest men in the besieging army, and by education and family ties, one of the highest. He was William, the fourth son of Baron Hervey of Ickworth; grandson of the first, and brother of the second, third and fourth Earls of Bristol, and of the celebrated Bishop of Derby. Born in May, 1732, he was but 27 at the time of the Niagara campaign, but was well seasoned in American frontier fighting. He had begun his military career as an ensign of the 44th regiment; he had learned what an Indian ambushade meant, in the expedition under Braddock; promoted to be lieutenant July 4, 1755, and to the command of a company, December 27, 1756, he had fought with his regiment at Ticonderoga in 1758; and it was as a major of brigade that he came to the Niagara with Prideaux.<sup>27</sup>

When De Serviès was conducted to Johnson's camp, he could scarce believe his eyes. In an arbor near the general's tent were

<sup>27</sup> His subsequent service was still more distinguished. He shared with Amherst the capture of Montreal in 1760, and after a varied service became colonel (by brevet), major-general, lieutenant-general and general in the British army, Jan. 1st, 1798. He was elected to Parliament for the borough of Bury St. Edmunds, in 1763; he never married, his death occurring Jan. 15, 1815. His lineage is recorded in Debrett, his service in the Army Lists, in the "Royal Military Calendar," I, 45; etc. In many accounts of the capture of Niagara, this officer's name erroneously appears as "Harvey."

De Lignery, Aubry, De Montigny, De Repentigny (who had commanded at Presqu' Isle a few years before), all wounded; Captain Marin (not to be confounded with the Chevalier of Fort Le Bœuf), Vassan<sup>28</sup> of the colonial troops, who had preceded Pouchot in command of Fort Niagara; and others, 17 in all, the most famous partisan leaders in America. The amazed De Serviès "could scarcely speak to them," whether from emotion or the rigor of English discipline, is not indicated. With heavy heart he returned to the old fort, well knowing that the end was come.

If any spark of hope had lingered in the breast of the garrison, the report of De Serviès quenched it. The last remnant of discipline, if not of courage, fled, so that the officers "could scarcely restrain the soldiers and militia at their posts from abandoning everything . . . The German soldiers were more mutinous than the rest." Had Johnson seen the state of affairs he could readily have forced an entrance. Captain Pouchot detailed Artilleryman Bonnafoux to examine and report on the condition of the fort; and this brave fighter, though wounded, went the rounds with his aids. It was indeed a sorry sight. He began with the covered way, which the English could take in a day or two, by sap or assault. The escarpments were battered down. There was a wide breach in the face of one of the bastions; the palisades at the bottom of the *fosse* were broken away. On the lake and river side no defense could be made, so that "the fort might be easily insulted."

The garrison had lost 10 men of the regiment of Sarre, 9 of Béarn, 8 of Royal-Roussillon, 13 of Guienne, 43 Colonials, 26 militia; in all 109 killed and wounded, and 37 sick. Pouchot says no one had slept for 19 days, but he means, none had gone to bed; for he records that the gunners fell asleep at their guns. The beds, the men's shirts even, had been used up for gun wadding, and in the last days they had used packs of furs from the

<sup>28</sup> So at least I construe the English spelling "Basonc." The names of all the prisoners are given in Sir William's diary, printed in the Appendix of Stone's life of the baronet; yet so distorted in spelling as to make identification dubious if not in some cases, impossible. Johnson evidently took down the names by ear; and as usual, wrote them in impossible form. Fortunately, for most of them, there are French records to rely on.



storehouse for protection at the batteries. In all the fort only 140 muskets were serviceable; most of these lacking bayonets, the colonial soldiers and Canadians had fitted wood-cutters' knives to them. The batteries had burned up 24,000 pounds of powder — the only munition with which the fort was well supplied, for Bonnafoux reported 54,000 pounds still on hand; but the 12-pound cannon-ball were all fired away, and few remained of the 4- and 6-pounders. Further resistance was physically impossible. On the representation of his officers, Captain Pouchot admitted the utter exhaustion of his garrison and asked to capitulate. The negotiations occupied much of the night of the 24th, when finally agreement was reached and the two commanders signed articles of capitulation.

The capitulation appears to have been written in French. The draft which Amherst sent to Pitt, August 5th, is in French; <sup>29</sup> the English versions, later published, contain minor departures from the original.

It was agreed that the garrison should march out with arms and baggage and be sent to New York as expeditiously as possible. The "French ladies, and women and their children" who were in the fort, and also a chaplain whose name is not given, were sent to Montreal. The sick and wounded were to remain in the fort until able to travel, and be protected from insults of Indians. Other stipulations, usual in such cases, were agreed upon. The surrender included the two sailing craft and other boats at Niagara belonging to the French. It is interesting to note that there were in the fort during the siege not only "ladies" (*dames*) and "women" (*femmes*), but children. The post surgeon, whose name does not appear, was to remain to care for the wounded and sick. No harshness was visited upon any of the captive garrison, and Sir William deserved great credit for preventing an massacre.

The signatures appended to the Articles of Capitulation, grotesquely misspelled in English copies, include, beside Captain Pouchot, those of the Chevalier de Villars, captain in the La Sarre regiment; Captain de Serviès of the Royal Roussillon; Solvignac, an officer of Béarn; De la Roche Verney, captain of

<sup>29</sup> A copy in the Canadian Archives. See Appendix,

the Marine Troop; Cousnoyer, the Chevalier de Larminac, and Captain Philippe Thomas de Joncaire, all of the Marine; Morambert, and Lieutenant Daniel de Joncaire Chabert, in the regiment of Guienne; and also the officer who had gallantly served and been wounded in command of the artillery, and whose protean name, as appended to the Articles of Capitulation, is spelled Bounnafons. Nearly a year after the surrender there was correspondence between the Chevalier de Lévis and General Amherst, in regard to the delayed exchange of this Lieutenant Bounnafons.<sup>30</sup>

Soon after capitulation, Sir William sent Lieutenant Francis, with 30 men in three boats, to reconnoitre towards Toronto. They returned July 30th and reported that the French had burned that fort and destroyed everything they could not carry away.

To Lieut.-Colonel Massey was confided the escort of the garrison prisoners.<sup>31</sup> He conducted them to Oswego, where he was relieved by an escort from the New York regiment.

<sup>30</sup> Lévis to Amherst, Montreal, June 14, 1760: "His detention delays his promotion, and I feel confident that Your Excellency would regret, even as I should, to work any such detriment to the fortunes of an individual officer," etc.

<sup>31</sup> Orders signed "W. Hervey, Major of Brigade."

## CHAPTER XXXV

### AFTER THE VICTORY

FIRST ENGLISH OCCUPANCY OF NIAGARA — SOME OF THE MEN WITH JOHNSON — VALUE OF THE INDIAN CONTINGENT — LEE'S RECONNAISSANCE.

SIR WILLIAM'S forces had no sooner entered into the battered and wrecked stronghold, than they were greeted by numerous English men, women and children, who had been held captive there, some of them for years. They had been brought in by Indian war parties. From time to time, such prisoners were shipped down to Montreal and Quebec; but while detained at Niagara those who were able to work were employed as servants and laborers; and though they enjoyed considerable liberty within the fort, were not allowed to leave it, except for some task such as wood-cutting, under guard. One of these prisoners was John Peter, who had been taken captive May 23d "in Captain Bullet's company of Virginians, on their way to Fort Legonier from Raystown." Among the others were Margaret Painter, taken captive in Pennsylvania some 18 months before; Nathaniel Sullivan, captured September 25, 1758, at "Potowmack in Virginia"; Isabel Stockton, a Dutch girl, carried off by Indians from Winchester, Virginia, October 1, 1757; Christopher and Michael Franks, brothers, of Tulpehocken, Bucks Co., Pa. Captives taken on the frontiers of Virginia and Pennsylvania would naturally be brought into Fort Niagara on their way to Canada; but Sir William found here also John McDaniel, who had been taken prisoner a year before (July 12, 1758) near Halifax in Nova Scotia. More touching were the cases of several small children, whose parents were killed by the Indians, so that they now had no other home than the old fort. One young woman was Molly Heysham, carried off in a raid in "the Blue Mountains," probably the Virginia frontiers, four years before; but even her

captivity was short compared with that of Edward Hoskins, a New Englander, who had been held a prisoner for ten years. Another record reports that with a detachment of the French prisoners who arrived at Albany from Niagara, were George Akes, a blacksmith, taken captive on the frontiers of New England, and David Barry, 60 years old, who had been held captive by the Indians and the French at Fort Niagara for 14 years.

We have no account of Johnson's meeting with Joncaire and Chabert, but it must have been an interesting moment. From the day of his first coming to the Mohawk they and their father had been his most influential adversaries in bidding for the support of the Six Nations. If reports can be trusted he had set a price on their heads, offering a bounty for them dead or alive, or for their scalps. Rivals and adversaries in the heart of New York for many years, it is not known that they ever met until this day on the parade of Fort Niagara. Neither Chabert nor Johnson made any record of the meeting, but as a good fighter is usually a generous victor, we may set Sir William down as having been both.

After Sir William was in possession there were brought to him some letters and a French manuscript which he could not read. These had been found in an embrasure of the fort, where, it appears, they had been hastily hidden by the writer, who may have been prevented by a cannon ball from further writing. The manuscript proved to be a journal of the siege from July 6th to 24th, and gives some details not found in Captain Pouchot's account. The writer was a soldier or under-officer, for he speaks of himself as undertaking a duty with other volunteers. When Johnson returned to the East the unknown soldier's journal was translated and published.<sup>1</sup>

One thinks of this contest as waged by English against

<sup>1</sup> It was in fact, much published, though many modern writers appear to have overlooked or neglected it. I have noted it in the *Maryland Gazette* of Baltimore, Aug. 30, 1759, where it bears date "New York, Aug. 20"; in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Aug. 23; *Boston Evening Post*, Aug. 27; *Boston Gazette*, Sept. 10; in William Smith's scarce "History of Canada," vol. I, Appendix (Quebec, 1815); and in Turner's "History of the Holland Purchase," Buffalo, 1849. It has been drawn on, in our pages, to supplement Pouchot.

French. As matter of fact, both sides were made up of many nationalities.

The French regulars and the Canadians in the besieged garrison had little in common save their mother tongue. The troops from France usually held something of scorn for the Colonials, but the latter were often better soldiers, at least in coping with the conditions of wilderness and Indian warfare. The Canadian knew his country better than the stranger did, and with a more encouraging form of government would have loved it more. By 1759, in many cases a century of ancestral occupation and struggle lay behind the humble Colonial soldier, giving him a right to that pride of land and devotion to its welfare which we call patriotism. Neither the military nor the civil administrators of the colony, except such few of them as were Canadian-born, had any love for the country. It was only the *habitant*, who for the most part was serving in the ranks, who could feel that he was fighting for his own. But he was not, as a class, of the fighting type, and little spirit or valor in the ranks is discoverable in such service as they were now engaged in at Fort Niagara. Though hardy and resourceful in the wilderness and on the water, they had little training and no relish at all for such a rain of cannon balls as Sir William Johnson poured in upon them. As their exhaustion increased, they had fairly to be driven to duty. There was another element which gave Pouchot far more trouble. "The German soldiers," says the captain's memoir, "of whom we have had many in the colonial troops, and who had come this year from France, as recruits, were more mutinous than the rest."

On the English side, as one learns from such muster-rolls as have been preserved, there were also very many whose place of birth is recorded as Germany or Prussia. One of the ablest of these was John Joseph Schlosser, a native of Germany, whose commission as captain-lieutenant in the 60th regiment is dated May 12, 1756. He was made captain, July 20, 1758, and in that rank served at the siege of Niagara. After the surrender Johnson confided to him the important service of re-establishing Chabert's ruined fort above the falls. He rebuilt

it on a different site and remained in command for some two years, the place becoming universally known as Fort Schlosser. In modern days when all traces of the fort had disappeared, it was a terminus of steamboat travel on the river, and was called Schlosser's Landing or Schlosser's Dock, or simply Schlosser's.<sup>2</sup>

In one respect taking precedence of all of Sir William's staff and fellow officers, was Lieutenant-Colonel William Farquhar of the 44th. His earlier service had been with the 15th Regiment, of which he was made major, March 12, 1754. He it was who at Louisbourg in July, 1758, with three companies of grenadiers "took possession of the best gate"—the "Dauphin"—and saw the garrison lay down their arms. This was on July 27th, so that his entry into Fort Niagara on the 25th nearly marked the anniversary of the victory a year before. September 19, 1758, he was made lieutenant-colonel of the 44th; and when Johnson departed from Niagara, August 4th, Lieutenant-Colonel Farquhar was left in command—the first, after Johnson, of a long series of British commandants at that post. He appears to have continued in that command until his death, whether from wound or illness cannot be stated, which probably occurred early in October, 1759, as Amherst had word of it on the 29th of that month.<sup>3</sup>

Several of the officers who entered the old fort with Johnson, this triumphant July morning, receive some mention in our narrative. There were others of whom at least a brief record should be made. Here was Major John Tullikins, who had been wounded at Ticonderoga a year before, holding a commission in the fourth battalion, Royal Americans. After the Niagara campaign he was transferred to the 45th Foot (February 25, 1760); in October, 1761, was advanced to be lieutenant-colonel; and in 1762 commanded the first battalion of the army sent to reduce Newfoundland. Here was Captain,

<sup>2</sup> Capt. Schlosser was transferred to Fort St. Joseph on Lake Michigan, where he was captured by Pottowatomies, May 25, 1763; he was carried to Detroit and exchanged, and the next year appears in Philadelphia, protecting the Moravian Indians from the Paxton mob. His name appears in the lists of the Royal American regiment until 1772.

<sup>3</sup> The editor of Knox's "Journal," Champlain Society ed., says (II, 186, *note*) that Col. Farquhar died Feb. 1760; overlooking the statement in Amherst's report to Pitt, as above.

later Colonel, John Butler, who was long to be identified with the region, whose grave, on the west side of the Niagara, is an object of antiquarian interest, and to whose memory a tablet is placed on the wall of St. Mark's church, in the old town of Niagara, Ont., directly across the river from the scene of his exploits in July, 1759.

Here was Major Hervey, who was the first of Johnson's army to enter the fort, and of whom some note has been made. Here, too, undoubtedly, was Joseph Brant, a Mohawk lad of 17, Johnson's protégé and later to become his brother-in-law. Brant's career, like Butler's, was to be closely connected with the region for many years to come. Among the Indians were three sons of the famous chief called the Bant.

John Johnson, who succeeded his father as baronet, is said <sup>4</sup> to have accompanied him on the Niagara expedition; he was 17 years old at the time.

Captain William Trent is said by his biographer <sup>5</sup> to have been in the service of Sir William Johnson in 1759. If so, he probably shared in the Niagara campaign.

And here was Daniel Claus, a lieutenant in the 60th (Royal American) regiment, who was later to gain fame and promotion, though less in military than in administrative service. His career as Superintendent of Indians in Canada, needs no recital here. He married a daughter of Sir William Johnson, and died in Cardiff, Wales, in 1788, having gone to England to obtain remuneration for losses sustained in the Revolution. That he shared in the battle of July 24th, and helped carry the wounded De Lignery to the English camp, is indicated by existing documents.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> J. Watts de Peyster, introduction to "Orderly Book of Sir John Johnson," etc., Albany, 1882.

<sup>5</sup> Alfred T. Goodman, editor of Trent's "Journal." (Cincinnati, 1871.)

<sup>6</sup> Mrs. George Bell of Buffalo, a great grand-daughter of Jelles Fonda, for many years preserved the following letter:

Major Fonda will please to let Capt. Dick the Bearer have a 2½ point Blanket on my Acct. for a Blanket which he says I took from him at Niagara in 1759 to carry the french command'g officer from the Field of Battle to the Camp.

How true it is he best knows. I for my part don't remember.

22d Nov. 1774.

DAN CLAUS

To Major Jelles Fonda, Caghnawaga.

A far different type of man who this day followed the British flag into the battered old fort, was young James De Lancey, eldest son of the Lieutenant-Governor of New York Province. That he held the confidence of his chief is clear from the responsible duty to which he had been assigned on the 23d; that he merited this confidence is proved by the way in which he acquitted himself. He was 27 years old; and though born in New York, had received the thorough education of an English gentleman, at Eton and Cambridge. He had not long left these classic halls before entering with fine spirit on the taxing campaign in the Niagara wilderness. It was his last conspicuous military service, for the following year, on succeeding to his father's ample estate, he retired from military occupations.<sup>7</sup>

Lieutenant George Clinton, afterwards Governor of New York State and Vice-President of the United States, who had served in the regiment commanded by his father, Charles Clinton, in the expedition against Fort Frontenac, was with the English army at Niagara.<sup>8</sup> He is said to have shown "great daring and enterprise" at Frontenac, as we may well believe from a general knowledge of his character. In 1755 he had run away from home and shipped on board a privateer to fight the French. No details of his service at Niagara have been found, but a letter to him from his father, dated "Little Britain [now in Orange County, N. Y.], August 12, 1759," still preserved, has the following touching his Niagara service:

We have in our Publick Papers an Account of Your Success at Niagara, also of the French Quitting Ticondroga and Crown point, which has been Received with the Greatest Joy Imaginable at New York and Every Where in the Country. I am sorry for the loss of

<sup>7</sup> His subsequent career, though outside the scope of our narrative, merits some further word here, since, with other members of the DeLancey family, he fills a considerable place in New York colonial and revolutionary history. From 1768 to 1775 he represented New York City in the Assembly. In the last-named year, with his family, he removed to England; but in the Act of Attainder of 1779, notwithstanding his absence from the country, his estates were escheated. After the Peace of 1783, he became vice-president of the Board of Loyalists. He died at Bath, England, in 1800, survived by his wife, Martha, who was a daughter of Chief Justice Allen of Pennsylvania.

<sup>8</sup> Hosack's "Memoirs of De Witt Clinton," 285.



Genl Priddaux and Col Johnston My old acquaintance Sir William Johnston has Gained a Great Deal of Honour by his Conduct in the Reduction of Niagara and the Defeat of the french Army who came to Relieve it, this has gain'd him fresh Laurels and will place him high in the Esteem of his Sovereign and Every true Subject. I am glad to hear our New-yorkers behaved well. The french Army who Came to Raise the Siege of Niagara had been appointed to take Pittsburgh (as I hear) but upon being Inform'd of Your Lying before Niagara they thought it of more Importance to Relieve that place & getting so Good a Drubbing there it will prevent the attempt they Designed Against Pittsburgh.

None who entered Fort Niagara on this day, not even Sir William Johnson himself, was to figure more conspicuously in the events on which in the next twenty years the foundations of the American nation were to be laid, than Charles Lee; but he was destined less for fame than for infamy. He was at this time 28 years old. Born in England, schooled on the Continent, and proficient in several languages, not even the polished James De Lancey excelled him in the culture which comes from books and a wide familiarity with society and the world. He was also one of the most experienced soldiers in the Niagara service; from boyhood he had dedicated himself to the profession of arms, and was something of a theoretical expert in military tactics when in 1751 he joined the army in America as a lieutenant in the 44th regiment. In the Canada campaign of 1754, he served as captain, "Lee's grenadiers" gaining a reputation for intrepidity. He had been with Braddock at Duquesne, and was wounded at Ticonderoga, in the assault of July 1, 1756. Johnson found him useful in managing the Indians, for, like his chief, he had cultivated the friendship of the Six Nations, and had been adopted into the Mohawk tribe under the name *Ounewaterika*, or "Boiling Water." If the name was given in reference to his temper, it was not inappropriate. It is not recorded that he distinguished himself in the siege, or the battle of the 24th; but Johnson regarded him as a fit man for a difficult service. With a small force he was to make his way through the wilderness, to find and confer with Brigadier-General Stanwix. His message was, that if

Stanwix could spare them, he was to send 300 or 400 men to strengthen the garrison at Niagara. How this mission fared, will presently be related.

Sir William may well have exulted in his victory. There was more than one critic in America and England, ready, like the sharp-tongued Charles Lee, to assure the public that Johnson was no soldier and knew nothing of military methods. He knew enough at Niagara, at any rate, to adhere to the plan undertaken by Prideaux. As he now looked about him at the battered and feeble defenses of the place, Johnson may naturally have reflected that he could have carried it by assault, though it would have cost more lives than the course he followed. But had he made a brilliant dash and gained the place by sharp fighting, it would thereafter have been far more difficult to hold his Indians in check, and with Aubry's hordes coming down on him from the south, without the aid of his Indians, Johnson, if occupying the fort, would have found himself in a predicament, for Aubry then could have cut off the English base of supplies. As it was, he had accomplished the purpose of the campaign with economy of life, and with great thoroughness. He had not only taken Fort Niagara, but at the same stroke, by defeating Aubry and his force, had extinguished the garrisons of the upper posts, and practically had put an end to French power west and south of Niagara. The removal of the fugitive remnants of the French and the adjustment of relations with native tribes, were details for the accomplishment of which the genius of Johnson was amply adequate, even had these matters been left to him alone. He must have realized that this victory gave to the English, and especially to New York Colony, access for the first time to the fur trade of the Lakes, and all the dormant wealth of the vast surrounding lands. He had opened the door to a new order of settlement, of civilization and of religion; for the capture of Fort Niagara was the overthrow of the last altar on the Niagara reared in the name of that faith which for more than a century since the coming of the first missionary, had been the only religious teaching in these wilds.

There was a chaplain at the fort when it surrendered; and

there was ample opportunity for his ministrations among those of his faith. On the 27th, the bodies of General Prideaux and Colonel Johnstone were removed from their temporary grave at the camp. At six o'clock in the evening a detail of 200 men, each with three rounds of powder, were paraded as escort under command of Captain Beckwith. All the men off duty were ordered to attend, under arms; and at half past six, the bodies of the slain, draped with the British colors, were borne through the gate, the solemn procession moving to the roll of muffled drums and the boom of minute-guns. In the Roman Catholic chapel the burial service of the Church of England was read by Mr. Ogilvie; and there these soldiers were buried. Sir William wrote in his diary that they were buried "in the chapel, with a good deal of form," adding, "I was chief mourner."<sup>9</sup>

Writing from Albany, February 1, 1760, Mr. Ogilvie added these particulars:

In this Fort [Niagara], there is a very handsome Chapel, and the Priest, who was of the Order of St. Francis, had a commission as the [French] King's Chaplain to the garrison. He had particular instructions to use the Indians who came to trade, with great hospitality (for which he had a particular allowance) and to instruct them in the Principles of the Faith. The Service of the Church here was performed with great Ceremony and Parade. I performed Divine Service in this Church every day during my stay here, but I am afraid it has never been used for this purpose since, as there is no minister of the Gospel there. This neglect will not give the Indians the most favorable opinion of us.<sup>10</sup>

For the moment, the care of the French prisoners, most of

<sup>9</sup> Pouchot's plan of the fort published with his *Mémoire* does not show the location of the chapel, but it is clearly shown on the British Museum map of 1757, above mentioned. In 1903 an effort was made to find the grave of Prideaux, old residents in the neighborhood having claimed knowledge of the removal of the remains, many years since, to the neighboring military cemetery. Some search was made here, at a designated spot, but nothing edifying was discovered.

<sup>10</sup> Rev. John Ogilvie to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; his letter is preserved at the Society's headquarters in London. (MS. vol. XIX.) It is also published, in part, in Hawkins' "Historical

them no doubt exceedingly grateful to have fallen into civilized hands, was the least of Sir William's troubles. The greatest was the Indians. It must be remembered that this battle and surrender had taken place in the depths of a wilderness, not only populous with savages, but into which great numbers from remote tribes had been drawn. Of those who were nominal allies of the French and who had survived the battle, many had lurked in hiding until the issue was decided, now to come forth under pretense of friendship with the victor, or failing that, to lay hands on any possible plunder. These gathered from all quarters, like vultures over a carcass. Johnson's own Indians, too, who had numbered more than 900, excited by the license allowed them on the 24th, were as difficult to restrain as wild beasts. "All my attention is taken up with the Indians," wrote the baronet to Lord Amherst, July 25th; in fact, both he and Pouchot feared a massacre, and it was this fear which led to some unusual precautions. As the English entered the fort on the morning of the 25th, Pouchot drew up the entire garrison in line of battle on the parade ground, their arms in their hands, their haversacks between their legs; and although the English occupying-force included one entire regiment, four companies of grenadiers and four piquets, the French soldiers were allowed to retain their arms, as protection against a possible Indian attack. Their officers were with them, and thus they remained for 30 hours. Captain Pouchot told his men, "if any Indian should come to strike them, or to take away anything, to give them a good kick in the belly, or strike them with their fist in the stomach, as the surest means of restraining them. If this would not check them, it would be better to die with arms in their hands, than be tortured by them." These orders were followed, and the English did not insist on their first demand, that the French should give up their arms. Although troops were posted on all sides of the fort to keep the Indians out, yet within an hour after the English had entered, the red-skins scaled it on every side, more than 500 gaining entrance. It was well that the French officers made haste to put

Notices of the Missions of the Church of England in the North American Colonies," London, 1845.

their belongings into the powder magazine, for everything that was left in the open quickly disappeared.

With a fine courtesy, Captain Pouchot invited Sir William and several of his officers to dinner — an occasion which tempts the imagination to linger on the scene, though it may not adequately be pictured. The parade was thronged with troops, victors and vanquished, the latter eyeing uneasily the bold and stealthy savages who stole their belongings and coveted their scalp-locks. In the commandant's quarters, the old mess-house still standing, the officers gathered at table to break bread together and drink a few healths. Of all the scenes enacted in this structure during the third of a century then past, this final ceremonial of the days of the French was by no means least in significance; for here France herself quaffed a cup in acknowledgment of a conqueror to whom she was yielding an empire vaster and more potential than any statesman of that day could see or dare predict.

If this dinner was significant we may be sure it was also short. Sir William had much to attend to and there was too nervous an atmosphere for leisurely lingering. There seems also to have been a spirit of looting hardly to be excused in guests, but not unusual in the circumstances. Victors have ever claimed the spoils. "After the dinner," dryly observes Captain Pouchot, "these officers helped themselves to all the utensils and movables."

All of the French officers had lodged in the mess-house or "castle." As soon as they left, the Indians raided the whole structure. "They took everything, even to the iron-work and hinges of the doors, and broke whatever they could not carry off." They broke into the storehouse and appropriated five or six hundred packs of peltries, counting on selling them to the English. Worse yet, they broke open and wasted all the barrels of flour. Some of the chiefs even had the assurance to say to Pouchot: "We have no designs against you, be quiet; it is the English who are doing us harm."

Sir William was not lacking in attention to his prisoners. To the officers, many of whom were stripped of well-nigh everything, he gave shoes, stockings and blankets. Surgeons at-

tended the wounded, and provisions were shared. But the greatest service to all was to hasten embarkation. On the afternoon of the 26th the garrison marched out, gun on shoulder, drums beating, two cannon at the head of the column. The arms were given up at embarking, and that evening most of them were got off, under guard of 300 men from the 46th regiment, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Massey, who conducted them to Oswego, where he was relieved by an escort from the New York regiment. The French women and children, and the garrison priest, whose name is not given, were to be sent to Montreal; most of the garrison to England; the officers to New York, until exchanged. Further note of the fortunes of these prisoners will presently be made.

Some of the savage features of this warfare are revealed in the incidents of the 27th. Many of the prisoners taken in the battle of the 24th had remained in the hands of their Indian captors. Johnson, well knowing the Indian customs, counted on ransoming these prisoners; that he succeeded in doing so, is not clear. Pouchot relates what he calls a "tragic adventure":

Moncourt, a colonial cadet, had formed a strong affection for an Indian with whom he was amicably allied. This Indian who was in the English army, seeing his friend a prisoner evinced much grief upon his condition and said: "My brother! I am in despair at thy death; but be quiet. I will prevent them from making you suffer." He then killed him with a blow of his tomahawk, thinking to release him from the tortures to which prisoners among them were destined.

Captain Pouchot, whose style is often obscure, can hardly be accepted as authority on what happened at Fort Niagara after he was sent away. That the Iroquois were loth to part with their prisoners is plain from an entry in Sir William's journal, July 27th: "I divided among the several nations, the prisoners and scalps amounting to 246, of which 96 were prisoners. The officers I with difficulty released from them by ransom, good words, etc." Much is hidden, rather than revealed, by this brief record.

Report of Indian excesses at Niagara was made to Montcalm, who laid the complaint before Lord Amherst. In denying them the commander wrote that these reports "are without foundation. . . . The officers of my army know too well what is owing to humanity, the honor of the nation, and to my express orders against any excesses they might learn of; and any savage convicted of such outrage, would be immediately punished by death."<sup>11</sup>

Four months later we find Lord Amherst giving orders for the employment of Captain Lotbridge, to recover from the Indians several French and Canadian prisoners taken at Niagara.<sup>12</sup>

It may properly be asked, whether the English victory at Niagara was due to Indian aid, or whether the fort might not have been carried, and Great Britain securely seated in the region without calling to her aid a horde of savages whose methods of war were barbaric and inhuman. In Colonel Montresor's plan of campaign, no recognition was given to Indian service, but Sir William Johnson had no difficulty in convincing Amherst that the aid of the Indians was essential. During the siege, they were a nuisance rather than a help. In the decisive battle of the 24th they were a very active force; whether Johnson's soldiers could have overcome the force of Aubrey and De Lignery, without Indian assistance, none can say; but with that assistance, what might otherwise have been a victory by force of arms, was turned into a rout and a massacre.

Although Gage was the logical successor of Prideaux and was designated by Amherst to continue the Niagara campaign, events moved faster than word of the official appointment. Gage never reached Niagara, and all the glory was Johnson's. When word of his victory reached England, his praises were sounded in every quarter, sometimes in such fulsome fashion as to be somewhat ridiculous. Even the historian Smollett indulged in a page or so of painfully perfect sentences. He lauded Johnson (whom he called "Johnston") as a self-taught

<sup>11</sup> Amherst to Montcalm, Camp at Crown Point, Sept. 10, 1759.

<sup>12</sup> Amherst to Haldimand, New York, Jan. 14, 1760.

soldier and compared him to Clive in achievement; as one who, "by a series of shining actions, demonstrated that uninstructed genius can, by its own internal light and efficacy, rival, if not eclipse, the acquired art of discipline and experience. Sir William Johnston," continues Smollett, "was not more serviceable to his country by his valor and conduct in the field, than by the influence and authority which his justice, benevolence and integrity had acquired among the Indian tribes of the Six Nations, whom he not only assembled at Niagara to the number of eleven hundred, but also restrained within the bounds of good order and moderation."<sup>13</sup>

A less extravagant but more judicious judgment on the value of Johnson's Indians in the Niagara campaign is found in a brief memoir by Colonel Daniel Claus. As already stated, he had served at the siege of Niagara; he was a son-in-law of Sir William, and in later years was Superintendent of the Canadian Indians. No man of his time could speak on this matter with more intimate or practical knowledge. It was during the American Revolution that Colonel Claus, then resident in London, wrote the memoir<sup>14</sup> referred to.

With admirable fairness, it sets forth Sir William's qualifications for controlling the Indians, and relates that when the Niagara campaign was determined on, he at once foresaw that a great source of danger to English troops, penetrating the region, lay in the numerous and warlike "upper Senecas, *alias* the Tsinusios [Geneseos]," who had been chiefly in the French interest since the French were in possession of Niagara, "it being with their consent and permission they were allowed to establish themselves there; that nation of Indians claiming the property of the soil." Claus represents these Geneseo Senecas as having profited so much through their friendship with the French and especially from their lucrative employment at the Niagara portage, that they were staunch allies of the French and formidable foes of the English. This was not conspicuously true at the time of the siege; and it may be noted in pass-

<sup>13</sup> Hume & Smollett's "History of England," vol. I, pp. 48, 49.

<sup>14</sup> "Remarks on the Management of the Northern Indian Nations," addressed to Secretary William Knox, dated No. 1 Ryder street [London], 1 March, '77." See N. Y. Col. Docs., VIII, 700.



ing that one of the first acts of the English, after they were in control of the Niagara, was to take away the privilege of employment on the portage from these same "Tsinusio" Senecas. But of the Six Nations Indians who were English allies at Niagara, Colonel Claus wrote:

The Indians, consisting of upwards of 1000, were the pilots, guides and in a manner guards to that expedition, continually scouring the woods with which our little army was surrounded, and sending scouts to the westward, wherefrom a reinforcement of French and Indians was expected, and in consequence gave Sir William Johnson all the intelligence he could desire of its approach and the disposition of the Indians, which he found was friendly; so that he had nothing or at least very little to fear from that quarter, and which the event manifested and the success of that siege was in a great measure owing to the vigilance and dexterity of the Indians. . . . The conquest of Niagara . . . was the means of the most consequential diversion in favor of General Wolf that campaign, which the most knowing people in Canada will allow; for it set the whole Colony in an alarm [and] disheartened the Canadian army at Quebec.

When Johnson was at Niagara, in July, 1761, *en route* to Detroit, he found the Six Nations, including the Senecas, holding a ceremony of condolence for the Indians who were killed in the battle of July 24, 1759.

The story of the refugees, after the battle of the 24th, has never been very clearly told; probably it cannot be. Their first rendezvous was on an island in the Niagara where on coming down they had last made camp. As the usual route was down the west channel, this camp was probably on the west side of Grand Island, or on Navy Island. Here an officer, Rocheblave, with some 150 men, had remained to guard the canoes and bateaux. Now there were boats to spare. Several French leaders had not shared in the battle. Portneuf had stayed at Presqu' Isle and Belestre at Detroit, the latter being reported sick. August 1st, as Johnson was going to Niagara Falls, he was met with a flag of truce from Portneuf, who begged him to advance to his prisoners whatever they wanted, "they being men of fortune and credit." The bearer of the

flag, De Couagne, who had with him a party of "9 men and Indians," was sent on by Sir William to Fort Niagara; he was, perhaps, the last representative of France at the old stronghold. Johnson retained him as interpreter, and found him very useful in the coming years. De Belestre, up at Detroit, was disposed to make trouble. He sent an officer, Richarville, with a party of Indians, to haunt the vicinity of Fort Niagara. They succeeded in killing an Englishman, whom they could not take prisoner, close to the fort.<sup>15</sup> Belestre was not called on to surrender until November 29, 1760, when he handed over Detroit to Major Robert Rogers.

Among those who survived the battle and fled up the Niagara, was, apparently the half-breed Charles De Langlade, styled the "Father of Wisconsin." The son of Augustin De Langlade, a French pioneer at Green Bay, and an Ottawa woman — sister to the famous Chief Nis-so-wa-quet — Charles had in his boyhood followed the warpath with his Indian relatives. In years following he had, successively, three wives, two of them Ottawa women, some of whose descendants, strong, capable people, proud of their ancestry, played an important part in the early history of Wisconsin. In 1759, at Montreal, he married a French woman, Charlotte Bourassa. A grandson, Augustin Grignon, many years since wrote a sketch of Charles De Langlade, in which are set forth his services during the Seven Years' War. He was a commissioned officer in the Marine corps, led an Indian force at Fort Duquesne when Braddock's army was cut to pieces, and later served under Montcalm at the capture of Fort William Henry on Lake George. In September, 1757, he passed up the Niagara under orders from De Vaudreuil to report at Mackinac, where he became second in command under De Beaujeu. Of the Fort Niagara campaign Grignon says: "I have no distinct recollection about my grandfather being at Fort Niagara in 1759, but presume he was, as he served on every campaign; and I dare say he took part with his French and Indian force in the fighting that transpired a little distance above the fort; and when

<sup>15</sup> Vaudreuil to M. Berryer, Montreal, June 24, 1760.

there was no longer a prospect of usefulness, retired with his Indians from the fated place."<sup>16</sup>

His biographer states positively that De Langlade and some of his Menomonee followers served under Montcalm on the Plains of Abraham. To have done so means that after retreating up the Niagara and into Lake Erie, De Langlade (and probably others<sup>17</sup>) turned again eastward, eluded the English at Niagara and Oswego, and made their way through Lake Ontario and down the St. Lawrence, by the middle of September.

Promptly after the capitulation Sir William sent off three Indian runners with the news to Pittsburg, and the report later came back that wherever these messengers went, the Western Indians had fled.<sup>18</sup> The tribes had vague fears of English incursions throughout all their lands. The Indians expected Johnson to go on and take Detroit. Their second thought was to make peace with the new masters; so that within a few weeks great numbers of them flocked in to Fort Niagara, camped in its vicinity, and offered to the British "great quantities of furs and several prisoners."<sup>19</sup> A band of Indians from Venango reported in Pittsburg, August 13th, that the Indians "from over the Lakes" were very angry with the Six Nations — a natural resentment, since the western tribes had lost many of their warriors at Niagara. These Indians also gave Pittsburg its first details of what had happened in the upper country since the battle of Niagara. They told of the burning of the forts at Venango, Le Bœuf and Presqu' Isle, by the French. The remnants of the garrisons, who had not responded to the call of Pouchot for aid, as well as the refugees after the battle, had all made off for Detroit. It proved a harvest time for the Indians, especially those living near the Venango fort, where were stored many things of value,

<sup>16</sup> Grignon's "Recollections," Wisconsin Historical Collections, 1856.

<sup>17</sup> Grignon mentions Amable De Gere, and the Menomonees, old chief Carron — O-sau-wish-ke-no, "the Yellow Bird"; and his son Glode — Ka-cha-ka-wa-she-ka, "the Notch-Maker"; all of whom appear to have been with De Langlade at Niagara.

<sup>18</sup> *N. Y. Mercury*, Oct. 8, 1759.

<sup>19</sup> *Ib.*, Oct. 15, 1759.

which the French did not attempt to carry away. Before setting fire to the buildings they distributed to the Indians gold-laced coats, hats, and other things. As the water was so low they could not get their bateaux up the French creek, they burned and broke them, lest they prove useful to the enemy; and assuring the Indians that the French would return in the spring and take possession of all the Ohio valley, the fugitives hastened to Presqu' Isle and thence to Detroit.

Charles Lee's embassy to General Stanwix has been mentioned. The party Lee had in command for this service consisted of one officer and 14 men — an obviously inadequate force to meet any considerable foe, whether French or Indian. Its very weakness shows, not merely that pursuit of the fugitive French, or of scattered bands of Indians, formed no part of Lee's mission; but also that Sir William was confident no considerable enemy still lurked in Lee's path. That Lee gave the fugitives ample time to get out of the way is proved by the date of a letter to his uncle, Sir William Bunbury: "Niagara, August y<sup>e</sup> 9th," and by a brief journal<sup>20</sup> which shows that he did not set out from the Niagara until September 19th.

On the night following that day, Lee says he "lay at Jonquir's house, 21 miles." Although the distance from Fort Niagara is overstated, this would have been at Fort Little Niagara, where Captain Schlosser was establishing his new post near the ruins of Chabert's fort. Lee's words indicate that a house remained. Except for the passage of Schlosser and others under the immediate direction of Sir William, Lee's company was the first English expedition to pass over the Niagara portage.

From the ruins of Chabert's fort they set out in boats, passed up the Niagara, crossed the east end of the lake, and skirted the south shore as far as Presqu' Isle, the voyage giving Lee just ground for his subsequent claim of having been the first to conduct British troops across Lake Erie.

To quote from the journal:

On the 20th, at one o'clock, "Launched our boats into the river and proceeded about 12 miles; lay at an island which we

<sup>20</sup> Preserved with the Bouquet papers, British Museum.

called Thursday Island"—apparently one of the small islands near the head of Grand Island. The next day, Friday the 21st, they entered the lake at 2 o'clock, "crossed a bay which we imagined to be 30 miles," and camped that night at what Lee called Friday creek, "a very good harbor for boats, the only safe one we could discover betwixt Niagara and Presqu' Isle." The next day they proceeded about 35 miles to a large creek, "which we called from the roughness and danger of the entrance, the Devil's Mouth."<sup>21</sup> Sunday, 23d, on account of high seas, they made only 24 miles, stopping at "Bear Point," probably the modern Point Gratiot at Dunkirk. On the 24th they reached "Lilly creek," 60 miles, and on Tuesday the 25th entered Presqu' Isle bay, 24 miles. According to Lee's figures, they traveled 143 miles from the outlet of Lake Erie to Presqu' Isle, a distance which we know as 90 miles.

At Presqu' Isle, of which he writes: "a fine harbor, fine soil and very strong situation," they hid their boats among some willows, baked their flour into bread "for conveniency of carriage" and on Wednesday the 26th "marched to the fort Le Bœuf through a very bad road, being almost a continued swamp, bridged on by logs, 21 miles." Throughout the journey, Lee overstates distances, apparently gauging his estimates by the difficulties encountered. From Le Bœuf to Venango his figures foot up 172 miles!

At Fort Le Bœuf his men made rafts, on which Lee proposed to float down to Venango, a difficult undertaking at any season, but never more so than towards the end of the dry season when the stone-strewn bed of Le Bœuf creek, and of Venango river, could be crossed in many places dry-shod. At one o'clock on the 27th they shoved off on their rafts and went down stream, according to Captain Lee's figures, about 25 miles, "when our raft overset, by which accident we lost the greatest part of our ammunition, all our provisions and necessaries." They camped on the shore, and next day, after going what seemed to Lee 50 miles, camped again "at an Indian hunting-place." On Satur-

<sup>21</sup>The "Devil's Mouth" was probably Cattaraugus creek; and Friday creek was 18-Mile. Lilly creek, which Lee puts 24 miles east of Presqu' Isle, was presumably either 16- or 20-Mile creek; but Lee's distances are all wrong.

day the 29th they "set off and about 30 miles rowing we met with some hunting Indians, who gave us some bear's flesh." They halted here all day, and on Sunday continued the journey, arriving at noon at a Delaware Indian town where they got food and stayed all night. The next morning a Mingo took them down the river in a bateau, reaching, on October 1st, the fort at Venango, where Lee wrote in his journal:

Fort Le Bœuf is situated upon a very narrow creek, which runs into a small creek, which we imagine the river takes its source from. The situation is not at all commanded and the soil is very good, the river for about 100 miles from its source very winding and inconceivably rapid, the country on each side swampy; the lower parts of the stream is more moderate, the country on each side very fine, a good deal clear, and thickly inhabited by Indians, who have among them a surprising number of English children.

Lee's journey from Venango (the present town of Franklin, Pa.) to Pittsburg was accomplished in three days. "The river Ohio," as he calls the Allegheny, "from Venango to Pittsburg is winding and shallow and full of rifts, the country on each side high, the soil good, the woods open and pleasant."<sup>22</sup>

When he delivered his message to Brigadier-General Stanwix, that officer promptly declared that it was impossible for him to send any force to relieve Niagara; whereupon Lee and his comrades made their way — by what route is not stated — to Crown Point, where he reported to General Amherst. His mission had been fruitless, and the journey, to judge by the brief journal here quoted from, of little value as a reconnoissance.

Lee's subsequent career, reaching its disgraceful culmina-

<sup>22</sup> Attached to Lee's MS. among the Bouquet papers, is found in Bouquet's writing, a summary of Lee's estimates of distance: Niagara to Presqu' Isle, 230 miles; Presqu' Isle to Le Bœuf, 21; Le Bœuf to Venango, 172; Venango to Pittsburg, 140; a total of 563 miles. The correct distances are: Fort Niagara to Presqu' Isle (by water, following the south shore), 120 miles; Presqu' Isle to Le Bœuf, 15; Le Bœuf to Venango, 60; Venango to Pittsburg (approximately, by the river), 125; total, 320.

tion in his disobedience of Washington's orders at Monmouth and his dismissal from the army in which he ranked next to the chief himself, requires no recital here.

Two of his letters, written at Niagara, are preserved. To his sister he wrote, July 30th, a graphic account of the siege and battle: "We have after a siege of nineteen days reduc'd the most important post of Niagara, a place of great strength and prodigious consequence to our nation. It cuts off all communication between Canada and all other Settlements in America belonging to the French; it entirely commands the numerous back nations of Indians, and consequently engrosses the whole fur trade to us, a more solid and real advantage to the Publick than the whole Commerce with the E. Indies." After telling of the battle, in which he puts the number of killed and wounded at 200, besides the Indians, he adds: "I myself escap'd unhurt, but two musket balls at the same instant graz'd my hair." He was pleased with the Niagara region: "This place is quite a paradise, situated on the west end of Lake Ontario, and washed by Niagara river, 18 miles from the great falls, the most stupendous Cataract in the World. I believe I shall settle, marry and trade here. Our plunder has been considerable, amongst which there are some fine skins which I intend to send you by the first opportunity, to dispose of as you please. You must present some of 'em to my Mother." This accounts for some of Chabert's lost peltries.

A letter to his uncle, also written from Niagara "August y<sup>e</sup> 9th," gives even more fully the story of the engagement. "Our Artillery," Lee writes, "was trifling & bad; our Engineers (as usual) execrably ignorant. The Senckas, the most numerous & powerful tribe of our Indians, wavering and irresolute, ready to desert us on the first prospect of unsuccess." Sir William Johnson he styles "a good and valuable man, but utterly a stranger to military affairs." He dwells on the value of the victory to England, Fort Niagara appearing to him "by its situation absolute Empress of the Inland Parts of North America," its capture giving England the fur trade of the continent, and defeating the long-cherished scheme of the

French, "of forming a Chain round our Colonies, so as in time to have jostled us into the Sea."<sup>23</sup> Lee was evidently much impressed by the scenic attractions of the region, for he dwells on them, in his letter to his uncle, as in the earlier epistle to his sister: "The situation of this place and the country round it are certainly most magnificent. It stands on Lake Ontario at the mouth of Niagara River 18 miles from the great falls, the most stupendous Cataract in the known World. Had I a throat of Brass & a thousand tongues I might attempt to describe it, but without them it certainly beggars all description. The country resembles Ickworth Park, if not surpasses it. For an Immense space around it, it is fill'd with Deer, Bears, Turkeys, Raccoons, in short all sort of game. The Lake affords Salmon & other excellent fish. But I am afraid you will think I am growing Romantick, therefore shall only say it is such a Paradise & such an acquisition to our Nation, that I wou'd not sacrifice it to redeem the dominions of any one Electoral Prince in Germany from the hands of the enemy."

<sup>23</sup> Seventeen years later Lee suggested to Congress the "absolute necessity" of taking Niagara from the British. See his letter to the President of Congress, May 10, 1776.



## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE NEWS SPREADS

TRANSFER OF THE PRISONERS — WALPOLE AND VOLTAIRE — ENGLISH REJOICINGS AND COMMENT — THE NIAGARA FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ENGLISH VERSE.

IT was Lieutenant (later Captain) Thomas Moncrieff, who first carried out of the Western wilderness the momentous news of this victory. He went "Express"; which means by boat with oarsmen along the Ontario shore to Oswego; thence to Albany on horseback, with a fresh steed wherever procurable. He was at Oswego July 31st; August 3d he reached Lake George and reported the victory to Colonel Montresor; and on the night of the 4th, at Crown Point, he gave the news and a letter from Johnson, to Lord Amherst, who at this time made him an aide-de-camp. In New York, Lieutenant-Governor De Lancey had the news by August 10th, on which day he sent word of the Niagara victory to the Lords of Trade.

In spite of the primitive conditions of the time, great news like this quickly spread. No sooner had Moncrieff touched at Oswego, or Lake George, or Albany, than other express riders were sent post-haste on other routes. Quickest of all, by methods which seem telepathic and mysterious, the news was spread through the forests by the Indians, with incredible celerity; a fortunate thing for the English, since it turned many a possible foe into an ally, protesting friendship. Soon after the capture of Niagara, the Ottawas, Chippewas and Mississagas, heretofore in the French interest, declared for the English.

Thomas Moncrieff was much employed as dispatch-bearer. He had been a lieutenant under Shirley at Oswego in 1756; and was to return to the Niagara in 1763, when, a brigade major, he was to "ride Express" to Detroit with orders for Major Gladwin. He served in the British army during the Revolu-

tionary War, and later resided in New York, where he died in 1791.<sup>1</sup>

In the English camp, on the evening of the 24th, general orders contained the following laconic but comprehensive bulletin:

Sir William Johnson returns his thanks to the Troops for their valiant behavior this day against a superior body of the enemy, which at this critticle time has been of the greatest advantage to the English nation, and thoroughly secured us the friendship of the Six Nations, and will undoubtedly facilitate the reduction of Niagara, a post so important to the English nation in North America.

At 7 o'clock on the morning of the 25th Lieutenant-Colonel Farquhar, with the grenadiers, took possession of the gates of the fort. At 10 o'clock the 44th regiment, with drums beating and flags flying, entered and drew up on the parade where never before had the British colors flown.

As soon as the troops had taken possession, Johnson's bateaux and whaleboats were moved around into the river under the fort, and the British force which during the siege had worked a battery on the west side of the river, came over with their artillery and went into camp.

To Haldimand, Moncrieff carried the following concise report:

NIAGARA, July 25, 1759.

*Sir:* I have the pleasure to inform you that we had the good fortune yesterday to beat the French army which came to the enemy's assistance, and this morning the Fort surrendered by capitulation. For further particulars I refer you to Mr. Moncrieff. You'll please to forward the French garrison who are on their way to New York,

<sup>1</sup> Singularly scattered and strangely preserved are some of the records of the time pertaining to our region. Among documents relating chiefly to the siege of Quebec, preserved in the Imperial Archives at Moscow, are Russian translations of Lt. Gov. De Lancey's letter to Pitt, written in New York, August 5, 1759, enclosing a letter of Lt. Coventry to De Lancey, dated Albany, Aug. 2, '59, in which he says that Lt. Moncrieff, "Aide of Gen. Crideax, arrived to-day from Niagara," etc., giving an account of the exploits of Major Beckwith, of Captain "Bouchot," etc. Another document is a Russian translation, dated "Niagara, July 25," being substantially the report of the capitulation which was carried to Gen. Amherst by Moncrieff.

with a proper escort from thence if convenient; if not, this escort is to proceed with them.

WM JOHNSON.

To Lord Amherst, Commander-in-Chief, Johnson sent the following:

NIAGARA, July 25.

*Sir:* I have the honor to acquaint you, by Lieutenant Moncrief, that Niagara surrendered to his Majesty's arms, on the 25th inst. A detachment of 1200 men, with a number of Indians, under the command of Messrs. Aubry and de Lignery, collected from Detroit, Venango, and Presqu' Isle, made an attempt to reinforce the garrison, the 24th in the morning; but as I had intelligence of them, I made a disposition to intercept them.

The evening before, I ordered the light infantry and piquets to take post upon the road upon our left, leading from Niagara-falls to the fort. In the morning, I reinforced these with two companies of grenadiers and part of the Forty-sixth regiment.

The action began about half an hour after nine; but they were so well received by the troops in front and the Indians on their flank, that, in an hour's time the whole was completely ruined, and all their Officers made prisoners, among whom are M. Aubry, de Lignery, Marin, Repentine, to the number of seventeen. I cannot ascertain the number of the killed, they are so dispersed among the woods; but their loss is great.

As this happened under the eyes of the garrison, I thought proper to send my last summons to the Commanding Officer, for his surrendering, which he listened to. I enclose you the capitulation; Mr. Moncrief will inform you of the state of our ammunition and provisions; I hope care will be taken to forward an immediate supply of both to Oswego. As the troops that were defeated yesterday were drawn from those posts which lie in General Stanwix's route, I am in hopes it will be of the utmost consequence to the success of his expedition.

The public stores of the garrison, that can be saved from the Indians, I shall order the assistant Quartermaster General and the Clerk of the stores to take an account of, as soon as possible. As all my attention at present is taken up with the Indians, that the capitulation I have agreed to may be observed, Your Excellency will excuse my not being more particular.

Permit me to assure you, in the whole progress of the siege,

which was severe and painful, the officers and men behaved with the utmost cheerfulness and bravery. I have only to regret the loss of General Prideaux and Colonel Johnson. I endeavoured to pursue the late General's vigorous measures, the good efforts [? effects] of which he deserved to enjoy.

With earnest good wishes for your success I have the honour to be, etc.,

WM. JOHNSON.

From the ancient orderly-book of the New York Provincials, already drawn on, much might be culled, tending to show the employment of the troops after the capitulation. There was no relaxation of discipline — the Indian menace forbade that — but there were new duties. On July 27th a large force was detailed to cleanse the fort of all filth; another was employed in leveling the trenches which lately they had dug with heavy toil. On the 29th 150 men were sent to fetch timber for building a vessel. On August 1st, John Christopher of Captain Van Vecher's company, and Michael Prior, of Captain Lansing's company, were court-martialed and sentenced, the former to 500 lashes, prior to 200, "for the crimes they were guilty of," said crimes not being specified, but evidently not deeply criminal by modern standards, for on this same August 1st we learn that John McKow of Captain Vischer's company was confined "for sitting on his post, all [three] crimes of the very worst nature a soldier could be guilty of." But Colonel Thodey, it appears, desired that the regiment should be able to boast a clean record: "therefore as he would not have it said that a soldier of his regt. was punished during this command from Oswego, he forgives all three of them," but he wanted it understood that any other soldier guilty of such "crimes" would be severely punished.

The regiment embarked Aug. 2d., save 100 men, "carpenters, masons, brick-makers and all other artificers," who were left behind as a part of Niagara's first English garrison.<sup>2</sup> The regiment's last camp at Niagara was on August 2d.

<sup>2</sup> These 100 men were drawn from the companies of Capts. Gilcrist, Homes [Holmes], Smith and Van Zandt; with them were also Lt. Waters, Lt. Burns, Capt. Bloomer and 22 men, Lt. Vanderburg and 27 men skilled in the trades, whose names are given in the orders of the day.

As soon as news of Prideaux's death reached Oswago, Colonel Frederick Haldimand, on duty there and next in command, hastened to Niagara, with Captain Williamette. They arrived July 28th, three days after the capitulation; hence no mention is made of him in reports of the siege and surrender. If he had counted on succeeding Prideaux his hopes were blasted, for Johnson had not only assumed the command, but ordered Haldimand to come to him. Because of the Indians, it was vital in this crisis that Johnson's authority should not be questioned. Haldimand, though disappointed, made no strenuous contention. He wrote to Amherst that he would serve under Johnson, temporarily, rather than make trouble, and the general commended this attitude.<sup>3</sup>

One week after the surrender Sir William wrote in his journal: "Aug. 1. I went to see Niagara Falls with Colonel Haldimand, Mr. Ogilvie and several officers, escorted by three companies of light infantry. Arrived there about 11 o'clock." The next day Haldimand set out for Oswego with two whale-boats, with explicit orders from Sir William, who joined him two days later. On the 16th General Gage arrived at Oswego, with orders from Amherst to attack the French post at La Galette (Ogdensburg), and proceed down the river, with Quebec as the final objective. Johnson was eager for the undertaking; Haldimand advised against it, and Gage hesitated; so that these three officers were yet at Oswego when on the 8th of October a scout brought in "the agreeable news" of the fall of Quebec. All plans for an attack on La Galette that season were dropped. After some reconstruction of Fort Ontario, Gage hastened off to winter quarters at Albany, Johnson dismissed his Indians and went home, and Haldimand settled down, with the 4th Battalion of the Royal Americans, to spend a dreary winter in command of the new Fort Ontario.

To Colonel Farquhar, remaining at Niagara, Johnson gave explicit instructions, in part as follows:

<sup>3</sup> Johnson wrote in his diary that Haldimand came to Niagara "to claim the command, which I refused giving up, as my commission gave me rank of him. He gave up the point, until General Amherst's pleasure was known, which may be soon, as Col. Haldimand, on receipt of my letter, wrote him upon it."

The sick that are likely soon to recover of the 44th will continue here; the rest to go to Oswego.

You will see that those employed in repairing the fortifications, in putting the artillery and stores in proper order, in repairing or building vessels, and fitting up barracks, have all manner of assistance, and be kept diligent at their several works.

As Mr. Demler has directions about erecting a battery for two 18-pdrs near the water side, you will give him assistance as soon as you can. As the genl-in-chief is very desirous that vessels shall be built with all expedition, and as more timber will be wanted, you will send out for it occasionally, taking care to send a strong escort, at different hours and places.

As soon as the Army is embarked, you will shut the gate of the covered way, and not allow any man of the garrison to go out, to prevent stragglers being taken by the enemy, being informed they want to take a prisoner for intelligence.

As provisions are very difficult to be brought to such a distance, you will see that the Commissary takes all possible care and serves out first these likely to spoil.

As it is expected that the Indians in this neighborhood formerly in the French interest, will now at least in appearance be our friends, you will receive them with civility, give them provisions and assure them that traders will soon arrive to buy their skins more to their advantage than ever the French did. If the Indians should come in large bodies, you will not admit above 20 to come within the fort at a time. Two interpreters are left here under your orders, who you will take care to see civilly treated.

As our being in possession of this place greatly distresses the enemy, and is of great importance to his Majesty, I request you will take care that the service is performed with the greatest strictness as possibly some attempt may be made. Whatever extraordinary may happen you will send immediate notice of it, directed to the care of the officer commanding at Oswego, with leave to open the letter if you think necessary.

As this fort was ordered by Major General Amherst to be garrisoned by part of Brigadier General Stanwix's army, you will, on being relieved by them, embark the present garrison and join the army at Oswego, leaving with the officer who succeeds you in the command all instructions you may have received and what information you can furnish him with for the service. Should the garrison sent by General Stanwix not be sufficient according as circumstances

may appear to you, you will leave a detachment of the 4th regiment equal to what this service may require.

Some of the French officers, and private men, not being now in condition to be removed, you will take all possible care of them and when recovered send them by the safest conveyance to Oswego. The Guard over them will be careful not to allow any Indian or suspected person to have any communication with them upon any pretence whatever. The officers who are able to move about, to have the liberty of the Parade.

Mr. Demler was ordered to repair the fortifications and to build a battery for two 18-pounders on the water side; to put all buildings and barracks in good repair for the winter; and to send a list of things needed "for defence and comfortable for the troops." Captain Walton was ordered to care for the artillery and make a return regarding it.

Writing from his camp at Oswego, September 28th, to William Baker in London, Sir William touched on some features of the campaign:

. . . I have been greatly distressed this campaign wanting good arms for the Indians I brought into the field, who were 945 effective; by having so many on our side we gained Niagara with the weakest force and most insignificant train of artillery &c. that ever was sent so great a distance against so respectable and regular a fortification.

I got two little schooners of the Enemy's there, which are of very great service, now being the only way we have at present of transporting provisions etc to Niagara, the lake being too rough at this season for smaller craft.

We are building a scow at Niagara will carry 10 6-pounders, but for want of ship carpenters sufficient, I fear she will not be finished timely to be of service this year. There is a very fine harbour for building vessels of any size at Niagara under command of the fort, and the greatest quantity of the best oak for that purpose I ever saw in any part of the world.

The enemy have yet two very pretty vessels carrying 10 guns each, so that they keep the dominion of that lake untill our scow appears upon it; we must by all means have and keep the Dom'n of this lake, which will not only gain to our interest with proper management all the Nations of Indians living beyond and around them, but secure to us all the conquests made this campaign in this quarter

of the country, from whence the strength and wealth of Canada have chiefly flowed.

It was on August 1st that some French prisoners taken by Brigadier Murray at Dechambault, just above Quebec, gave that British officer his first information of the surrender of Fort Niagara.<sup>4</sup> As the news was confirmed and spread it caused an exultation among the British forces, and a depression of spirits among the French, which may not have been wholly without influence on the outcome on the final struggle. When, a week later, the news penetrated to Ile-aux-Noix, in the outlet of Lake Champlain, De Bourlamaque wrote: "I expected the capture of Niagara, and am no more surprised at the defeat of M. de Lignery. Here we are with no resource. If the Marquis de Vaudreuil persists in not reinforcing the army of the Chevalier de La Corne, God keep us from greater misfortune! . . . This handful of men will be astonished at the check we have received at Niagara, and the discouragement, especially for the militia, is the worst of all the evils."<sup>5</sup> Two days later he wrote to the Governor himself: "The capture of Niagara and the loss of the 1200 men of Delignery, reducing the force at the Rapids to so small a number, it is not possible to hope for great resistance." To many a French officer the loss of Niagara and the frontier it guarded, made the struggle on the Plains of Abraham a forlorn hope.

An express rider left Albany Thursday morning, August 4th, at 6 o'clock, and on Saturday afternoon following was proclaiming the agreeable news in New York. Boston received it about the same time. A royal salute was fired from the cannon at Castle William, from guns at Charleston and on

<sup>4</sup> A letter of Wolfe, apparently intended for Pitt, dated "Camp of Montmorenci, 2d Sept. 1759," referring to Brigadier Murray, says: "The prisoners he took [at Dechambault] inform'd him of the surrender of the Fort of Niagara."—*Can. Arch.*, ser. M., vol. 210.

Capt. John Knox wrote in his journal, Aug. 25: "We have the happy news of the reduction of Niagara, by a detachment of Mr. Amherst's army," etc. A deserter reported at Quebec, Sept. 12th, that "the reduction of Niagara had caused great discontent in the French army, that the wretched Canadians are much dissatisfied."—*Knox*, II, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Bourlamaque to Rigaud, Aug. 8, 1759.



the wharves, church bells were rung and vessels displayed their colors. "In the evening there were illuminations, several large bonfires, and a great number of fireworks played, with other public rejoicings." The *Gazette*, from which we quote, had an Albany correspondent, worthy prototype of some who have come after, who wrote that a letter from Niagara brought word that upwards of 1100 Indians were convened there by Sir William Johnson, "who by their good behavior have justly gained the esteem of the whole army. Sir William being informed the enemy had buried a quantity of goods on an island about 20 miles from the fort, sent a number of Indians to search for them, who found to the value of £8,000 and were in hopes of finding more; and that a French vessel, entirely laden with beaver, had foundered on the lake, when her crew, 41 men, were all lost."<sup>6</sup>

The size of the French vessel's crew; her cargo, all of beaver; the amount of treasure trove on Grand Island; the great improbability that Sir William would confide such a quest to Indians;— and a failure to find these statements officially recorded, suggest that the *Gazette* correspondent possessed qualities not unlike those occasionally shown by modern members of his honorable guild.

More credible is the following, also from Albany:

On August 21, a teamster from the fort at Lake George, looking for his oxen, discovered four Frenchmen on the southwest side of Hudson's river, who called to him for assistance. He returned to the fort and told the officer in command, who sent out a sergeant and 12 men to bring them in. They proved to be a French lieutenant, a commissary and two privates, who had escaped from Niagara during the siege, with a design to go to Montreal, but lost their way. They had been out 28 days and were almost famished.<sup>7</sup>

The progress of the French prisoners through the country

<sup>6</sup> *Boston Gazette*, Aug. 27, 1759. The story appeared in many prints in America and England.

<sup>7</sup> *Boston Gazette*, Sept. 10, 1759. Another account speaks of "Mons, Larmenau and two privates" who escaped between Oswego and Albany; probably the same men referred to above. "Larmenau" was Lieut. Larmiac, of the Colonials.

greatly interested the communities of eastern New York and New England. On August 12th the entire force taken at Niagara arrived at Albany, where their advent made a great stir. The streets of the old Dutch town were thronged by burghers, English soldiers and civilians, curious and picturesque Indians, and the French themselves, 640 soldiers, 12 officers and about a dozen women who had shared the fortunes of the army. An observer wrote of them: "The men look well, and in particular the late Governor of Niagara [Pouchot], is a soldierly-looking man." Albany knew the difficulties of Mohawk navigation, and could readily understand how "eight French prisoners and four Yorkers" were drowned at Schenectady by the sinking of a scow.

In the throng that made its way down the steep streets of Albany village to the Hudson river strand, was one whose experiences suggest a tale of old romance. She was an English woman, who had been wife of a soldier in Braddock's army, and was taken prisoner by the French at Braddock's defeat. Her captors carried her to Fort Niagara, where she was long detained, and where, supposing her husband killed, she married a French subaltern, by whom she had a child. When Niagara fell she, with her husband and child, shared the common fate of the French captives; but this day, in Albany, as they defiled before the multitude of curious on-lookers, she suddenly beheld in the crowd her English husband! Something of the dramatic the situation surely has, as he whom she supposed long since dead on Braddock's Field now appears a sturdy soldier of King George, on duty in Albany town. There is, beyond question, a halt in the march, a gathering of the crowd — in short, a scene. The English soldier demands his long-lost spouse; and — in the words of a chronicler who saw what he reported, "after some struggles of tenderness for her French husband, she left him and closed again with her first; tho' 'tis said the French husband insisted on keeping the child as his property, which was consented to by the wife and first husband."<sup>8</sup>

More than 600 prisoners with an ample British escort em-

<sup>8</sup> *Boston Gazette*, Sept. 10, 1759, quoting a private letter from New York, Sept. 3d. There are other accounts of the incident, but none of them gives the names of the woman captive or her husbands.

barked on seven sloops and leisurely floated down the Hudson to New York, where on August 10th the *Mercury* duly reported:

Since our last seven sloops arrived here from Albany, with about 640 French prisoners, officers included, being the whole of the garrison of Niagara. Among the officers are Mon. Pouchot, who was commander-in-chief of the fort, and Mon. Villars, both captains, and Knights of the Order of St. Lewis. There are 10 other officers, one of which is the famous Mon. Jonquire, a very noted man among the Seneca Indians, and whose father was the first that hoisted French colours in that country. His brother is also a prisoner, is now here, and has been very humane to many Englishmen, having purchased several of them from the savages. Mon. Larmenau, with two privates, made their escape near Fort Harkamer, and are supposed to be gone to Canada.

The officers and men in general, both Canadians and regulars, look well, and don't appear as if they fed for some time on Horse-flesh; on the contrary they are very robust, fat and spry-looking men.

Among the prisoners taken the day the fort surrendered, is the infamous Mon. Morang, who commanded at Monongahela when Gen. Braddock was defeated, where so many of our brave countrymen were cruelly massacred, not one of the wounded being ever heard of since, of which there were many hundreds; however we hear the Mohawks insist on having their share of all the Prisoners taken in the Party that he commanded.

Although in all the eastern communities there was much curiosity to see these famous French leaders whose exploits had been magnified until in the popular imagination they appeared as demons and fiends incarnate, yet a deeper interest attached to the return of the English prisoners who were found and set free when Sir William entered Fort Niagara. For more than a century New York and New England had known the meaning of Indian captivity, but not always were the captives brought back under such conspicuously triumphant circumstances.

In November an exchange was effected. On the 30th, Colonel James Montresor, at Fort George [Fort William Henry], wrote in his journal: "Expected the French prisoners and made a preparation for them. I got 3 dozen of Beer from

the General's servant." Some of the French prisoners supped with him the next night, and on Sunday, December 2d, "Messrs. Pouchot & Villex [Villars] &c., with the rest of the French prisoners, after having breakfast with me, embarked with the Guard of Independents."

Among the French officers who were exchanged, besides Captain Pouchot, were Captain Serviès of the Royal Roussillon; the wounded Lieutenant Bonnafoux, of the Royal Artillery; the Chevalier de Villars of the regiment of Sarre, and Lieutenants de Morambert of Guienne, Salvignac of Béarn, and probably La Milletière of Languedoc, who had been carried to Albany by the Mohawks, and sent thence to New York.

The Colonials included, besides Joncaire and Chabert, Captain La Roche-Verney, Lieutenant de Cournoyer and others.

However various the fate that awaited these soldiers of fortune, none was to follow up his adventures on the Niagara with a more notable service, or to meet a more tragic end, than Captain Charles Aubry. His American employment had been hazardous, typical of the French partisan of the time, who relied on savages and employed their methods. From his remote post in the Illinois country he had led, for the relief of Fort Niagara, some 300 soldiers and Canadian militia, traders and forest rangers, and 600 Indians of many tribes. At Fort Machault he had joined his wild following with that of De Lignery, who he saw fatally wounded in the decisive battle at Niagara. Himself escaping Indian tomahawk, though wounded by a British bullet, he is now sent to England and exchanged. He was given the Cross of St. Louis, and, returning to America, became Governor of Louisiana, and surrendered that colony to the Spanish in 1766. His part in the events of that time shows him as a sycophant of Spain; French historians write of him with execration and contempt. In 1769 he sailed for Bordeaux, carrying, 'tis said, a fortune in his money chests. The ship was wrecked, February 24, 1770, after it had entered the Garonne, and nearly all on board, including Governor Aubry, were drowned.

In New York, Lieutenant-Governor James DeLancey summoned the Council and General Assembly at his own residence,

and made them an exultant speech on the successes of British arms and the general discomfiture of the French, especially in their loss of Quebec and "the defeat of their army coming to the relief of Niagara, and the reduction of the Fort at that important Pass." These, he proclaimed, with no voice of contradiction, "are Events which add fresh Lustre to the Reign of the best of Kings; redound highly in the Glory of his Majesty's Arms, disappoint the intended Insult of the Enemy on his Kingdom and Dominion, and open to these Colonies a favorable Prospect of future Security."

The New York authorities appear to have been somewhat burdened by the care of the Niagara prisoners. Some of them were distributed in New England towns. An advice from New Haven, August 25th, says: "Last Thursday came to town from New York one hundred of the French prisoners taken at Niagara, consisting of Canadians and regulars. Almost all of them chose to go to prison rather than be hired, the proposal of which they seemed to treat with disdain. The like number we hear are secured at Fairfield."<sup>9</sup> Many privates were quartered in the New York barracks, 200 were sent to Norwalk, Conn., others to New Jersey towns. Some of the officers were placed on Long Island.

In November, an exchange was effected and Pouchot and most of his officers were sent to Montreal, where, according to the memoir of the commander, he arrived New Year's Eve. Daniel de Chabert says that he reached his home in Montreal on Christmas Eve.<sup>10</sup>

Nowhere was the rejoicing more manifest than in Boston; and of these loyal British New Englanders none was more devoutly exultant than the young Doctor of Divinity, Jonathan Mayhew, pastor of the West Church in Boston. October 25, 1759, was appointed by authority "to be observed as a day of public thanksgiving for the success of His Majesty's arms," which now had gained Quebec as well as Niagara. On this day Dr. Mayhew went up into his pulpit in the morning and again in the afternoon, and preached two mortal long sermons. As

<sup>9</sup> *Boston Gazette*, Aug. 27, 1759.

<sup>10</sup> Deposition of 1763.

it has ever been the privilege of ministers of a gospel of peace to thank God for victories won by force of arms and the destruction of the enemy, so Dr. Mayhew tuned his thank-offering to the text found in Psalms cxxvi, 3. Notwithstanding the text, the sermon followed lines of thoughts decidedly mundane, and constitute a not inadequate history of the war. The fall of Fort Niagara in particular was shown in its true significance. As it came into the thought of the average Bostonian of that day, Fort Niagara was more than remote; it was foreign, inaccessible, far beyond the habitable though hazardous frontiers. No spot under the United States flag is now so distant as this wild and dangerous Niagara region must then have seemed to stay-at-home New Englanders. The outlying Aleutians, or the Philippines, our Government's uttermost possessions, are nearer now to us of the Eastern States, in the aspect of familiarity, if not of time and distance, than was this rendezvous of Indians, French Canadians and fur-traders to the parishioners who eagerly followed the discourse of Dr. Mayhew. He showed them the vast importance of the conquest here. "A very material acquisition," his discourse ran, "has been made this present campaign, of the fortress of Niagara. This was in itself a strong fort, and defended by a numerous garrison; which is not to be wondered at, considering the importance of it to the enemy. . . . It was so situated as to draw the commerce, and with it the affections, of numerous tribes of savages about those lakes; as also to awe the Six Nations, our old friends and allies; and even to stagger their friendship. . . . This important fortress is now in our hands; the very considerable army that had been destined to its relief, and to raise the siege, being repulsed with great slaughter, and the garrison made prisoners of war. By which acquisition, the wavering nations of the Mohawks, as they are commonly called, are secured in their fidelity and friendship; many other tribes of the savages have become our useful allies, instead of perfidious enemies. . . . God has remarkably smiled upon this great enterprise from the very first." Captain Pouchot may have held a different opinion.

In 1759 Benjamin Franklin was residing in London, and at

about the time of the taking of Fort Niagara was the guest of Lord Kames (Henry Home) at the latter's residence in Scotland. When word of the victory at Niagara, soon followed by that of Quebec, reached him, he did not fail to express himself in characteristic fashion, on the suggestion of restoring Canada to France. "No one," he wrote,<sup>11</sup> "can more sincerely rejoice than I do, on the reduction of Canada; and this is not merely as I am a Colonist, but as I am a Briton. I have long been of opinion, that the foundations of the future grandeur and stability of the British Empire lie in America; and though like other foundations, they are low and little now, they are, nevertheless, broad and strong enough to support the greatest political structure human wisdom ever erected. I am therefore by no means for restoring Canada. If we keep it, all the country from St. Lawrence to Mississippi will in another century be filled with British people; Britain itself will become vastly more populous, by the immense increase of its commerce; the Atlantic sea will be covered with your trading ships; and your naval power, thence continually increasing, will extend your influence round the whole globe, and awe the world! If the French remain in Canada, they will continually harass our colonies by the Indians; impede if not prevent their growth; your progress to greatness will at best be slow, and give room for many accidents that may forever prevent it."

Washington, who in January previous to the capture of Niagara, had wed the Widow Custis, was residing at Mount Vernon, devoting himself to the care of his large properties, which his marriage had considerably augmented, and took no part in the campaign of 1759. Such allusions to it as are found in his correspondence are of a general character. In view of his experiences during his embassy to Fort Le Bœuf, one would suppose that his undoubted interest in the expulsion of the French from the Lakes and the Ohio would have led to some pronounced expression, but nothing bearing on the issue has been noted in his published letters.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Franklin to Lord Kames, London, Jan. 3, 1760.

<sup>12</sup> In a letter to Richard Washington, July 14, 1761, he wrote: "The entire conquest of Canada, and dispossession of the French in most parts

Admiral Charles Saunders wrote to Pitt, under date of "*Stirling Castle*, off Pt. Levi, in the river St. Lawrence, 5th Sept., 1759: Yesterday I received a letter from General Amherst . . . dated Camp at Crown Point, August the 7th, wherein he only desires I would send transports and a convoy to New York, to carry to England 607 prisoners taken at the surrender of Niagara."

Two packets carrying the news of the capture of Niagara arrived in English ports September 4th, and on Saturday the 8th Captain Prescott arrived at Whitehall with a letter from Amherst to Pitt, dated "Crown Point, Aug. 5th," "to inform you of the great event of Niagara," and inclosing Johnson's report and a copy of the terms of capitulation.

The successes of this summer roused England to great rejoicing, but they were by no means unexpected. No matter how the fortunes of war might befall elsewhere, England confidently anticipated victories in America. In June, Horace Walpole, the ever-delightful gossip, had written to his friend Horace Mann: "If we lose our own island, we shall at least have all America to settle in. Quebec is to be conquered by the 15th of July, and two more expeditions, I don't know whither, are to be crowned with all imaginable success, I don't know when." A little later (July 8) he wrote: "From America we expect the greatest things; our force there by land and sea is vast. I hope we shall not be obliged to buy England back by restoring the *North Indies*! I will gladly give them all the hundred thousand acres that may fall to my share on the Ohio for my twenty acres here. Truly I don't like having them endangered for the limits of Virginia!" After Captain Prescott's arrival Walpole again wrote: "With your unathletic constitution I think you will have a greater weight of glory to represent than you can bear. You will be as *epuisé* as Princess Craon with all the triumphs over Niagara, Ticonderoga, Crown Point and such a parcel of long names. . . .

of North America, becoming a story too stale to relate in these days"! That he was not unmindful of the importance of Niagara during the Revolutionary War, is evidenced by his communication to the Committee of Congress, Jan. 13, 1779 (Ford's "Washington," vol. VII, and to Maj. Gen. Schuyler in 1780. (*Ib.*, VIII, 185.)



If the King of Prussia shall be totally undone in Germany, we can afford to give him an appanage, as a younger son of England, of some hundred thousand miles on the Ohio."

On the same day (September 13) he wrote to the Earl of Stratford: "We have taken more places and ships in a week than would have set up such pedant nations as Greece and Rome to all futurity. If we did but call Sir Wm. Johnson '*Gulielmus Johnsonus Niagaricus*' and Amherst '*Galfridus Amhersta Ticonderogicus*' we should be quoted a thousand years hence as patterns of valour, virtue, and disinterestedness; for posterity always ascribes all manner of modesty and self-denial to those who take the most pains to perpetuate their own glory."

In England and Wales a public Thanksgiving was proclaimed, for "defeat of the French army in Canada," and October 23rd was generally observed.<sup>13</sup> Another proclamation fixed the same day as a Thanksgiving throughout Scotland. In due course the European centers learned of the success of British arms at far-off Niagara, followed close by the decisive victory at Quebec. Two days after this news reached Geneva, where Voltaire resided, he gave a great entertainment at his country-house. "In the evening the company retired into a noble gallery, at the end of which was erected an elegant theatre, and a new piece called '*Le Patriot Insulaire*' was performed, in which all the genius and fire of that celebrated poet were exhausted in the cause of liberty. M. de Voltaire himself appeared in the principal character, and drew tears from the whole audience. The scenes were decorated with emblems of liberty and over the stage was this inscription in Latin and English:

" LIBERTALI QUIETI MUSIS SACRUM  
S P of the F.

" *The English line means 'Spite of the French.'*

"After the play the windows of the gallery flew open and presented a spacious court finely illuminated and adorned with

<sup>13</sup> Still another Royal Proclamation designated Nov. 29th as a day of public thanksgiving "for the defeat of the French army in Canada and the taking of Quebec." Niagara is not mentioned.

savage trophies. In the middle of the court a magnificent fire-work was played off, accompanied with martial music; the Star of St. George shedding forth innumerable rockets, and underneath a lively representation by girandoles of the cataract of Niagara."

Voltaire, we may suppose, did not exult over the humiliation of France, but at what he regarded as a victory of liberty over despotism.

The echoes of English victories at Niagara, Crown Point and Quebec were long to be heard in the press of England and the Continent. Some of the writings which these events called forth were sound and statesmanlike. Others fell somewhat short of common sense. Many a writer who undertook to explain the situation on the Niagara and the Lakes lapsed into absurdities. The author of "A just estimate of the importance of having reduced Crown Point and Niagara"<sup>14</sup> had much to say of "the narrow pass of Niagara." "Here," he explains, for the edification of untraveled Britons, "the waters of those Great Lakes, that spread over the continent far and nigh, are so narrow and shallow, that they are even fordable for passengers on foot"; which is, to say the least, a singular conception of the outlet of so vast a reservoir. "At the same time," continues our writer, "this pass is so secured by the mountains and lakes that it is almost inaccessible but by water." Of Fort Niagara and Chabert's post above the Falls, he says: "These are the only settlements at Niagara, where the country is mountainous and barren, unfit for culture." His argument was that by all means the British should secure the Niagara "pass." As fate decreed — perhaps with the aid of a too leisurely editor — the Niagara was securely in the hands of the British some weeks before this article, urging its acquisition, appeared in print.

For some years following the conquest of Canada the British periodical press abounds in erroneous or distorted statements regarding the Niagara region. The French were better informed. Captain Pouchot, whose knowledge of the region was intimate, deprecated the false reports regarding American

<sup>14</sup> *The Grand Magazine*, Sept., 1759.

topography. While yet serving in Canada, he had written, concerning the region of the Lower Lakes: "That country, my Lord, would be well worth seeing by experienced eyes, which has not as yet been the case. The well-known carrying-place of Niagara is an evident proof. The most recent accounts thereof describe it as the most rugged of Alps, although it is only a rise of ground [*rideau*], a little more elevated than that of Bellevue; below and above are very fine plains."<sup>15</sup>

A corresponding perversion of facts, in early published engravings of the Falls of Niagara, is to be noted. Long after the appearance of artistic and approximately correct views of the cataract other publishers continued to issue, especially in volumes of travels, grotesque and impossible pictures of Niagara, a curious evolution from the original view accompanying Hennepin's "*Nouvelle Découverte*."<sup>16</sup>

Although Sir William Johnson's victory took this scenic wonder from France, and added it to the possessions of King George, no comment on that phase of it — as an incomparable acquisition — appears to have been indulged in. But the expansion of trade opportunities appealed strongly to the British imagination.

In "The Field of Mars, an Alphabetical Digestion of the Principal Naval and Military Engagements . . . of Great Britain and Her Allies," published in London in 1781, an article of considerable length is given under the head "Niagara Fort Taken" (vol. II); and although this publication was more than 20 years after the British capture of the fort, the following extracts are not without interest as reflecting contemporary views on the subject.

"This," says the compiler, referring to Fort Niagara, "is without exception the most important post in America, and secures the greatest number of communications; for it is situated at the very entrance to a strait. . . . As the great communication of those who go by water is along the strait and carrying-place, so those who travel by land are obliged to cross

<sup>15</sup> Pouchot to the Marshal de Belle Isle, Apr. 14, 1758.

<sup>16</sup> The reader who would follow this subject further is referred to "The Niagara in Art," Buffalo Historical Society Publications, vol. XV.

it. The lakes are so disposed, that without a somewhat hazardous voyage, the Indians cannot any otherwise pass from the northwest to the southeast parts of North America, for many hundred miles. The fort of Niagara thus naturally commands all the five nations, and all those Indian tribes that lie to the northward of the lakes, as well as those that are scattered along the banks of the Ohio, Ouabache and Mississippi; and according as it is possessed by the English or the French, connects or disjoins the colonies of Canada or Louisiana, protects or lays open our own, and is in all respects of so much consequence that it was the opinion of persons the most conversant in American business that this attempt ought to have been made much earlier; and that if such an attempt, made at such a time, had succeeded, it would have contributed very much to the serenity of those parts of our colonies which were the most exposed, and would have at the same time greatly facilitated all our offensive measures and shortened the war."

The writer goes on to speak of the esteem in which the French held the place, and relates how "they prevailed at last, under the name of a trading house, to erect a strong fort at the mouth of the strait, on the very best harbor, not only on this, but on any of the lakes, an harbor which is safe from every wind, and often for the whole year." He continues: "A French officer, an able and enterprising man, had been a prisoner among the Iroquois for a long time, and having, according to their custom, been naturalized, he grew extremely popular amongst them, and at last acquired his liberty. He communicated to the then Governor of Canada, the plan of an establishment at Niagara and he himself undertook to execute it. He returned amongst the Iroquois, and pretending great love for their nation, which was now his own, told them that he would gladly come to make frequent visits to his brethren; but it was proper for that purpose that they should allow him to build a house, where he might live at ease, and according to his own manner; at the same time he proposed to them advantages in trade from this establishment. A request which seemed a compliment to those to whom it was made, was readily granted. The house was built. By degrees this house extended itself;

it was strengthened by various additions; and it grew at last to a regular fortress, which has ever since awed the five nations and checked our colonies."

This somewhat perverted story of the elder Joncaire is followed by an account of the capture of Fort Niagara, of which the following conclusion will suffice: "The taking of Niagara broke off effectually that communication, so much talked of and so much dreaded, between Canada and Louisiana."

The writer, like many another commentator, failed to realize the vast distance, and the tremendous difficulties of communication, between the Niagara and Louisiana — even the larger Louisiana of the Eighteenth century. It is true that the French sought to establish such a communication. That it was sporadic, exceptional and practically negligible as an existing condition, the preceding pages have sufficiently shown.

The *Royal Magazine* of London, in its issue for September, 1759, published an "Account of the Fort of Niagara . . . with a perspective view of the Fort, drawn on the spot." The writer of the article, whose signature is printed as "J. C——r" is conjectured to have been Captain Jonathan Carver. He says he "was taken prisoner near Oswego, on the 16th of May, 1758, and carried to the fort of Niagara, from whence he made his escape on the 24th of August following." If he was a prisoner at Fort Niagara for three months, his sketch of the place, "drawn on the spot," does not testify to very close powers of observation. The stone house is wrongly placed in relation to lake and river. Between it and the lake shore is a small one-windowed structure marked "the commandant's apartment." For the most part the plan is crude and worthless.<sup>17</sup> The article which it accompanies is a jumble of errors, with not one statement of importance or one vivid touch, as would be expected in the reminiscences of one who had been held there captive by the French.

Neither Carver, in the "Travels" of which he was the reputed author, nor Lettsom, his editor and biographer, reveal where Carver was in 1758. In '57 he is said to have served

<sup>17</sup> This same plate of Fort Niagara appeared in the folio compilation, "A New Military Dictionary, on the Field of War," London, 1760.

under Webb, at Fort William Henry; he himself describes the difficulties of his escape; but no trustworthy record of his presence on the Niagara as a prisoner of the French has been found.

It was inevitable that British exultation should find expression through a poet or two. The first claimant, though a sorry one, for the laureate honors of this war, was James Ogden, who, at Manchester, in 1762, published "The British Lion Rous'd."<sup>18</sup> There is little about this ambitious production to detain the student of poetry; but its labored measures merit attention in connection with our present study, since in them we have, so far as noted, the first mention of Niagara in English verse. It also merits attention, not merely for this precedence, but, as will appear from a quotation, for its philological value.

In stately meter, but somewhat falling short of Miltonic exaltation, the author recites the deeds of

Great Britain's worthies, an illustrious train,  
Who propt the throne in George the Second's reign.

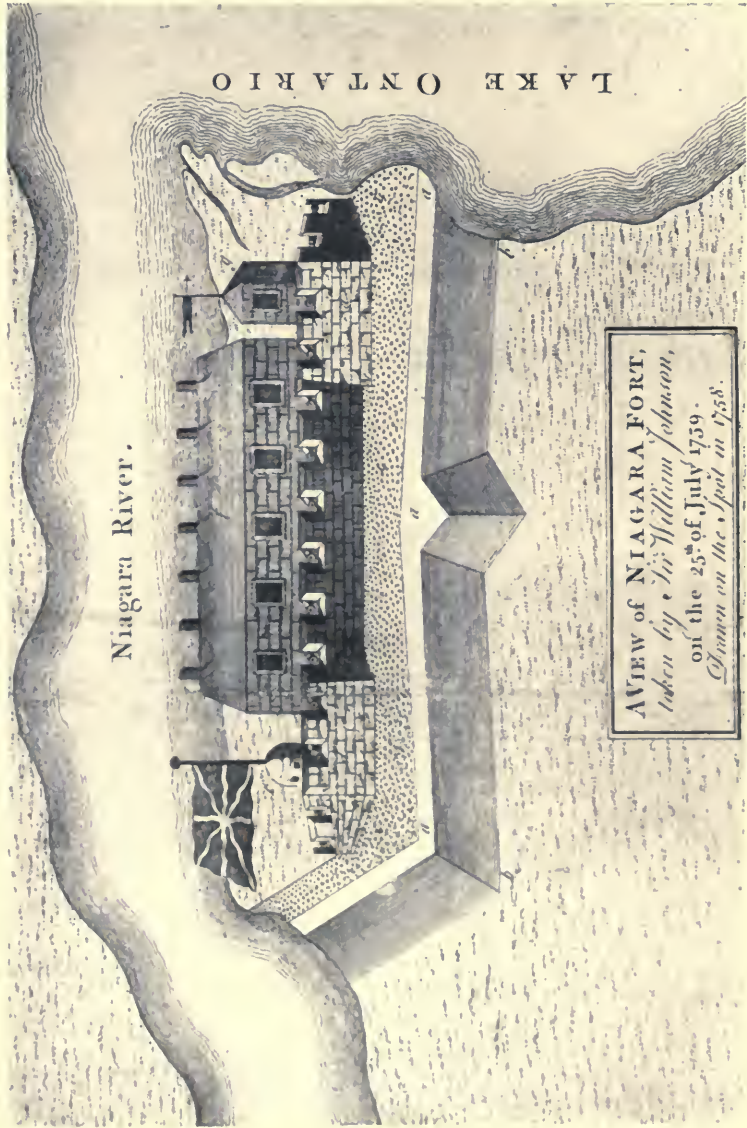
and among these worthies includes General Amherst and the heroes of the Niagara campaign, Prideaux and Johnson:

And to reduce strong Niagara sent  
Both Johnsons, under gner'al [*sic*] Prideaux went.

By "both Johnsons" the poet refers to Sir William Johnson and Colonel John Johnstone. The former is thus portrayed:

. . . Sir William bold.  
Worthy among the first to be enrol'd!  
None like the knight is form'd for enterprize  
To fight the Indian, or to civilize:  
'Twixt him and Prideaux such a friendship grew  
That each to each imparted what he knew.

<sup>18</sup> "The British Lion Rous'd; or Acts of the British Worthies, a Poem in Nine Books. By James Ogden. Manchester: Printed by R. Whitworth, Bookseller, next the Weaver's Arms, at the Back of the Bull's-Head. M.DCC, LX, II. [Price five Shillings.]" 8vo., pp. 223. It is a great curio, and scarce.



Plan of Fort Niagara Ascribed to Jonathan Carver

*From the Royal Magazine, London, 1759*





As they advance toward Niagara,—

Ee'r yet their men the fortress can invest,  
 A sigh indignant heaves the gen'ral's breast.  
 "What," said Sir William, "by that sigh is meant?"  
 "I grieve," he said, "to think how faction rent  
 Brave troops, which, were it not for cursed feud,  
 Had long e'er this a coward foe subdu'd."  
 "So you may think," the other chief replies  
 "But only by experience men grow wise."

A long conversation follows, in which the defeat of Braddock is lamented, and Sir William describes the Indian character and method of warfare. The account of Indian ferocity, wiliness, cruelty and even cannibalism, is gruesomely realistic, though probably little like what Sir William would have told had he and not the poetizing Ogden been the narrator. Several pages are filled with the exchange of "what they knew" between the two officers, as they advance on Niagara:

While thus the bold Hibernian entertain'd  
 Prideaux, both officers and men sustain'd  
 Uncommon dangers in the open field,  
 The fort now summon'd yet refus'd to yield;  
 To work they fall, and, favour'd with the dark,  
 Paralled lines to the defences mark.  
 Some dig the trench, with axes others clear  
 The ground from trees and shrubs, in front and rear;  
 Others the new-fall'n wood in faggots bind,  
 To raise their batt'ries, these in order join'd,  
 Are ram'd with earth the force of balls to break,  
 With many a logg and many a well-drove stake.

Thus with their work, the fortress they invest,  
 Nearer approaching, nearer while they prest,  
 Chief in command the active Brigadier  
 Travers'd the trench, nor thought of danger near,  
 Kill'd when his back is turn'd the fort to view;  
 The random shot an English gunner threw;  
 Lost to his kindred, Amherst, and the state,  
 Whence apprehended least the stroke of fate,

He falls — No circumspection life secures,  
Where Death sets open his unnumber'd doors.

Alike the friend, the general, and the man,  
Sir William mourns and prosecutes his plan;  
The French, now straiten'd, must submit of course,  
Without fresh men their numbers to re'nforce;  
These, drawn from distant posts and now at hand,  
The bold Hibernian, now in chief command,  
Attacks and beats — At last, reduc'd to treat,  
To him proud Niagara yields her gate.

Our quotations perhaps sufficiently exhibit the character of this rhymed and metered but sadly unpoetic history of the French-Indian War. The attentive reader, however, cannot have failed to observe that wherever the word "Niagara" occurs in these verses, it must be pronounced, to preserve the meter, with the primary accent on the third syllable. Two years after Ogden, a truer poet, Oliver Goldsmith, published "The Traveller, or a Prospect of Society," in which occur the lines:

Where wild Oswego spreads her swamps around  
And Niagara stuns with thundering sound.

Here we have the same necessary accent of the third syllable. The events of this war first made the name of our river and cataract somewhat familiar to the people of England; and the use of the name as found in these poems confirms the testimony of experts in Indian linguistics, and proves that in common English speech, at the time of the Conquest, the pronunciation was "Ni [or, rather, Nee] -a-ga' ra." "Ni-ag'-a-ra" would have been impossible to the Iroquois tongue, whereas the more musical "Nee-a-ga'-ra," each syllable ending in a vowel sound, is true to both Mohawk and Seneca pronunciation. How or when the change first came about, who can say? but the harsh and perverted pronunciation appears to be too deeply fixed in current speech to make reform likely.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The siege of Fort Niagara and the battle of July 24th are the subject of Act I, of J. B. Mackenzie's "historico-military drama," "Theyendanegea." (Toronto, 1898.) Among the characters are Gen. Prideaux, Sir William Johnson and "Joncaire-Clauzonne, a Seneca half-breed attached to the French interest."

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### MISFORTUNES OF CHABERT

LOSSES OF THE MASTER OF THE PORTAGE — HIS HOLDING AT THE  
LITTLE RAPID, NOW BUFFALO — LAST FRENCH SAIL ON THE  
LAKES — POUCHOT'S DEFENSE AT FORT LÉVIS — HIS MEMOIRS.

CHABERT was the heaviest loser, in a property sense, on the frontier by the war. According to a schedule which he later submitted to the Government of France, he was despoiled of a large fortune, some of the items of which it is interesting to note, for they reveal to us the holdings of the first man who really developed the transportation facilities around Niagara Falls. Save for the transitory structures of La Salle and Denonville, Chabert's father was the first to erect and maintain buildings on this frontier; and Chabert himself appears to have been the first white man to occupy and till a portion of the site of Buffalo.

Under the contract which he had entered into with Government, he had erected buildings, chiefly sheds for the protection of goods in transit, on the shore below the Lewiston Heights, and on the Heights themselves.<sup>1</sup> Of the structures at his fort above the falls, he enumerates a stable 100 feet in length, a shed of oak plank or logs 40 feet long, a barn 42 feet long; a residence, houses for the commandant and for the head store-keeper, and the King's store-house, for goods passing up or down.

The control of the portage had been absolutely his. No modern railway system or shipping interest by land or water exercises a greater monopoly than was enjoyed by this first transportation monopolist of the Niagara. In the instructions given to him by the Marquis de Vaudreuil, April 12, 1758, it is directed that he shall take measures for expediting the traffic over the portage, "this Portage being exclusive to him,

<sup>1</sup> His phrase is, "*du platon et des côtes.*" Elsewhere he speaks of "*les grands côtes.*"

according to the agreement which he made with the King"; and Vaudreuil gave orders to the commandant at Fort Niagara, "that no other person [save Chabert], under any pretext whatever, shall carry anything in this Portage, and that in consequence no private individual shall have horses at the said portage." For the transport of public stores, Chabert was to hire men as needed, from those under orders of the commandant at Niagara, and pay them as might be agreed.

If he was given a monopoly, he also incurred obligations. Under the instructions of the Intendant he was required to erect numerous buildings: "a house suitable for lodging the commissary's clerks, and the people needed for the Little Fort; a shed for receipt of the King's property." He was to repair storehouses on the shores, and on Lewiston Heights was to build a house for the clerk who was stationed there to look after Government stores as they came up, and put new roofs on two storehouses. All of these buildings were now burned, a total loss.

He had kept a force of Canadians at work, since the spring of 1758, improving the portage road, but had not been reimbursed for wages advanced to them. He had cultivated three fields adjoining his portage fort on the south, which he says "were not without buildings"; and in the river just above the fort, on an island of 12 arpents, he had cultivated and planted four arpents. Of all of these the enemy had taken the harvest.

He had still another building which represented labor and outlay. The instructions of April, 1758, contain this clause:

The said Sieur de Chabert shall apply himself to cultivate the lands at the river *Aux Chevaux*, situated six leagues from the Portage, at the entrance to Lake Erie, where the pasture is excellent. He will plant there Indian corn, Tobacco, etc., and to that end he will take to the Little Fort the bateaux and vehicles needed to send to the straight the animals and other things needed for the establishment of the said river.

This is a clear designation of Buffalo river. The distance is right, and the name, "*Aux Chevaux*," was early given to it

and was not applied to any other stream in the region. At this time the Tonawanda was called, by the French, *Rivière aux Bois-blancs* —“river of the bass-woods,” and so it appears on Pouchot’s map. There was no stream entering the Niagara, or the lake, from the westward, which could have been meant. The Niagara shore on the east side, stretching north from the mouth of Buffalo river, was a succession of sand dunes and ridges; but between the mouth of the Buffalo and the lake shore were low, rich meadows, with fine, large trees bordering the stream. This is the “Island” of modern days, a place of elevators and warehouses. Here it was that Chabert, in compliance with orders from Quebec, not only planted crops but erected buildings. In summing up his losses he referred to it by its common designation, the Little Rapid. That his establishment was on the Buffalo side and not the Fort Erie side of the Niagara, is proved by the reference to the river *Aux Chevaux* above quoted. Here he had “15 arpents of front by 20 in depth, cultivated and sown.” In the schedule of his losses he says that 40 arpents were planted at the Little Rapid, and cultivated “with the mattock.” Here he had a shed 100 feet long, of pine; a barn, 100 feet, with cedar timbers (a marvelous long barn, but the figures are Chabert’s); a stable, a dwelling house, 45 feet; a shop, 20 feet, for the blacksmith; a storehouse 25 feet long; a second barn nearly finished. He enumerates plows, tools, etc., which with all his buildings and implements, were destroyed and laid waste.<sup>2</sup>

The statement of his losses can here only be summarized. In the original it is elaborately itemized and makes many pages.

<sup>2</sup> This was, in fact, the first Buffalo. Here clearly were a farmstead, tilled fields, a white man’s home, barns and storehouses, and some facilities for trade. The frequent allusions to the Chief of the Little Rapid in many documents indicate an Indian tribe resident in the neighborhood, at least for part of the year. This was 21 years before the first Seneca villages were built, farther up Buffalo River; and 27 years before any white man, save Chabert or his employees, is known to have established himself on the site of the present city of Buffalo; but Chabert’s designation of the site is in no wise vague, and his schedule of improvements is explicit. In brief, we have warrant for carrying the history of Buffalo back more than a quarter of a century earlier than is to be found in any hitherto published record.

He asked to be reimbursed 45,000 francs [*livres*] for loss on contract for transportation over the portage, from October 1, 1758, to July 25, 1759; for horses and vehicles furnished to officers and others, going and coming, 4,000 francs; for three horses killed, 560 francs; for supplies, "by order, to Frichet, master carpenter, for construction of boats and bateaux, planks, iron, work of horses and men," etc., 10,000 francs; for delivery at the Fort Niagara storehouse of 5500 pounds of iron, "which I have bought from travelers at three livres the pound, which should have been repaid to me in kind and never has been," 16,500 francs; for the construction of buildings at Fort Little Niagara, and elsewhere, though protesting they cost him much more, he set the figure at 15,000, making a total for the above items, of 91,060 francs.

In another schedule, which begins, "Concerning the invasion, capture and pillage by the enemy," he included many items for which he claimed his contract with the Government entitled him to reimbursement. There were 96 horses, "36 of them arrived the day before the siege of Niagara, which cost 500 livres each, without counting the wages of 20 men who had brought them, at 200 livres each man, and for four guides, 300 livres each," all of which he set down at 34,000 livres; there were 30 colts at 50 livres each, 36 good carts at 200 each, 12 sledges [*traines ferrées*] at 50 each, four drags with wheels and chains, 150 each; and a carriage [*calèche*] for the officers going and coming over the portage, 200 livres. Harness, saddles, nails, horsehoes, wood, charcoal, anvils, bellows, forges, plank, ironwork for a sawmill — a very long list is made of articles, the mere enumeration of which helps to make somewhat more distinct a picture of the rude and primitive conditions of the time. The *calèche* for the officers is an unwonted bit of luxury. One item that hints at heavy toil is "backboards," used in carrying packages on the backs of the plodding porters up and down the steep Portage road. All these things and more were put in at 25,000 livres, making a total of 69,100 livres in this schedule.

In a third list, Chabert included the equipment for 385 "soldiers," but he meant his savage warriors. "Who says the

equipment of a savage," he explains, "says at least one blanket [or fine cloth], a coat, often laced,<sup>3</sup> a pair of mitasses,<sup>4</sup> a shirt, a breech-clout; a gun, often of fine workmanship; a kettle, knife, needles, ribbons, vermilion, etc., over and over. This equipment of the warrior is always accompanied with a present for his wife and each child, who must be supported during all the campaign of the husband, and finally followed with a great feast for the warriors." Protesting that this item cost him at least 1000 livres per man, Chabert entered it at 250, a total of 96,250 livres. To this he added 15,000 livres to cover presents he had given the Indians. One interesting entry reads: "To purchase of horses, by order, from M. de Lignery, commandant on the Ohio, to carry the Scotch officers prisoners to Presqu' Isle, after the affair of September, 1758, 4399 liv." Consignments of goods for De Lignery in 1759, "said goods taken from my storehouses at Kanaouangon [Conewango], for which I have not been paid anything at all," 82,000 livres; numerous "small supplies" are valued at 18,000 livres; and the smallest item of all, which undoubtedly represented a grievous loss, is for "13 barrels of oil and 7 barrels of drink [*boisson*] lost at La Chine," 480 livres; making a substantial total in this schedule of 216,129 francs.

A fourth schedule covers provisions and stores, of which he was pillaged: Flour, grain, Indian corn, peas, lard, pitch, tallow, blankets, cloths, linen, hats, ribbons, vermilion, needles, guns, axes, tomahawks. "These stores were always abundant, always supplied. . . . Let them ask who they will, there is no one who will not reply, that it is a loss at least of five or six hundred thousand francs"; nevertheless, he lists them at 150,000. He adds 10,000 francs for a special stock of fine goods "not in use with the Indians," but luxuries for the officers at the further posts. These things, which he had bought at price current in France, proved rich plunder for the Indian allies of both France and England. He lost 1000 pairs of moccasins at 3 livres the pair; 30 head of beef, which had arrived from Detroit, doubtless on the hoof, "on the eve of the siege," for

<sup>3</sup> His word is *galonné*, i.e., trimmed with gold or silver lace.

<sup>4</sup> Legging or stocking. An Algonquin word adopted by the French.

the relief of Pouchot's garrison; all fell into the hands of the Indians and English. Beeves were valued on the frontier, if in condition, at 500 livres each, but Chabert reduces them to 300, making 9,000 livres for this item. He lost 150 packets of peltries valued at 150 livres each, or 22,500 francs. These he had bought for use in exchange for goods. His ruined fields, lost and broken implements and burned hay and grain he reckoned at 16,000 livres, bringing schedule four up to 210,500 francs. The four schedules together made a grand total of 586,789 livres, which on the basis of the present franc, made a loss of \$117,358, for which he sought to be reimbursed.

In spite of his elaborate protestations that it fell far short of his actual losses, the amount named would probably have been ample recompense. Chabert laid great stress on the disappearance of all documents, invoices and account-books, "lost or destroyed in the tumult and confusion of a forced retreat through the enemy's battalions." The outcome of his claim will be told in a subsequent chapter.

A romancer would find tempting material for a lively tale of adventure in the operations on Lake Ontario in this summer of 1760. Although Niagara had fallen, Frontenac and Toronto no longer existed, and Oswego was the base of an ever-strengthening enemy, two French vessels still cruised the lake, like uneasy spirits banished from accustomed haunts; and with all the odds against them, and never a friendly port left in the whole circuit of Ontario, managed for many weeks to keep the English apprehensive. Now and then they would appear off Oswego, to tempt Captain Loring, who would give chase, whereupon they would disappear like phantoms, symbol of the vanishing power which had lorded it over these Lakes since the days of Champlain.

There were but two of them left: the *Iroquoise* and the *Outaouaise* (Ottawa). After the destruction of Fort Frontenac, the French had made a new base down the river at Point au Baril, where defensive works were erected in the autumn of 1758 by the Sieur de Cressé, who also superintended the building of the two schooners. The site, on the north shore near the present village of Maitland, was chosen because it afforded a



fair harbor, convenient to timber.<sup>5</sup> The *Iroquoise* had been launched April 9, 1759; her consort, April 12th. On completion, the redoubtable La Force was given command of the *Iroquoise*, and Captain La Broquerie of the *Outaouaise*. Some note has been made of their service that summer, in which La Force gave such aid as he could to the beleaguered Pouchot at Niagara, carrying flour and pork to the garrison. After the surrender he and La Broquerie dogged the movements of the English; and it was with a wholesome respect for them that Sir William on that 4th of August when he dispatched the captured garrison to Oswego, postponed the embarkation from five in the morning until five at night. For the rest of the season, our two captains made harbor among the isles, at Point au Baril and La Présentation, maintaining meanwhile a spy service on the English at Oswego. In this they had to be wary, for Captain Loring was alert, and had several vessels at his service. The sloop *La Marquise de Vaudreuil*, and a brigantine, had been spared by the English when they foolishly destroyed the French fleet at Fort Frontenac in 1758, and had been carried to Oswego, where with changed names they may now have been in service. But the chief reliance of the English was on the two vessels built at Niagara since the conquest — the *Onondaga* and the *Mohawk*.<sup>6</sup> Because of their names, and because their flags were decorated with the picture of an Indian, Johnson's followers of the Six Nations regarded these vessels as their especial champions.

The season of 1759 closed without notable action on the waters of Ontario. In the spring of 1760, as soon as the ice allowed, the *Iroquoise*, flagship of "our Navy," as De Vaudreuil had been fond of writing, was again in commission; and with the rest of the squadron — the schooner *Outaouaise* — was once more carrying the white-bannered lilies of France among the isles and along the shores which for so long had acknowledged their sway. There was no longer reason for

<sup>5</sup> Hough locates the site of the shipyard as "probably Brockville," which is a few miles above Maitland. Old French records speak of it as "*Anco à la Construction*," from the vessels built there in 1759, but there is no deep bay in the vicinity.

<sup>6</sup> Pouchot incorrectly speaks of them as the *Seneca* and *Onoïda*.

threading the passages of the Bay of Quinté or for coasting along the deserted shores of the north and west. The long traverse towards Niagara, if attempted in bravado, offered nothing substantial to the cause of France. They were powerless to molest Niagara; to cruise into that part of the lake was to run the risk of being cut off from their own base, and trapped. But La Force and La Broquerie, with fruitless zeal, haunted the south shore, seeking to embarrass and perhaps injure the English in their transport of men and supplies to Fort Niagara; and hovered about Oswego, now drawing in to spy, now disappearing in the offing, according to weather and the movements of the English.

Captain Pouchot had long since been exchanged and returned to Montreal, where he arrived on Christmas Eve, 1759. In March he was sent up to the little island, some miles below present Ogdensburg, now known as Chimney Island. In 1760 it still bore its ancient name, *Oraquinton*; <sup>7</sup> but the French called it *Isle Royale*. Here fortifications were begun the preceding August by the engineer Desandrouins; he was recalled, and to Pouchot — the last French defender of Ontario at the West — was intrusted the task of completing the works and making a final defense against the English at the eastern gate of the Lakes. He labored throughout the spring and summer in fortifying the little island and neighboring points, loyally styling the completed work Fort Lévis.

Captain Pouchot's journal regarding this work is even more detailed and leisurely than in the portions relating to his earlier service at Niagara and Oswego. Into these details we cannot here follow him. He pays much attention to the Indians, who were never more uncertain than now. Indian spies sent to Oswego returned with tales which he dared not trust; or, impressed with the superior strength of the English, and the flavor of their liquor, wholly abjured a losing cause and did not return at all.

Captain Pouchot experienced a curious expression of the Abbé Picquet's ministrations in the neighborhood. The Indians would profess conversion for the sake of a blanket;

<sup>7</sup> Various spellings in early records: "Oraconenton," etc.

but when Pouchot sought to rally them to his aid they excused their loss of zeal by saying that their religion no longer permitted them to engage in war. In this final campaign of 1760 they were of little use to either army.

Early in July Captain Loring sailed down the lake from Niagara to Oswego. The *Iroquoise* and her consort had been hovering near the latter port, to watch the movements of the English. Loring took after them, but in the fog which shut down, the French, seeing only the *Onondaga*, gave chase; then discovering that she was supported by other armed craft, crowded on sail and escaped to La Galette, while Captain Loring returned to Oswego. He had missed a golden opportunity to distinguish himself. He was under definite orders to intercept the French boats and keep them from reaching their base down the river. If he had had in him the stuff of some British sailors, the Lower Lakes could have claimed another hero; a little of the spirit, say, of Captain Gardiner of the *Monmouth*, who, when the *Foudroyant* hove in sight, exclaimed to his officers: "She looks more than a match for us, but I will not quit her while this ship can swim or I have a soul left alive."

The stuff that makes heroes was, however, not lacking in Amherst's command, as the sequel was to show. He had gathered at Oswego a mighty force—time and place considered. The keynote of Pitt's policy was preparedness; which meant not merely foresight and strategy, but, when the clash came, men and metal to overwhelm the enemy. So up the tedious Mohawk route had been brought some 10,000<sup>s</sup> troops,—three times the size of the army, accounted large, with which Bradstreet had destroyed Frontenac. But its strength was designed, not for the Lakes, but for Montreal; for Amherst's army was

<sup>s</sup> According to Mante, Amherst's army mustered 10,142, men and officers, besides 706 Indians under Johnson. The Indian contingent was variable. The more reliable force consisted of the Royal Highlanders, 1st and 2d battalions; the 44th, 45th and 46th regiments; the 4th battalion of the 60th regiment; 8 companies of the 77th, 5 companies of the 80th; 597 grenadiers, 597 light infantry, 146 rangers, and 167 of the Royal Artillery. Of the colonials there were the New Jersey regiment, 3 battalions of the New York and 4 of the Connecticut regiments. It was the mightiest host that had ever invaded the lake region. A return in the Canadian Archives (A. & W. I., 94, p. 143) gives the total strength of the army as 10,961.

but one of three, which drawing in simultaneously from east, south and west on the last stronghold of Canada, was to end the war and the days of New France. With these remoter movements our narrative is not concerned; but this chronicle must include one episode of Amherst's advance, for it constitutes the final act in the drama of the Lower Lakes under the French.

In Amherst's path lay the Isle Royale with Pouchot's fort. To still further bar his progress cruised the *Iroquoise* and the *Outaouaise*. The discrepancy in force makes this final conflict somewhat farcical, somewhat pathetic. Pouchot's force, including the men on the vessels, did not exceed 500. Amherst might have ignored the French, beyond such exchange of shots as would have enabled him to pass on through the disputed channel; he could have passed Fort Lévis "like a beaver's hut," as an Indian phrased it; as, indeed, General Murray, in his progress up the river from Québec, passed Three Rivers, content to leave behind an enemy post, knowing it could not harm him. But such a course did not accord with Amherst's habits of thoroughness. The French must be cleared from his path, to the last man, boat and battery. What he dreaded, in his passage from Oswego to Montreal, was not the valiant Pouchot on Isle Royale, or the guns of the two French schooners; but the various difficult channels and wild rapids with which his men were not acquainted. He needed to defeat Pouchot in order to get his Canadian boatmen who could pilot the English force through in safety.

Captain Loring weighed anchor August 7th, and with the *Onondaga* of 18 guns and 100 men, and the *Mohawk* of 16 guns and 90 men, sailed across the lake to Frontenac, in hopes of taking the French vessels by surprise. "You will make it your business," ran Amherst's orders, "to attack, take, sink, burn and destroy them, if you should be so lucky as to meet with them."<sup>9</sup> Haldimand was to go with a detachment in whale-boats and bateaux, by safest route to Grand Isle, and encamp, or on Isle Cochon if it seemed more advantageous. His men were to sound the channel and help Loring find safe passage

<sup>9</sup> Amherst to Loring, Aug. 6th; Haldimand MSS. These papers abound in details of the advance from Oswego to Montreal.

for his vessels. The embarkation from Oswego was completed, August 11th, when the greater part of the army proceeded in bateaux and row-gallies; but Loring with his vessels mistook the channel, fell behind, and instead of preceding the army, followed most of it to the rendezvous at La Présentation.

The passage to that point occupied several days; so that the Indians, amazed at the endless number of boats, told Pouchot that the sound of their oars never ceased. On the 16th, near Point au Baril, there was an exchange of shots with the *Outaouaise*. The next day, as La Broquerie attempted to sail up the river, he was attacked by an English force in five row-boats, commanded by Colonel Williamson.

This was one of the most remarkable actions in the history of the Lakes. La Broquerie's vessel mounted one 18-pounder, seven 12-pounders, two 8's and four swivels. She was a top-sail schooner, and is variously spoken of as schooner, sloop and brig. Whatever her exact rig, she was a craft of 160 tons and on this occasion had a hundred men on board.

Colonel Williamson's five small boats — row-gallies they are styled in old reports — carried in all five officers and 25 artillerymen, besides the oarsmen. Four of these gallies carried each a brass 12-pounder, the fifth a howitzer. In the face of La Broquerie's broadsides they surrounded the ship and gave volley for volley. It was an audacious and probably an unnaval attack; for Williamson was a landsman and a volunteer. In a small boat he passed back and forth among the row-gallies, directing their shots and maneuvers, absolutely exposed but unharmed. It was a singular conflict, the combatants suggesting an unwieldy wounded buffalo beset by alert wolves. The ship fired 72 rounds, mostly into the clear waters of the river. Williamson gave in return 118 shot, with such effect that after two hours La Broquerie hauled down his flag and surrendered. His loss was three killed and 12 wounded. The English had one man killed and two wounded. The *Outaouaise* was taken to a secure anchorage, remanned by the English and named the *Williamson*; and her late commander and crew were taken prisoners to Amherst's camp at La Présentation.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The credit of this exploit is given to Israel Putnam, in the "Life" of

Thus dwindled the French power on the Lakes. Detroit and all western posts were cut off, and in our study are negligible. There now remained only Pouchot behind his breastworks at Isle Royale, and La Force on the *Iroquoise*. If La Broquerie's final service for his flag was scarcely gallant, that of La Force was even less so. On August 1st he ran his vessels aground above Point au Baril; and although she was got off, 15 feet of keel was broken and she leaked, a foot an hour. By the 15th she was reported repaired, but no further service by her is mentioned either by French or English authorities. She apparently lay disabled and of little use until Pouchot gave up his fort.

The English attack on Fort Lévis presents several features of interest. Pouchot had to submit to the ignominy of a bombardment by the prize brig *Williamson*, which had so lately flown the French flag. One of the English schooners, the *Onondaga*, got into shallow water close in shore where she could not help herself, and received such a hot fire from Pouchot's batteries that she struck her colors. What followed is best told by an eye-witness:

that worthy by Col. David Humphreys. Of the advance of the English force down the river, Humphreys says: "Two armed vessels obstructed the passage, and prevented the attack on Oswegatchie [La Présentation]. Putnam, with 1000 men, in 50 batteaux, undertook to board them. This dauntless officer, ever sparing of the blood of others, as prodigal of his own, to accomplish it with the less loss, put himself (with a chosen crew, a beetle and wedges) in the van, with a design to wedge the rudders, so that the vessels would not be able to turn their broadsides, or perform any other manoeuvres. All the men in his little fleet were ordered to strip to their waistcoats, and advance at the same time. He promised, if he lived, to join and show them the way up the sides. Animated by so daring an example, they moved swiftly, in profound stillness, as to certain victory or death. The people on board the ships, beholding the good countenance with which they approached, ran one of the vessels on shore. Had it not been for the dastardly conduct of the ship's company in the latter, who compelled the captain to haul down his ensign, he would have given his assailants a bloody reception; for the vessels were well provided with spars, nettings, and every customary instrument of annoyance as well as defense." That Putnam led the attack on the French vessels is a fiction. He was with Amherst's army, and may have shared in the action under Williamson. Humphreys is a perfect example of the old-time biographer who knew no limits in the laudation of his hero, and made him the head and front of everything with which he had anything to do.

She struck to the enemy, and sent a batteau to them with four men and Mr. Thornton, the Commodore's second, who looking at that distance so like Loring, we thought at the batteries it was he. The same boat rowing back again to the ship with one of her crew, probably to fire her, Captain Adam Williamson,<sup>11</sup> the engineer, pointed a gun, and fired through her, taking both that fellow's arms off, which made her row into shore directly; perceiving then there was a squabble on board the *Onondago* about what they should do, the General sent an officer's party on board, who hoisted the colours again, and saved her for ourselves.<sup>12</sup>

To lose a ship and then retake it, under the batteries of the enemy, is the sort of exploit that has made English naval annals glorious. This was a small affair, but it rings true; not indeed on the part of Captain Loring, who is said to have ordered the surrender, but on the part of General Amherst, who, slow in some situations, was here quick to seize an opportunity.

Pouchot's fort was literally shot to pieces, and on the 25th — 13 months to a day after his surrender of Fort Niagara — he capitulated. Every officer with him was wounded, and more than 60 men were killed or wounded.<sup>13</sup>

Pouchot, La Force, and La Broquerie, with the remnants of the French garrison and crews, were returned to Oswego, and carried thence as prisoners of war to New York. General Amherst, keeping with him every man who could serve as pilot, ran the rapids, finding them more deadly than the opposing French had been; for in the passage, mostly at the Cedars, he lost 64 boats, with stores and ordnance and 88 men drowned. Of the ultimate junction of his army with those of Murray and Haviland, and the final capitulation of Montreal — which meant the end of French dominion in Canada — history has abundant record.

Of the three men who were the last to defend the cause of France on Lake Ontario, Captain François Pouchot was most

<sup>11</sup> Son of Col. George Williamson who had captured the *Outaouaise*.

<sup>12</sup> Knox's "Journal," II, 411-412.

<sup>13</sup> According to Knox, Pouchot had at Fort Lévis two captains, six subalterns and 291 men, of whom a lieutenant of artillery and 12 men were killed, and 35 wounded. The English loss was given as 21 killed and 23 wounded.

notable. Little is learned of La Broquerie. In 1756 he commanded the schooner *Huron*, of 18 guns, carrying 40 marines, and the seemingly large crew of 80 men. Aside from his commands of the *Huron* and the *Outaouaise*, he does not figure in the records or reports of the time.

Captain La Force, who was virtually admiral of Lake Ontario for four years, appears to have been the same La Force<sup>14</sup> who in 1753 was given as a hostage by the French to the English for the execution of the articles of capitulation of Fort Necessity. If so, he was the same La Force who, in December, 1753, escorted Washington from Venango to Le Bœuf; the same who was taken prisoner, May 28, 1754, and for whose enterprise and ability the English had great respect. Writing to Governor Dinwiddie, Washington said: "La Force would, if released, I really think, do more disservice than fifty other men, as he is a person whose active spirit leads him into all parties, and has brought him acquainted with all parts of the country. Add to this a perfect use of the English tongue and great influence with the Indians." Captain Stobo also speaks of his value to the French. In 1756, as commander of the *Marquise de Vaudreuil*, he headed the naval force on Lake Ontario. He carried a crew of 30, with 50 or more marines; and his vessel's armament included eight 8-pounders, eight 6-pounders and eight swivels that fired 2-pound shot. In 1758 he had been sent to Niagara with Claude Poulín, *dit* Courval, the Sieur de Cressé. Note has been made of his service during the siege of Fort Niagara. He seems to have turned readily from service on the lake to expeditions through the forest. La Présentation was his base for both. In 1757 he headed a band of Indians which set out from the vicinity of the Abbé Picquet's mission, made their way through the wilderness and killed an Englishman near Schenectady. At the siege of Fort William Henry, July, 1757, he appeared, with the Abbé Picquet, as an interpreter. A month later, he was a prisoner, and Montcalm was writing "particularly" for his return. From such scattered facts we get some portraiture, none too distinct, of this active

<sup>14</sup> So regarded by Tanguay, *Dic. Gén.*, V, 82; but no family record is given, nor even his first name.



Canadian who in the closing years of the war, seems virtually to have had a free hand, on Lake Ontario.<sup>15</sup>

With Captain Pouchot, the third of the trio who were the last to fight for France within the field of our study, the reader has already some acquaintance. His own ample though fragmentary memoir, one of the most useful sources of our study, sufficiently sets forth his varied services. As related in a previous chapter, he had rebuilt and defended Niagara. He had also served as engineer at the siege of Oswego in 1756, and had distinguished himself at Ticonderoga in 1758. Vaudreuil, in 1756, asked that he be made brevet lieutenant-colonel, and granted a pension, in consideration "of his economies in the Niagara works, where certainly he has made a respectable and solid fortification at little expense"; but these requests were not granted. As proved, both at Niagara and Isle Royale, he was not only a capable engineer, but a dogged, sturdy fighter; and although he surrendered twice to the British, never once did he show the white feather. After the fall of Fort Lévis, he was sent to New York and thence, January 1, to France, where he arrived in March, 1761. France was just then full of Canadians and others whose service in Canada was chiefly associated in the public mind, with wholesale fraud and corruption. It is not strange that Pouchot came under suspicion. An order was issued for his committal to the Bastille, but more innocent or more fortunate than many of his fellows, his disclaimer of complicity in any wrong dealing was listened to. In the words of the anonymous eulogy prefixed to the "*Mémoires*," "The thunder of Power ceased to mutter when the voice 'of Innocence was heard." Cleared of all charges, but poor and with a large family to care for, he sought further military service. He was sent to Corsica, where, in making a reconnaissance with 50 men, he was shot by Corsicans hidden in some bushes, and died, May 8, 1769. His valuable memoirs, written at his home in Grenoble prior to his Corsican ap-

<sup>15</sup> His adventures did not cease with the close of the war. In the autumn of 1761 he embarked at Quebec on the *Auguste*, for France. Nov. 15th she was wrecked on the coast of Cape Bréton. Of 121 passengers, 113 were lost, including the Chevalier de La Corne and M. de Becancourt Portneuf. La Force escaped; but I have found no record of his later career.

pointment, were published in Yverdon, Switzerland, in 1781. Scarcity long since gave the original edition place among costly Americana, but the work has genuine worth to the student of the later years of French occupancy of the Lower Lakes. A quaint but useful map, contained in the work, showing the Ontario and western New York region, and the exceedingly interesting map by Captain Pouchot in the British Museum, are sources of information not elsewhere duplicated.

Of all who have figured in our narrative none departed from this scene of activity in more striking fashion than the Abbé Picquet. He had passed the winter of 1760 in Montreal. In the spring of that year, foreseeing that the loss of the colony was inevitable and having abundant reason for preferring not to fall into the hands of the English, he retreated through the wilderness to Louisiana. He had hoped, we are told, to achieve this with a considerable body of troops—"grenadiers from each battalion, saving the flags and the honor of their corps"—but this could not be accomplished. He was obliged to be content with a body-guard of 25 Frenchmen and a varying, at times large, escort of Indians. He does not appear to have followed even the wild Ottawa route, but may have plunged into the wilderness to the south of it, making his way through that vast network of forest and rock, of lake and stream, a portion of which is to-day set aside as Algonquin Park. Coming out on the forest-walled shore of Lake Nipissing, the strange caravan crossed it, and by the St. Francis and north shore of Lake Huron, reached the old post at Mackinac, in mid-October. With native escorts renewed from the various tribes encountered as he went along, the Abbé leisurely crossed to the Mississippi and placidly voyaged down its vast current, reaching New Orleans in July, 1761. The retreat, begun in apprehension of his life, had become a triumphal progress.

Montcalm on occasion had amused himself in planning a retreat, in case his army were overwhelmed by the English, through the Lakes or the wilderness to the Mississippi, and down to the safer precincts of the French Colony on the Gulf. How seriously he considered such a course cannot be said; but of all the men in the history we trace, the only one who at-

tempted and accomplished it, was the Abbé Picquet, whose picturesque career, and equally picturesque character, are well worthy further attention than they have received at the hands of historians.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Parkman's chapters on the Abbé, graphic in drawing and just in estimate as they appear to be, by no means exhaust the subject, but are the best we have in English. In French there is Picquet's own journal, unpublished (a copy in the Canadian Archives); the works of Lalande and Chagny, already cited. An excellent shorter study is "*Le Fondateur de la Présentation*," by the Abbé A. Gosselin, Trans. Roy. Soc. Can., 1895.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### CHABERT'S DEFENSE

AN ERA OF FRAUD AND WASTE — CHABERT'S ADMINISTRATION ON THE NIAGARA PORTAGE — THE GREATEST TRANSPORTATION MONOPOLIST IN AMERICA — THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM.

ONE phase of the administration of Canada in its last days under the French, is as familiar to students of the subject as is the course of the war by which the Colony was lost: the phase of corruption in high places and in low, in everything pertaining to financial administration; but in relation to the Niagara and its portage, it is a phase unfamiliar and unstudied.

It is unnecessary here to recite the circumstances and methods by which the Intendant, Bigot, and many of his associates, robbed the Government on a colossal scale; but it is essential to our purpose to show how the system of graft and of cheating was worked in the Lake and Niagara region, and at the posts dependent on the Niagara portage. It is a story until now unwritten, in relation to the region we are studying.

By 1758, France was complaining, angrily expostulating, at the outrageous increase in the cost of supplying Frontenac, Niagara and dependent posts. Bigot and his accomplices kept serenely on. By 1759, expostulation began to give way to a cool resolve to bring the rascals to judgment; and not even this crucial year of the war, and the loss of Canada, turned France from this high purpose; for here was a case where Justice called for most rigorous and unrelaxing application of the machinery of punishment. That, in the end, the punishment did not fit the crime, is not surprising, for France herself, bereft and distracted by losses, was not to be looked to, just then, for extreme measures.

In the region of Lake Ontario the storm began to gather, after the loss of Fort Frontenac. "How do you wish me," wrote Berryer, then Colonial Minister, "to reconcile the enormous demands for all sorts of goods which you have made

this year, under pretext of a general scarcity of everything, with your information contained in other letters wherein you advise me of the capture of Fort Frontenac; that the King has lost, in that fort, a prodigious quantity of provisions and goods. I am not ignorant that the fort was the depot for the posts on Lakes Ontario and Erie and the Ohio; that therefore it must be always supplied; but if the posts in the upper countries could have caused an expenditure in provisions and merchandise, Fort Frontenac had no need of all you say it contained. I forewarn you," he added, "it is my intention to establish a new order as soon as circumstances will permit it."<sup>1</sup>

Montcalm, concerned only with the conduct of the military campaign, was an amazed observer of the official robberies that went on unrebuked. "Has the King need of purchasing goods for the Indians?" he wrote to Belle Isle, in April, 1759. "Instead of buying them directly, a favorite is notified, who purchases at any price whatever; then M. Bigot has them removed to the King's stores, allowing a profit of 100 or even 150 per cent. to those it is desired to favor." In that spring, provisions for the garrison at Fort Niagara cost eight times more than in 1755. This was not scarcity, but monopoly.

Investigations were begun, but Bigot was not alarmed; astutely foreseeing the loss of the colony before the law could hold him responsible for his share in it. In December, 1758, he informed the President of the Navy Board that the bills of exchange for that year, which were expected to be 16,000,000 livres, would amount to 24,000,000, "of which a part is for expenses of the preceding year." In April, he writes that the accounts for 1759 will be from 31,000,000 to 33,000,000 livres! Never, was the reply, had there been an example of so enormous an expenditure "nor of the easy manner in which he announced it, as though such heavy sums could be had without trouble." One of Bigot's explanations was that there were great abuses at the trading posts, and vast increase in the cost of their supplies. The great offenders were themselves at Montreal and Quebec; but so far as the western posts were in-

<sup>1</sup> Berryer to Bigot, Versailles, Jan. 19, 1759.

volved, the accusation fell heaviest on the master of the Niagara Portage.

Chabert's defense of his administration at Fort Little Niagara is a long and verbose document, a summary of which must here suffice. It has been related (II, 190) how, in 1757, at the Governor's orders, he had assumed the task of provisioning the posts of Presqu' Isle; Le Bœuf, the Allegheny and Ohio. He says there were 40 posts and villages dependent on him. Relying on the promise of Vaudreuil, that unforeseen losses should be charged to the King's account, he used all his own ready money "and took the rest on credit." This alleged promise of Vaudreuil, so palpably opening the way to loose transactions without limit, would be unbelievable, save of a period when anything might be sanctioned and of an administration under which anything might be done. "Would it have been possible," exclaims Chabert, "to make a more unjust proposition to a private individual, than that he venture all his property, all the mainstay for his children, and even the property of others, on the hazards of war? Would he not be a madman?"

So far as related to the control of the Indians and the conduct of trade, Chabert was the most influential man in all the region here under study. "Loved and respected by the Indians," he says, "and having at command considerable sums, I was able, alone, independent of whatever happened to carry on the greatest trade in Canada. That I have not done so, is because I was more eager for honor than for money, more jealous of sustaining the Colony than of increasing my own income." Vaudreuil knew this; nor was it any mark of favoritism or corruption that led him to such ample spending power in Chabert's hands. The great purpose at the Niagara portage, was not so much to rob the King as to hold fast to the Indians. A more uncertain or wasteful system could not have been devised; nor was it any the less wasteful because of the elaborate system of checks and safeguards supposed to be in force.

One thing, Chabert says, troubled him. In after days, when brought to an accounting, the Governor, like many a modern witness, "could not remember" to have given orders for trans-

portation by the Niagara route, at the King's expense, of the effects of merchants who were going to trade at the several posts. At the trial Chabert cited the express terms of the instructions Vaudreuil had given him: "He shall have the portage of the goods and effects of said traders made on the King's account"; but, he generously adds, it was not strange that the Governor, giving so many orders, should forget this one! He continues:

The orders were not only wise, but absolutely necessary. There were quite 50 leagues of portage — and sometimes 70 — for the carrying of goods to these peoples. What trader would choose to expose himself to the risks and fatigues of such transport if the Governor did not grant some slight concession, in sparing him the most difficult and costly of all the portages, that of the Niagara, which however was only 10 leagues. The proof that no one would have undertaken it without this advantage, is found in the fact that everybody gave up the trade.

So it was Chabert or nobody. And Chabert served for some two years, perhaps the greatest transportation monopolist in America. He was a large employer of labor; the Niagara portage road was rebuilt under his direction. He brought into the region much live stock, especially horses and cattle. He built storhouses at several towns among the Senecas, and in the Allegheny valley; and he filled and refilled them with vast quantities of goods. When, at the trial in Paris, in 1763, he was called on to produce his books, or vouchers, or any proofs of transactions, he lamented that his clerks had been unable to save them "from the hands of the English." They had been burned or stolen and scattered, when his fort was destroyed in July, 1759. It is a question, whether Chabert set fire to his own establishment, or whether it was burned by Johnson's Indians. If he burned the place, as he says he did, he was responsible for the loss of his books. He says nothing about trying to save them. The prosecution passed over the point, perhaps influenced by his impassioned logic:

I should be pitied, not blamed, for having lost the documents

most essential to the recovery of my property; and for what am I culpable in the matter? Should it be for my goods which I have lost, and for those of individuals who helped me sustain the Colony by contributing to my advances? It was certainly not the King's money — of that I have had neither the handling nor the use; I even dare affirm that if he would consent to recompense me with a third of the amount I have spent for him, I should still rejoice in a fortune splendid enough to console me for the misfortunes of the war and the injustice of my accusers.

They ask me, has there been no malversation in this part of the service? I answer, if I had known of any, the remedy would have been as prompt as the wrong, my personal interest would have required it, since I would have been the first victim of these trickeries. . . . If I had wished to connive at any irregularity, I would not have been able to carry it through, because the weighing of goods was done by the King's storekeepers, before delivering them to my clerks, who then received a statement of the goods and of their weight, with a certificate signed by the commandant at Niagara. Now, the storekeepers and the commandant, with whom many a time I have had discussions and disputes, would readily and at once discover any wrong-doing, since they were the scrupulous examiners, the ocular witnesses, the severe censors and the stern judges of my conduct and service; since, finally, the Intendant or the Commissary would not pass upon, nor order payment for transportation, except after the exact verification of the weights, and the examination of the combined certificates of the commandant and the storekeepers.

If there was any wrong-doing, he avers, it was not in matters he attended to; he could not have robbed the Government without collusion with the commandant at Niagara and others; and he adds a somewhat convincing touch: "It is notorious that intercourse, harmony and concord have never been perfect enough, between them and me, to afford the least foundation for this supposition."

When the prosecution urged against Chabert a somewhat different charge — that the frauds at the Niagara portage had been committed in his absence, but that he was responsible for them — he indulged in rhetorical flights which we make no attempt to follow, diverting as they are in the study of his life and character. He reminded the court that at the time in



question he was an officer in the King's service, and not enough of a financier to watch over his own interests; that it was under orders from his superiors that he absented himself from his own fort, giving his service for the salvation of the Colony. He was much too adroit, and had too good a case of it, for the prosecution to make any headway in this line of attack. He had no trouble in showing how urgent, useful and loyal his service had been.

Then he turned on his accusers and challenged them to produce any proofs of corrupt conduct on his part. Should an officer, he asked, whose uprightness had been known for more than 30 years, "lose liberty as well as honor by reason of false accusations, proved calumnies, monstrous impositions, upon injurious and unfounded suspicion, upon indecent and unproved hearsay, upon trivial and ridiculous appearances, upon vague and uncertain information, upon rash possibilities, often imaginary, always inadmissible, because they are the ordinary fruit of passion, lying, deceit and malice." In such fashion, even more effective in French than English, did Chabert plead his own cause.

Chabert claimed not merely to have been upright in his own dealings, but to have been basely cheated by the Commissary-General, Cadet, by Morin, who was Cadet's treasurer, and especially by one Penisseau, a contractor of Montreal.

Morin had testified that in the autumn of 1758, Chabert sent to him a great package of certificates, for more than 60,000 livres, "which appeared to be all newly signed, and that one Saint-Germain, clerk to Cadet, had said to him that I had made it easy in my fort"—in other words that Chabert had signed up, all at once, this amount of trade vouchers, regardless of the transactions they were supposed to stand for. In defense, Chabert stated that he had sent in vouchers for 60,000 livres, at one time; that about half of them came to him or through the hands of his clerks in payment for goods taken from his storehouses; as to the rest, he deposed as follows:

As to the other half it did not belong to me; that is the truth. After the defeat of the Scotch at Fort Duquesne, the council of

war ordered me to conduct the officers of the enemy, prisoners, to Montreal. Several French officers begged me to take charge of certificates which were in their hands. These taken together, amounted to 30,000 livres, and made a big mass of paper. I at first refused the commission, because having all told only 10 men as escort, I was liable to be massacred in the woods by hostile bands, or by savages, without having time to put them in a safe place. However, these gentlemen had solicited me, through the commandant at Fort Duquesne, to carry their papers with me, at all events. . . . I took charge of them; but I found at the Niagara Portage fort orders which prevented me from going on to Montreal, so I sent all the certificates to Morin, to whom they were addressed.

The passage illustrates a readily-understood state of affairs among the officers and employees of these distant posts. On the certificates they had accumulated, which were but vouchers for their selling transactions, they were entitled to credit. The war having stopped normal traffic, they seized the opportunity of Chabert's embassy with the prisoners. He names several of the officers who thus put their certificates in his hands: Mont-Isambert, Rigauville, Corbière, Dancour, Delisle, Baby, Conton-Conte, Languedoc, and others, who had certificates amounting to 55,000 livres. "The packet was very considerable, since a great many of the bills were for only 15 to 20 sous." In giving these details at his trial, Chabert remarked: "Most of these persons are in France; they can be questioned."

It was at most a flimsy charge. Obviously, if Morin had mistrusted these certificates, it was for him to refuse payment. Chabert claimed that the greater part of the sum was for materials required at the posts, and not for provisions.

Between Chabert, Cadet and Penisseau<sup>2</sup> there were charges and countercharges. Chabert claimed that the Commissary-General owed him 389,600 livres; Cadet swore he had paid to Chabert 133,000 livres. At great length, Chabert denied having received it. One Philippe, a clerk for Cadet, swore he had made the payment in 1759. Chabert was quick to seize the point: "I employed all the winter and spring of this year with

<sup>2</sup> In Chabert's *Mémoire*, usually spelled Penissault, but the shorter form is permissible.

expeditions and negotiations with the Indians, at all times far from every town of the Colony. I returned therefrom to the Fort of the Portage and from there to Fort Niagara, for its defense; I was taken there by capitulation on July 24th, and carried into New England, whence I did not return to Montreal until Christmas Eve of this year 1759. Up to that time, there was not a moment when I could have seen either Cadet or Philippe, and I spoke with the first only at the beginning of January, 1760, to borrow from him 3000 livres, and the 15th, to borrow 4000 livres, in order to pay several of my workmen who had returned with me from New England; borrowed that of which I would have had no need if he had delivered to me 133,000 livres a few days before." These facts, observes Chabert, Cadet could not deny "except by the habit of lying, which he has contracted."

If Cadet had paid him, continues Chabert, "he holds my receipt. Let him produce it"; and Cadet could not. The affair need not be followed further. As bearing on the honesty of Chabert's administration, it received great attention at his trial. It also illustrates the notorious method of Cadet, who doubled the amount and charged the King with 266,000 livres on Chabert's account.

Still another accusation against Chabert was that he had not furnished the amount of supplies which the Commissary-General had paid for.

As Commissary-General Cadet had to provision all the forts of the Colony. Supplies passed from one post to another, in the course of distribution. Everything for the sustenance of Presqu' Isle, Le Bœuf and Venango came first to Fort Niagara and was carried over the portage. The sending of food stores was in the hands of Cadet and his associates; but they had nothing to do with the sending of munitions of war, or goods for the Indian trade. Yet with all of these, as well as the shipments of furs, and of goods in exchange for traders, Chabert, as master of the Niagara portage, had much to do. During his long absences, his chief clerk, whom he speaks of as "the Sieur Colonge," acted for him and had a more intimate knowledge of the forwarding business than Chabert himself.

It can readily be seen that there was limitless opportunity for loss, by accident, by carelessness, or by theft. A schooner unloaded at Fort Niagara her cargo of flour, barrels of pork and other food stuffs, some of it shipped for the Niagara garrison, some for the Portage fort, some for Presqu' Isle and beyond. The same vessel may have brought cases of guns, ammunition and other munitions of war. A third class of goods would be clothing, paint, powder and bullets, weapons and ornaments, designed exclusively for the Indian trade. All of these things, with separate invoices, had to be handled many times before reaching their destination; transferred from schooner to bateau or canoe; carried by men or horses up the steep slopes of Lewiston Heights, or by the aid of the windlass hauled up the incline; carried through the woods, under inadequate or corrupt escort, which did not prevent bales and casks from being broken open or from disappearing altogether. St. Anthony knew no temptation such as beset a thirsty Indian, when intrusted with a cask of brandy; yet so difficult was it to procure labor on the Niagara portage that Chabert, as well from necessity as from policy, made much use of Indians. The goods were no sooner set down on the strand at Fort Little Niagara, than those consigned to the posts further on were again loaded into bateaux, to be rowed, poled and sailed (for sails were used, when possible, on bateaux) up the difficult upper river and across the uncertain waters of Lake Erie, with the new hazards of loss and damage by wind and wave, added to the constant wastage and pilfering by careless boatmen and hungry soldiers. This process repeated over and over, from Presqu' Isle to Le Bœuf, from Le Bœuf to Venango, the goods diverted into many Indian villages, there is small wonder that so laborious a system of freighting developed shortages and losses of every sort, which an elaborate system of checking by certificates and signed vouchers was powerless to prevent. Small wonder too, if, throughout the region of this distribution, in the host of clerks and storekeepers which the system required, there were not those who did not scruple to falsify reports and resort to various devices for their own unlawful profit; following, so far as their limited opportunities allowed, the example of the great thieves

who were at the head of the business in Montreal and Quebec. It would have been strange if one in Chabert's position, should escape suspicion.

Cadet, as Commissary-General of the Colony, assumed the responsibility of provisioning the posts. For Niagara and its dependencies, he sought the coöperation of Chabert. Cadet called it a partnership; Chabert, at his trial, did not relish the term, or the association which it implied, and explained at great length what his relations with "the former butcher-boy" had been. As the war had progressed and the food resources of Canada grew scarce, with prodigious increase of cost, Chabert was directed by Vaudreuil to procure at Niagara and elsewhere, all possible supplies from the Indians. It was not, at best, an abundant source of supply, save possibly in the two items of corn and game. At any rate, Chabert says: "I made a bargain with Cadet by which I agreed to furnish him with provisions and other wares at a very modest price"; he adds that he procured them at one-sixth of what they were selling for in Canada.

Each party to the arrangement presently claimed that he was defrauded. Cadet sent a representative, Penisseau, to Fort Niagara, to Chabert's post (and perhaps to those beyond), to check up the business. Colonge, at the Portage fort, presently reported that Penisseau was wholly devoid — to quote Chabert's words — of "integrity and uprightness"; but the whole accumulation of testimony shows him up — to use the language of our own time — as a crook and a grafter. Accounts were falsified, and Chabert's moderate charges, in the hands of Penisseau and Cadet, were multiplied many times, for the King to pay.

It is edifying to note the freight tariff of those days. As a ton of Pennsylvania coal to-day costs several times as much in Montana as it does at the mine, so were the values of provisions increased the further they got from France and Quebec. But it is difficult to compare the transportation facilities of to-day with those of the period we are studying. On provisions and post supplies sent beyond Niagara, an advance was made of 100 per cent, above the Quebec price, in time of peace,

and 200 per cent. in time of war. Niagara itself stood at 100 per cent. Bigot and Cadet claimed that this was made necessary by the cost and risks of transport. A much greater advance was often made by traders in selling to the Indians.

One large shipment of goods consigned to Presqu' Isle and the posts beyond, never got past Fort Niagara. This was in 1758. At Bigot's trial, it became a subject of inquiry. He testified that he had paid Cadet for forwarding them, on a basis of 200 per cent. advance over the Quebec price. When confronted by Cadet, he remembered that he had allowed only 100 per cent. He could not recall the reasons that had forced the convoy to stay at Fort Niagara. He did not know whether the generals had ordered it, or whether it was because they could not proceed farther. The English control of Lake Ontario, that summer, had not prevented the passage of the goods as far as Niagara. Whatever the cause, it sufficed to make Bigot lessen the profit, and pay only 100 per cent. advance instead of the 200 per cent. called for had the goods reached their destination.

In November, 1758, Cadet presented to Bigot five accounts of these goods, as figured by the Sieur Barbelle, head appraiser; certified by the head storekeeper and endorsed by Vassan, then in command at Fort Niagara. The amount, in great precision, was 1,142,250 livres, 11 sous, 3 deniers, in which the profit was only on the 100 per cent. basis above Quebec. Bigot signed these accounts, and when they were laid before him at the trial, admitted that the goods had stopped at Fort Niagara.

If Bigot stole on a colossal scale, he also allowed others to do so; that was essential to his success. In pressing one charge against him — that he had permitted Cadet too great profits — the scale of advance in price, on goods passing to and beyond the Niagara, was clearly shown. In reply to the accusation that the Intendant had allowed Cadet 500 per cent. profit, the defense said:

The perspective is frightful, but it gradually diminishes when approached and studied. It reduces to a profit of 100 per cent., one half of the 200 per cent. which would have been due had the

goods reached their destination. The profit at Quebec and Montreal was at 200 per cent. Thus goods which according to the invoice of France, had been purchased at 100 livres, were valued at Quebec at 300 livres; carried to the Ohio-river fort [Venango], at 200 per cent. above the Quebec price, they would have mounted to 900 livres. Remaining at Niagara and allowed at 100 per cent., they come to 600 livres; which indeed carries a profit of 500 per cent. over the price in France. But this advance had various causes, which should not be confounded: the perils of navigation from the shores of France to Canada — as well perils of the sea as of the enemies which infest it; the difficulties of transport in the colony, and the new risks from the English, who infest not only the Ohio but even the lakes and lands through which the goods must pass. Whatever it may be, such were the ordinary prices: 150 per cent. profit in time of peace, 200 per cent. in time of war. Bigot allowed only 100 per cent. to Cadet, because he had stopped at Niagara; a profit which appears just and reasonable, expense and risks considered.

An elaborate contract for supplying the posts and the dependent Indians with food and other necessaries, had been executed, witnessed and signed at Quebec, October 26, 1756, by the Intendant Bigot and Cadet and Martel, contractors. Its 42 articles appear to cover every possible condition and emergency that might arise. The agreement was for nine years. Many of the specifications dealt with the forwarding of supplies to the Lake Ontario posts, to Niagara and the chain of posts to the Ohio. The King was to furnish men for the transport and sufficient escort to protect them. He was to supply, for the Lakes, whatever *bateaux du cent* were needed.

The voyageurs used to put up their freight in packages of 50 pounds weight, which could be carried easily on the back, over the portages, and canoes were spoken of as carrying so many packs of 50. A bark canoe carrying "60 *paquets de 50*" was a large one. For the long passage from Frontenac to the Niagara, not only was there no portage, but, with the increase of freighting, heavy plank bateaux were substituted carrying much more than the fragile craft of bark. Packets were then made up of 100 pounds weight, and the boats were designated as "*bateaux du cent*." Those belonging to the King were used to

transport munitions of war and provisions from Montreal to Niagara and the other lake posts. One allusion to them, in a document of 1757, says they were each manned by five men and carried from 58 to 60 quintals of freight.

In time of peace, the contractor could avail himself of the sailing vessels on Lake Ontario. At the posts, storehouses and bake-ovens were to be kept in readiness. The contractor was required to have, in the several forts, by the end of October, provisions of good quality, not only for the garrison, but for Indians and detachments of troops that might come in during the winter. Beginning September 1, 1757, the posts of Presqu' Isle, Le Bœuf, and Venango, must have on hand a year's supply for 400 men. If the Governor-General judged proper to send supplies for a greater number, the Intendant was to notify the contractor in time for him to utilize the spring flood in Le Bœuf river, otherwise the cost of getting this freight south from Fort Niagara was to be at the King's expense. As the Niagara portage charges were a heavy item, it is clear that here was a great loop-hole for extra expense to the Government.

According to these articles of agreement, neither the common soldier nor his officers were to fare too sumptuously, either in garrison or on the march. The daily ration of the soldier, regular or Canadian militia, and of employed Indians, was two pounds of coarse bread (*farine entière*), half a pound of pork and four ounces of peas. The officers received the same ration, save that their bread was finer, and they were allowed a gill of brandy. One of the swindles early employed was that the soldiers' bread was made of mixed wheat and oats. More notorious was the favoritism in behalf of the officers, for whom the contractor sent into the Niagara wilderness, at the King's expense, many a cask of wine and other luxury not hinted at in the prescribed ration.

The conditions of this contract went into effect at the Lake Ontario posts, at Fort Niagara and at Chabert's fort above the falls, on July 1, 1757.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cadet agreed to furnish rations and necessary supplies for Forts Frontenac, Toronto, Niagara, and Little Niagara, from July 1, 1757, to June 30, 1766; and for Presqu' Isle, Le Bœuf and Fort Machault, from July 1,



Chabert is never very clear as to the source of his wealth; but that he was rich, as riches were accounted in his day, until the war ruined him, is plain. To be rich, in Canada in those days, was to be an object of suspicion. During his trial, he was led into avowing that he had grown rich from the sale of ginseng. "I enjoyed," he says, "a prosperity acquired by the most legitimate means. . . . This is the chief source of my fortune. The craze for ginseng spread from Europe to Canada. My connection with the Indians made it possible for me to profit by this. They gathered this plant as much as I wished, at 15 livres the pound; it sold at Montreal for 24 livres. If this trade had lasted a longer time, I could have made great loans to the State and the King."<sup>4</sup> Here is a touch of the humorist — or, rather, of an inherited trait of bragging, for which his father was renowned. Though the ginseng may have been practically all profit for him, it could not rank with the fur trade, in which he also engaged with Cadet — notwithstanding that officers were forbidden to engage in trade. Of one "deal" he says: "He received 20 packets of peltries, from a sale of goods. As long as he saw a present gain, the idea of crookedness did not enter his head. When the war made him fear the losses would exceed the profit, he offered me 10,000

1757 to the end of August, 1766. The contract above referred to was executed between Bigot and Cadet, and witnessed by M. Martel, chief secretary of the Marine.

<sup>4</sup> So much is on record regarding the early ginseng trade, it is unnecessary here to more than allude to it. *Aralia quinquefolia*, the species most valued, was formerly abundant throughout most of the region we here study, and occasionally rewards the botanist to-day in Central or Western New York. China, which attributed to it great efficacy, was always the chief market, though Europe at one time valued it. The Jesuit, Lafitau, appears to have been the first to write of it as an American plant; his treatise on it was printed at Paris in 1718. Much relating to it is to be found in the works of Charlevoix and other early travelers in America. What little medicinal value the root had, was often lost through being gathered at the wrong season, so that after a while China refused to buy the roots shipped from Canada. In Chabert's time the singular traffic was at its height. So many officers engaged in it, with profit, that about 1750 the Company of the Indies undertook to monopolize the trade. In 1752, it is said, more than 50,000 francs' worth was exported from Quebec. Sir William Johnson sent quantities of it to London; one account shows £144-s4-d7 due him for this article.

livres to withdraw from the partnership"; but as the losses then stood at some 200,000 livres, Cadet figured on getting the amount from the Government and clearing 90,000 livres on Chabert's share.

Chabert was accused of having signed falsified vouchers for goods in his own fort and at Fort Niagara. He in turn accused Penisseau of falsifying the vouchers and of getting his signature by trickery. A long story is made of it. The scheme was to charge the Government for vast quantities of supplies which were never delivered. To quote Chabert: "The execution of this project was very delicate. They had in each fort duplicate inventories of those in the hands of the Commissary-General; thus the maneuver could not possibly succeed save by the complicity or deceit of the commandants in each fort." He continues, that Penisseau came to the Niagara provided with an ample corruption fund, with which to buy up the commandants. Penisseau is even quoted as boasting that he bought up everybody he needed except the commandant at Presqu' Isle. He and Cadet further swore to having paid Chabert 80,000 livres. This Chabert denied.

The most suspicious transaction on the Niagara took place in the much-disturbed year of 1758, when the crises and demands of war had spread confusion and waste throughout the region. Returning to Fort Little Niagara from one of his strenuous expeditions, Chabert found Penisseau there. Chabert was in great haste to set out on another expedition, and very busy "giving orders for expediting the portage." Penisseau said nothing to him of business until, after two days, as Chabert and 30 braves were leaving the fort, he stopped them and demanded that Chabert examine the accounts for supplies.

"You ask the impossible," replied Chabert. "I have to hasten, 300 leagues, to join M. de Levi [Lévis]. I must gather, on the road, the warriors of several nations. I have not a moment to lose."

A long wrangle followed, from which Chabert broke away, and was making off with his fantastic escort, when Penisseau with the Government storekeeper and two clerks of Cadet, all

ran after him. Penisseau "renewed his entreaties, and swore to me with an oath that their accounts were absolutely true. I renewed my refusal, and would have continued my way, declaring to him I would sign nothing I had not verified. I added, that my brother, who had commanded in the Fort during the winter, in my absence, would verify and sign them, if they were in order; that I expected to see him, and would request him to do this as soon as he should return."

"'Oh Sir,' Penisseau said to me, 'you refer us in so urgent a matter, to your brother who is 200 leagues from here among the Indians, and who will not return, any more than you will, before winter. Are you not the Commandant of this place? Why refer us to some one else?'"

The dispute continued. Penisseau swore that the accounts were right, that he would be responsible for them. Then he threatened: Chabert should be held responsible for the consequences. If these vouchers were not signed, then and there, no more supplies would be sent to these posts; such a stoppage would ruin Cadet; it would upset the Colony.

Being, Chabert says, "a simple and straightforward soul," he believed them honest—"even Penisseau, who had not yet unmasked himself in my eyes"—and on the assurance of the King's storekeeper that the accounts were true, he signed them. "I only did it in order to remove any pretext of interrupting the service." The clerks opened for him "with as much dexterity as quickness, each account at the last page, for me to put my name at the bottom. This I did, and immediately pursued my way."

It afterwards developed that a wide space on the sheet above his signature, ostensibly left for the signatures of the Governor-General, the Intendant and the Commissary, was afterwards filled in with other charges, thus inflating the total to which he had certified. "It is only since my imprisonment," he declared, "that I have discovered this trick."

Singularly "simple and straightforward" our hero must have been, not to know that padded accounts were the rule and not the exception. The trickeries of the Niagara were practiced elsewhere, and by many classes. It does appear, how-

ever, that the military branch of service, either through greater honor or less of opportunity, came out of the affair much cleaner than employees and officials in civil and administrative life. It cost Chabert no little rhetoric, more or less plausible, to meet all the complications of the charges brought against him. He denied collusion with Penisseau; denied having received large sums from him.

A long and picturesque story is told of his attempts to collect what was due him, aided at times by his wife. Finally, Penisseau promised to pay, on the following day. "The next morning I took with me the Sieur Colonge, and we went together to his house. . . . What was my surprise when they told me he had disappeared during the night!" This was, apparently, after the capitulation of Montreal. When next Chabert and Penisseau met, they were both in the hands of Justice as represented by the *Cour du Châtelet*.

Many phases of this "*Affaire du Canada*," which pertain to the field of our study, to Chabert and the Niagara, are here perforce passed over. The memoir in which our commandant set forth his services goes at tedious length into the details of financial transactions, relating not only to the Niagara, but to a depot of supplies which Chabert had established on the Conewango.<sup>5</sup> He submitted to the Court a grand total of 389,600 livres, which he claimed to have lost, by the exigencies of the war and the frauds of Cadet and Penisseau.

In the hour of her stern resolve to bring to justice the guilty persons in this ruinous administration, France sent out to Canada an investigating agent, Querdisien<sup>6</sup> by name. Capable and upright he appears to have been, for although he began his inquiries when the Colony was in its death throes — reaching Canada during the siege of Quebec — he persevered and gathered much evidence valuable to the Government prosecution. One of the first subjects of his inquiry was the confused and spendthrift accounts from Niagara and Fort Machault.

The latter place, as our narrative has perhaps sufficiently shown, was always intimately linked with the Niagara estab-

<sup>5</sup> He writes: "My storehouses of Kanaouangon."

<sup>6</sup> Otherwise, Kerdisien-Trémaïs.

lishments. From the days of the elder Joncaire, the story of one involves the story of the other. It was Chabert-Joncaire who at old Venango had built Fort Machault, and the way between them was to him an accustomed path. After the loss of Fort Duquesne, Fort Machault was the principal stronghold of the French in all the region known as the Ohio. It was also the principal trading point. In 1759, the Sieur Martel had charge of trade there. During the first three months of this year its garrison consisted of some 300 soldiers, with 20 officers. In April and May, some reënforcements arrived from Niagara, and late in June there came in 600 or more French and Indians, from the Illinois. The neighboring tribes flocked to the vicinity of the fort and lived on the bounty of the King. For some weeks prior to July 13th, when De Lignery set out for the relief of Pouchot at Niagara, more than 1100 men, women and children were living at and about Fort Machault, mostly on provisions forwarded from Niagara. These facts were brought out when the young Martel was examined before Querdisien, in the summer of 1760.

There had marched to the defense of Niagara, with De Lignery, more than 900 men; and there remained at Fort Machault about 160. The last days of this famed rendezvous witnessed a carnival of prodigality unequalled in the history of that war. After word came of the capture of Fort Niagara, panic spread; an English invasion was apprehended, either from Niagara or Fort Pitt. L'Espervanche, who had been left in command, permitted the storehouses to be broken open and looted. Even after caring for the horde so lately gathered there, no lack either of food or trading goods existed. The delighted Indians were the chief beneficiaries. Blankets and gay-colored dress goods, beads and paint, mirrors and all the gewgaws that the savage loved were freely dispensed. A large residue stock was gathered in the midst of the fort, and, with the surrounding buildings, was burned, August 6th; and while the smoke still rolled heavily above the forest, or drifted out over the river, L'Espervanche and his fugitive command, including Martel the storekeeper, took the well-worn path to Le Bœuf and Presqu' Isle, to find later sanctuary at Detroit.

Martel's examination brought out many amazing facts. Cadet's vouchers for supplies sent to Fort Machault in the early summer of 1759 included 11,988 rations for officers (who at that time did not exceed 20); 349,306 rations for soldiers and dependent Indians. Other items were: Salt pork, 141,376 livres; tobacco, 78,066 livres; wine, 50 hogsheads [*barriques*]; and brandy, 2025 *veltes*.<sup>7</sup> The officers' mess even at this far backwoods post, evidently was something more than a Barmecidal feast.

These many tons of goods, necessaries and luxuries had been carried down to Fort Machault, needlessly; or, if not so carried, the bills for them were fraudulent. Martel's testimony, made as favorable as possible for Bigot, threw the burden of the iniquity on Cadet. It would be tedious to follow the inquiry further, the present object being merely to exhibit the sort of operation which went on over the Niagara portage route, and the fraud and waste that marked every step and phase of the service.

As late as June 1, 1759 — less than two months before the loss of Fort Niagara — Vaudreuil had thought it necessary to send to that post a large consignment of supplies and merchandise for Indians; they could not be neglected now, he reasoned, when their services were so much needed. A part of this shipment was as usual to go forward to Presqu' Isle, to Le Bœuf and Fort Machault, and also to Detroit. Bigot had assured the Governor that the warehouses at these places had been stripped by the heavy demands of the Indians. The goods that were sent were charged at enormous prices, the Intendant explaining that the shipment from France was so scanty, he had been forced to buy in Canada where all prices — thanks to his peculiar efficiency — had become excessive.

This last shipment by France of supplies to Niagara and dependent posts might have been omitted with no harm to the region. English arms speedily brought about the *debâcle*, and most of the goods so extravagantly supplied in June became plunder for the wasteful savage.

<sup>7</sup> A measure of 7½ litres.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### FROM THE BASTILLE TO DETROIT

ARREST OF THE CANADIAN SUSPECTS — CHABERT'S INCARCERATION IN THE BASTILLE — THE "MÉMOIRE" WRITTEN IN PRISON — HIS CLAIM TO NIAGARA LANDS — RETURNS TO AMERICA — OPPOSITION TO HIS TRADING PROJECTS — A BRITISH SUBJECT.

UNDER a decree of December 12, 1761, countersigned by the Duc de Choiseul, and under letters-patent of Louis XV, December 17th of the same year, it was ordered that proceedings be instituted against "the authors of the monopolies, abuses, troubles and double-dealings which have been committed in Canada." A commission, presided over by M. de Sartine, lieutenant-general of police, and composed of 28 judges of the Châtelet, was given supreme and final jurisdiction in the matter.

Chabert had rejoined his family in Montreal at Christmas, 1759, but very soon sailed for Europe. No record is found of the movements at this time of his elder brother, Philippe Thomas. There appears to have been a sojourn in England; but late in 1761 Chabert crossed over to France, where he was promptly arrested and sent to the Bastille,<sup>1</sup> together with a goodly company of his late companions and associates in Canada. Together they had "worked" the freight and supplies of the Ontario-Niagara-Ohio route. It had been a revelry of waste; now a day of accounting drew near.

The accused numbered 55, of whom only 21 appear to have been under actual arrest. Among those high in office, the great offenders were Bigot, the Intendant; Joseph Cadet, commissary-general of Canada; Jean-Victor Varin, deputy to the Intendant, commissary of marine, etc., and the Marquis de Vaudreuil himself. Of those who have especially figured in the present story as history-makers on the Niagara and adjacent

<sup>1</sup> Letters patent, signed by Louis, Dec. 17, 1761.

lakes, many of the most active and important found the hand of justice laid upon them. Had the governor of the Bastille been indulgent enough to grant it, a rare reunion of these veterans could have been held within the prison walls; for here were gathered the tireless "little major," Péan; Le Mercier, who, although he had become commandant of artillery for all of Canada, was none the less called to the accounting; Jean François de Vassan, whom we have known as commandant at Fort Niagara, and of the second battalion of the Marine troops. Not even his distinguished decoration as Chevalier of the Royal and Military Order of St. Louis could save him from prosecution. There were too a host of lesser rank, to whose fingers something may have stuck in handling the King's stores: De l'Espervanche and De la Chauvignerie, each of whom had served as commandant at Fort Machault, were among the accused, as were La Place and Martel, in charge of stores at that post; Papin, the storekeeper at Frontenac; the Messieurs Curot, father and son, both of whom served as keeper of stores at Fort Niagara; Lieutenant Saint-Blin, a soldier of good achievements, but in this affair charged with irregularities as commandant at Fort Le Bœuf; similarly, De Noyan, of Fort Frontenac, was held; Douville, commandant at Toronto; Ferrand, storekeeper at Le Bœuf; Le Gras and Saint Germain, the one a storekeeper, the other a clerk for Chabert at the Niagara Portage fort; and Chabert himself.

The arrests were made at various dates. Some against whom warrants were issued did not come into the law's clutches at all — perhaps because they had taken the oath of allegiance to Great Britain, and remained in Canada; but the State confiscated their property and issued various decrees against them. Bigot, Cadet, Chabert and Péan were sent to the Bastille in December and January, 1762, Vassan was not incarcerated until April. In September several of the officers, including Chabert, were given permission to engage counsel. Chabert's memoir appears to have been written with the assistance of M. Clos.

Imprisonment in the Bastille did not necessarily mean, at this time, any great severity or deprivation, except of freedom — and there were even cases in which the privileges of parole



were liberally given. The Bastille had its record of harshness and of horrors; but when Chabert and the others under accusation in the Canada case were confined there, the days of diabolical torture and bloody execution, as incidents of the prison's administration, were long past. In Chabert's time the château was almost 400 years old. For two centuries it had been a military citadel; for well-nigh two other centuries, and especially from the days of Richelieu, it had been a royal prison, and at times a mysterious and terrible instrument of government. A few years later the frenzied Paris mob was to witness its melodramatic downfall. There is, however, nothing to show that, at the period we are studying, prisoners like the suspected speculators from Canada were subjected to any great hardships. Favors could always be bought; and in the last decades of the old régime, official assistance, in various forms, was extended to the prisoners or their families. The Marquis de Vaudreuil, by reason of his rank and high connections, was the recipient of numerous favors. The correspondence of the time does not indicate the existence against him of the bitter and resentful spirit which was widely felt, and expressed, towards Bigot and Cadet. Vaudreuil's character, throughout his public career, shows a certain pliability, an easy compliance, which, while it debarred him from recognition as a strong administrator, also spared him somewhat the ignominy of his more able and more iniquitous associates. He had no genius for great adventures, not even in wrong-doing. When locked up in the Bastille, his first request was that a negro servant, known as Canon, might attend him. The Ministry granted it.<sup>2</sup> A few days later he asked for clothing and a bottle of lavender water; again, that he might send letters to his wife, coupled with a request for pomade, and some books to relieve the tedium of his prison cell. The tastes of Cadet were different; he asked for tobacco. Bigot, Péan and Varin were denied permission to walk together; but this was granted to Cadet and Pénisseau, who had leave to take exercise in the inner court or on the towers. The Canadian prisoners were allowed

<sup>2</sup> Order of Sartine, Mar. 30, 1762. Other particulars here given are drawn from the *Archives de la Bastille*, Roy's Rept., Can. Arch., 1912.

to hear Mass, and to receive a priest for confession in their rooms. One order, sent by M. de Sartine to the major of the Bastille, reads: "Bigot and Varin wish to hear Mass. I grant permission, and also that another basket of wine be sent to Péan."

If, on trial, a prisoner was acquitted, or found to have been unjustly held, his confiscated property was not only restored to him, but in numerous instances he was granted a royal pension. If, as was the case with Chabert, his family were in want while he was awaiting trial, they were assisted by the Government. Under date of September 3, 1763, the Duke de Choiseul wrote to the lieutenant of police: "I have received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me in favor of the children of the Sieur Joncaire-Chabert. I have the pleasure to inform you that I have got for them a second subsidy of 300 livres in consideration of the sad condition you informed me they were in."<sup>3</sup> The amount was at least equal in purchasing power to \$150 to-day. In April, 1762, the King had granted to the Abbé Joncaire, vicar-general at Grasse, 300 livres to be used for the relief of his brother Chabert's children.

Although leniency and aid were thus extended, it appears to have been the rule to keep the prisoner in close confinement until his examinations were completed. Only the officers of the prison, and perhaps his legal counsel, were permitted to visit or talk with him. Living thus in solitude, truly enough a caged bird of the wilderness, Chabert composed his memoirs. But for this incarceration we would know far less of him and of his life on the Niagara and in the surrounding country than we now do. Confined in narrow quarters whose ancient massive walls made the greatest possible contrast to the free life in the forest which for so many years had been his, he formulated at great length a plea in his own behalf and "against M. the Procureur-General, of the Commission established for the affair of Canada." Much of it is written in a style of sonorous grandiloquence, yet with a force and logic which may withstand our matter-of-fact translation:

<sup>3</sup> Funck-Brentano: "*Légendes et Archives de la Bastille*," Paris, 1898.

Reared amid the tumult of arms; devoted to the service of Country from the age of nine years; employed since that time among nations equally fickle, treacherous and savage, to cultivate their uncertain friendship, to glut their cupidity, to endure their barbarity, to countenance their caprices — the only means of holding them or regaining them to alliance with us; escaped from the fury of several bloody wars and from the perils of a tempestuous ocean, I arrive in France, I come to Paris full of the confidence which virtue gives, and I find myself arrested by the King's order and thrown into prison, in order to render account, not of my military acts, but of the use of the public funds [*les deniers du Roi*].

Such a situation distresses Innocence without disconcerting it; but it alarms Honor, since one instant of suspicion is anguish. It may be believed, from my experience, that the prospect of death is nothing for a soul well born. That never troubles mine, but fear of disgrace overwhelms it. Forty years of service have not taught me how to discover all the subtleties of imposture, and therefore do not enable me to dispel injurious suspicions. Sad situation, for one who has known only his sword, to depend now for his defense wholly on the pen. However, silence would seem to be pride, cowardice or conviction. So I will speak — or rather, let Truth speak. She is eloquent, the intelligent can not misunderstand her.

Such is the beginning of Chabert's memoir. He follows with the record of his services, which has already been drawn on in our narrative, interlarding the recital with more or less adroit and ingenious observations to prove his probity and life-long devotion to the cause of France. One is often amazed to find this man of the far frontiers pleading with the cleverness of a court sycophant or an oily-tongued lawyer. Beyond question, he had expert counsel and between them they made out as good a case as the bad facts would warrant.

Chabert lost no opportunity to remind his accusers that his employment in America had removed him "from schemes of mal-administration, in which imposture has undertaken to involve me"; replied at great length to the "calumnies" against him, and finished by showing the losses which he had sustained in the King's service. "It will be easy," he adds, "to decide at a glance which has been the motive of my acts, interest or honor, desire to enrich myself or zeal for the service." Now and then he slips into unctuous flattery:

I have never tried to excite pity; I have need now only for justice — I cannot fail to find it. . . . I have had the consolation of knowing the engaging affability, the incorruptible integrity and the judicious impartiality of the magistrate who presides over this august body.

Sometimes he flatters, sometimes he plays the logician, sometimes he works up a fine anger against his accusers; but he is most effective when his narrative takes the form of a pathetic recital of the wrongs of a ruined and heartbroken patriot:

Overwhelmed thus on every side by my misfortunes and the perfidies of my enemies, I sacrifice to the discharge of a part of my debts the last fragments of my fortune — houses, lands, papers, goods and personal property; a beloved wife, who bears a name ever celebrated in the Navy,<sup>4</sup> who has no other asylum but her mother's house, no resources but her love. The father and children are reduced to poverty, and the perfidious spoilers who have driven me to this sad extremity by their depredations still try to blast my reputation by the grossest fables, by treacherous acts and by all the inventions of fraud and foulness.

From this memoir Chabert's services after his capture at Fort Niagara, up to the time of his leaving America, can be traced. Taken prisoner to New York, he was held at some point in New England until exchanged in December. Several of his own men shared his fortunes in imprisonment, and, on being exchanged, returned with him to Montreal, where they arrived on Christmas Eve of 1759. In the early spring of 1760 he served under De Bourlamaque in the attempted siege of Quebec, then held by the English under Murray — who appears in Chabert's memoir as "M. de Murai." Chabert gives details of the trying experiences of the siege; the advance to Saint Foy was very laborious; day after day the troops were exposed to the incessant cold rain of April. "One day, as I was advancing against the Scotch, my troops took fright and deserted. I, at the mercy of the enemy, retreated with difficulty into the woods, marching, boots in the mud and snow, across a continu-

<sup>4</sup> She was a grand-neice of M. de la Galissonnière.

ous fusilade." After 17 days the attempt of the French to recapture Quebec was abandoned, and they fell back upon Montreal, their last stronghold.

Chabert was sent in August to gather the Indian warriors of the Lake of the Two Mountains and Sault St. Louis, and lead them to Isle aux Noix, in the Richelieu River, not far from the outlet of Lake Champlain. He only reached Isle St. John, from which he was recalled to Montreal, to hasten to La Prairie, for Amherst's army was coming down the river, and all the region, Indians and settlers, were in wild excitement. Chabert was sent up to Sault St. Louis, "to pledge the Indians, through my influence, that they spare the French settled in the country, and that they secure the pledges of their brothers who were with Amherst, not to pillage, massacre or burn according to their barbarous custom. Some days later Montreal surrendered; we were all made prisoners, and the war was at an end." His final service under the French flag in America had been, as usual, in leading and controlling the Indians; and so far as the records show, his humane efforts to restrain them from massacre were successful.

Few men, under either French or English flag, had wielded a greater influence over the Indians. With his father and elder brother, he had for many years been the main reliance of the French in this field, and had won the distinguished tribute of English enmity. Chabert did not greatly exaggerate when he declared that the English rejoiced more over the capture of himself and brother than at having become masters of Fort Niagara. "Ask the traders of Canada," he remarks, "and they will admit that if, at the end of the war of 1748, they had not lost all their goods and even life, they were indebted only to my brother and me. This testimony, joined to that of our enemies, is a good enough certificate of our life and services."

The reader will have formed some conception of Chabert's personality. It is *à propos* to add here some further note of the nature of the service in which he had been employed since he was a little boy. His own summary of that service, though somewhat fantastic in its phrases, is nevertheless an effective

and on the whole a true depiction of his labors and the arduous conditions under which he worked. The following paragraphs are condensed from the memoir written in the Bastille:

A childhood consecrated to the King's service; an education sacrificed for the good of the Colony; the flower and force of my life a prey to the rudest toil, to hardships long endured, to the most varied and pressing dangers; an uninterrupted succession of wars, of negotiations as useful to the State as they were barren and ruinous to me. . . . I could add, a loyalty proof against the repeated and most seductive offers on the part of the English, if I thought there could be this sort of subtle temptation for an honest man and a good Frenchman. . . .

Would one form an idea of the labors of a Canadian officer employed as I was among the Indians? Let him ask America! Let him transport himself into its vast forests, its waste plains, in the midst of its ferocious inhabitants and their scattered cabins. Let him cast a rapid glance over the barbarity of their customs, the treachery of their manners, the cruelty of their wars, and the still more revolting inhumanity of their triumphs and rejoicings. . . .

Let him follow the changing course of its rivers, sometimes overflowed, sometimes almost dry in places; vexed by currents and rapids, contracted between mountains, suddenly broken in their course by the frightful fall of their waters, precipitated into abysses, dashed against rocks, swallowed up in the vast lakes. . . .

There, let him fix his attention on an officer, alone, without escort, having for defense against a faithless, pitiless, unrestrained foe, only the King's name, arms and his own valor. For relief from hunger, only a gun, often useless, or the most desperate resources, the very thought of which is revolting. Shall I be believed (in a country where they have not the least idea of our travels in the savage regions of America) when I say, it has happened to me more than once, to pass days and nights breaking before me the ice of the swamps which I had to cross, plunged into water up to the middle, obliged to stop in order to restore, by brisk movements, a remnant of natural warmth. Shall I add that many times, deprived of the aid of my gun — the only commissariat of the Canadian in his encounters — I have seen myself reduced, by the cry of nature and the exhaustion of my strength to devour food towards which I felt a horror which yielded only to that of death. . . .

Forever obliged to wander in the forest, in a season when the winter of these regions rivals in rigors that of Siberia and Norway;

tramping through snows, climbing over the ice, breaking the ice to open a road. In summer, cramped in a narrow canoe, a fragile tissue of bark, the management of which is no less delicate than arduous; incessantly courting personal perils in order to avert those which menaced the Colony; exposing oneself to assassination, to prevent the murder of one's compatriots; facing treachery in order to prevent it; risking life, even, after a combat, to save that of an enemy made prisoner. . . .

Building forts, in order to have the privilege of provisioning them at his own expense; coming to be known by the title of Commandant, responsible for everything that happens there . . . yet under explicit instructions of the Governor to be ready for distant service. . . . Behold the spectacle which my life offers for more than 30 years.

In this fashion did Chabert depict his past life, for the edification of the court before which he was arraigned: "I have risked everything for the salvation of my country. I have lost all. I bring back to France my sons, my honor, my liberty, my services, and as soon as I arrive in port, one of my children perishes by a most cruel accident,<sup>5</sup> the others are exposed to the horrors of want. My honor is attacked . . . I lose my liberty, and I behold myself buried alive in a prison, delivered up to the calumnies of men who, having robbed and ruined me, attempt to implicate me in their evil doing. . . . Cruel situation, which makes me regret the sword of the English, the tomahawk and fires of the savage, less terrible to a brave man, than the stain given to his reputation."

On December 10, 1763 — two years after proceedings were instituted — Lieutenant de Sartine and the Council of the Châtelet announced their verdicts. Bigot was fined 1000 francs, sentenced to perpetual banishment from the kingdom, his property to be confiscated and he to pay 1,500,000 francs in restitution. Varin, also banished, was to repay 800,000 francs. It does not appear that the full measure of these sentences was ever accomplished. In one case at least there was a notorious evasion. Penisseau was to be fined 500 francs, banished from Paris for nine years, and pay back to the Government 600,000

<sup>5</sup> No particulars regarding it have been noted.

francs; but it is recorded that Madame Penisseau so gained the favor of the Duc de Choiseul that he granted to her husband letters of vindication and permitted him to keep the fraudulent gains which he had been sentenced to pay back.

The case of Cadet was perhaps the most remarkable of all. His sentence included the usual ridiculous fine—in his case 500 francs—nine years of banishment, and the restitution of 6,000,000 francs; but he actually secured to the Government more than 10,000,000 francs, whereupon his disabilities were removed.

Chabert, Vassan and Saint-Blin were found guilty “of having examined inconsiderately and without scrutiny the inventories of provisions in the forts where they commanded”—and were forbidden to do it again! (“*Il leur est fait défense de récidiver.*”) In view of the fact that no possible opportunity existed for a repetition of the offense, this amounted, though farcically, to an acquittal.

In Péan’s case, the commission extended the time of inquiry six months, he remaining meanwhile in the Bastille. June 25, 1764, a decree was issued that he restore to the King 600,000 francs, and be kept in the Bastille until it was paid.

Among the acquitted were the Marquis de Vaudreuil, Le Mercier and Desméloizes. Rouville, who had burned his fort at Toronto and retreated in fear of an English attack which was never contemplated, was fined 20 francs and banished from Paris for three years.

In a letter to Voltaire (June 25, 1766), speaking of the fate of Lally, d’Alembert remarks: “The robbers of Canada were more worthy of the hurdle, but then they had relations in office.”

No less pointed was the comment of Frederick the Great, who, observing that the war had cost France 1,350,000,000 francs and nearly all her colonies, and that England had destroyed her navy and merchant marine, remarked: “The war had broken out over some wretched habitations and the English gained 2000 leagues of territory, while humanity lost a million of men.”<sup>6</sup> He relates how M. d’Edelsheim became an inmate

<sup>6</sup> *Œuvres de Frédéric*, V, 40.



of the Bastille during this war: "The English had that year captured Guadeloupe, Quebec, Niagara. . . . So many reverses were calculated to disgust France with a war in which she sustained nothing but loss, and in which she could hope for no advantage." D'Edelsheim, representing Prussia at the Court of Louis, was arrested and confined in the Bastille, "that he might be consulted at leisure without offense to the Austrian Ambassador"! And there, in his hours of privilege, his occasional companions were Chabert and his fellow officers from Canada!

Captain Benoist's wound, received before the fall of Niagara and Quebec, had kept him from active service in the last two years of the war. Circumstances too kept him from all suspicion of implication in the frauds which involved so many of his brother officers. After the capitulation of Montreal he sailed for France, where, instead of being locked up in the Bastille, he was presented at Court, his loyalty commended, and favors were heaped on him. He was granted a pension of 300 livres, and on March 29, 1761, he received the honor coveted by every French officer who served in America,—denied to many a soldier far more efficient than Benoist—the grand cross of the Royal and Military Order of St. Louis. Thenceforth he is known as the Chevalier Benoist. The French Government called on him to testify as to the mal-administration of Canada, giving a most deferential ear to his opinions. Prompted by these attentions, he even wrote a memoir, "Reflections on Canada," which is notable chiefly because, written in 1761, its suggestions appear to have been made on the theory that France was to continue to govern Canada. True, the Treaty of Peace was not yet signed; but there is nothing very statesmanlike or profound in the Chevalier's "*Reflexions*." Of the Lake Ontario region he wrote:

If Oswego had not been retaken by the English it would have been necessary above all to put the fort of Niagara in condition to sustain a long siege. Repairs should be at the King's cost. To prevent the abuses of previous years, and that the Commissariat may be extended to all branches of the service, trustworthy persons should be charged with inspecting the works and auditing the ex-

penses. Furthermore to prevent all speculation, a perquisite of 600 livres should be allowed to the Commandant, and 200 to the subaltern officers. Fort Niagara being also a trading post, the King should first deduct from the customs duty the sums devoted to that purpose.

This is perhaps the last word of French plans for the government of Fort Niagara, already under the vigorous administration of the English.

The Chevalier Benoist returned to Canada in 1763, but not finding conditions to his liking, he once more sailed for France, not without some difficulty, the following year; and there he resided until his death in 1776.

On his acquittal Chabert crossed the Channel and for a time resided in London. October 18, 1764, he addressed to King George III. a remarkable petition, in which he set forth at length a claim to ownership of the east side of the Niagara, from the site of his former fort, just above the Falls, to and including Buffalo River.

“The Five Iroquois Nations,” runs the document, “gave to my father the land known as Niagara. The King of France found it proper to build a fort there; since that time it has been taken from the inheritance of my family, with no recompense or compensation. The histories and *mémoires* of the English and French, and wampum belts still preserved by the Iroquois, prove the reality of the gift of Niagara and environs to my father and his descendants, adopted, as he was, by the Five Iroquois Nations.”

Chabert goes on to say that he now learns “from the newspapers” (*les gazettes*) that this “terrain” had been ceded to his British Majesty by the Indians; “but, Sire,” he pleads, “these same nations, to testify to me their attachment for having lived among them for 40 years, solemnly gave me all the lands from the Chabert river, which is ten arpents from the little Fort Niagara, to the river Aux Chevaux, inclusively. This territory comprises the river and isle Chabert, the river and isle Au Bois Blanc, the Grand Isle and other small islands, and the river Aux Chevaux, inclusively.

“This solemn gift was twice confirmed; the first time at a great council of Iroquois deputies, in the presence of many French officers, and of M. de Beauharnois, Governor-General of the Colony; the second time, at another great Iroquois council, in the presence of French officers and of M. de La Jonquière, at that time Governor-General.” The wampum confirming the gift, which among the Indians was the same as a contract among the English, was still preserved, and could be shown to the King, if His Majesty desired!

The “river Chabert,” ten arpents from Chabert’s fort, could only have been Gill Creek. Cayuga Creek, a larger stream, was much more than ten arpents from the fort; Chabert seems to have overlooked it, otherwise he would have claimed it, for he asserted title to lands far beyond it. The river and island “Bois Blancs” were Tonawanda River and Island. There are maps on which both the Tonawanda and the Buffalo appear as “R. aux Chevaux”; but the French of Chabert’s time applied this name to Buffalo River; and since he had already designated the Tonawanda, he could only have meant the Buffalo, at the mouth of which, in 1758, as we have seen, he had erected buildings and cultivated lands.

How far back from the Niagara this splendid inheritance was to extend, Chabert’s petition failed to specify. Had the claim been granted, and the title held in the family of the petitioner, the descendants of Daniel Joncaire-Chabert would to-day be the proprietors of a strip of some 20 miles of Niagara frontage, now occupied by a part of the city of Niagara Falls, the village of La Salle, the towns of North Tonawanda, Grand Island and Tonawanda; and a considerable part of the city of Buffalo.

The gift of this territory to his father and himself, Chabert said was a matter of common knowledge—“*d’une notoriété publique*”—in Canada. “I cultivated these lands at great expense, and I began there an establishment which was destroyed in 1759 by your Majesty’s subjects; the ruins are still to be seen. The fields and islands which I had planted were harvested by your subjects after the capture of Niagara; into their hands passed the horses which I had brought there.” Continuing to recite his losses, he implored the “justice” of

the King, and begged to be allowed to return to the Niagara and occupy his property. He asked the King to direct the British officers and officials in America not to hinder or in any way trouble himself or his family in this occupancy; and he undertook to show that such occupancy would be advantageous to the British Crown, because being an adopted son of the Iroquois, "whose spirit and character I know better than any other man living," he could influence the Indians favorably towards British rule, "and make them less defiant and more attached to the interests of your crown." There was in truth something in Chabert's assertion that the credit which his family enjoyed among the Iroquois, would count for more in the King's favor than threats or force of arms. In a grandiloquent conclusion, he failed not to pledge his own loyalty to Great Britain.<sup>7</sup>

Chabert petitioned the Earl of Halifax to lay his request "at the foot of the throne." Halifax promptly transmitted a copy to Governor Murray at Quebec, and, as was to be expected, denied that Chabert had any ground for his claim. "As I have thoroughly apprised him," he wrote, "of the invalidity of Indian grants, even to the natural-born subjects of his Majesty, and the peculiar impropriety and impossibility of admitting such a title in his case, he no longer, I believe, entertains any hopes of obtaining his request, nor any intention of soliciting his pretension any further." It is not conceivable that Chabert himself could have been sanguine of success; but it was in his temperament to take the chance and make the best claim possible in his own behalf.

Lord Halifax did not fail to warn Governor Murray against Chabert, impoverished though he seemed to be: "As he intends to sail with the first ship to New York, and thence to Montreal, where he has house and family, I think it necessary to prepare General Gage and you for his arrival. I doubt not but the name and character of this officer, and the part which he acted in the late and former war, are well known to you."

<sup>7</sup> The original petition is preserved among the Lansdowne Papers in England. The Canadian Archives and the Buffalo Historical Society have copies.

Halifax added that if he were correctly informed, it would be "extremely necessary that the strictest eye should be kept on his future conduct. It seems highly probable that notwithstanding his declaration to me, he may go directly from New York to Niagara," in which case orders were to be given to officers at the latter place, "to so watch that if he be discovered in attempts to seduce or excite the Indians, the most speedy and effectual measures may be taken to prevent." If he went to Montreal he was also to be watched, "until he shall have given proof by his behaviour that he is to be trusted and that the great influence he is said to have with the savages will not be exerted to the prejudice of the British interest."<sup>8</sup>

Yielding to solicitations of the French Ambassador at London, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, Cadet, Boishebert, St. Ours and a few others, including Daniel Joncaire-Chabert, were granted an extension of one year, beyond the eighteen months stipulated by the Treaty of Paris, for the recovery of their effects and sale of their property in Canada; and no hindrance was made to their migration. From what sources Chabert gained funds or credit at this time, is not evident. He retained his house in Montreal; but by 1765, he was able to buy a large stock of goods, which he selected for the Indian trade at Niagara. By June of that year he was in Montreal, and the British Governor was writing to the Minister: "Mons. Chabere, of whom your Lordship formerly wrote, is arrived by sea from London. He meant to go to Niagara, but I have convinced him of the impropriety of such a journey and shall watch his motions."<sup>9</sup>

Chabert continued to receive much attention in the official reports and correspondence of the time. Guy Carleton, lieutenant-governor at Montreal, writing of him before he had seen him, observed: "He is represented to me as a man of weak parts,"<sup>10</sup> a singular verdict regarding one whose achievements and known energy gave such concern to the British Government; but Carleton soon revised his views, and more than any

<sup>8</sup> Halifax to Murray, "St. James, Oct. 27, 1764." In a letter of Aug. 21, Murray had already promised to keep a special watch over Chabert and other suspects.

<sup>9</sup> Murray to the Earl of Halifax, June 24, 1765.

<sup>10</sup> Carleton to Shelburne, Nov. 9, 1766.

other high official in America, sought to do justice to the unfortunate Canadian.

It is plain that Chabert was an object of suspicion from the day he returned to Canada; but no proof of any act of his, disloyal to the British Government, nothing indeed on which to base suspicion, is discovered. He took the oath of allegiance to Great Britain; and there is no reason to doubt his sincerity when he wrote to the lieutenant-governor in his own behalf as an upright and outspoken soldier, "who has well served the French King, but who will serve still better, if it is possible, our new master the King of England. I wish," he continues, "to be useful to the Government, and to show that zeal, uprightness and fidelity have always been the principle of my actions, rather than interest and reward. If I can be of any service whatever to you, I beg you do not spare me."<sup>11</sup>

From letters which about this time passed between various British officials, it is learned that Chabert's elder brother, Philippe Thomas de Joncaire, who for so many years had served as agent and interpreter among the Five Nations, was dead. He is nowhere mentioned in connection with the frauds and thefts in the Canadian service, nor does his name appear in the list of those against whom the Government instituted proceedings. In November, 1766, Lieutenant-Governor Carleton refers to him as "now dead."<sup>12</sup> If he survived until that year he was 59 years old.<sup>13</sup>

There now comes upon the scene a member of the family de Joncaire who has not figured in our story. Writing to the Earl of Shelburne, in November, 1766, Guy Carleton said:

Some days past a Mr. Joncaire came to me and said his brother Chabert, formerly a captain in the *Troupes de Colonie*, had an assortment of goods from England with which he purposes going up to the Lakes in the spring, and hoped I had no objection. I asked him if Governor Murray had not forbid his brother's going above Montreal. He answered, Governor Murray had indeed forbid it, but it was only till he should take the oath of allegiance to

<sup>11</sup> Chabert-Joncaire to Lieut. Gov. Carleton, Montreal, April 4, 1767.

<sup>12</sup> Carleton to the Earl of Shelburne, Nov. 9, 1766.

<sup>13</sup> Tanguay does not give the date of his death.

the King; that now he had gone thro' that ceremony he supposed the prohibition no longer in force, and that his brother would be much injured, if he had not the liberty to trade with the Indians, in common with the rest of his Majesty's subjects.

This "Mr. Joncaire," as appears from the correspondence, was a priest, a member of the order of Jesuits, and is spoken of as Abbé de Joncaire. He had resided in France for 27 years, but came to America, apparently while his brother Chabert was a prisoner in the Bastille. The Abbé told Lieutenant-Governor Carleton that his errand in Canada was "to settle the affairs of his brother who had had dealings with Mr. Rybot, a Spittlefields weaver," who had defrauded Chabert. There are numerous references in the official correspondence to the priest, who, like his brother, was an object of English suspicion, though little warrant is found for it. Carleton, who describes him as "a Canadian clergyman of abilities and knowledge of the world," intimates that his return to Canada, after so long an absence, might be due to an "ambition to wear a mitre, if Government should acquiesce in the appointment of a coadjutor to the See," for which there was agitation. The Abbé himself said that he had returned to Canada to visit his aged mother<sup>14</sup> and to help straighten out the affairs of his brother Chabert; "in which," wrote Carleton, "he has indeed been constantly busied, and has to my knowledge been extremely useful to his brother, who has lived too long in the savage world, to be much acquainted with any other."

In the autumn of 1766 the Abbé embarked at Quebec for England, to settle his brother's affairs there; but as the ship made her way down the difficult channel of the St. Lawrence, the Abbé suddenly changed his mind, had himself put ashore, and soon reappeared in Quebec, where he declared his purpose of spending the winter in Canada; giving, as reasons for his change of plans, "the dangers he must run in the passage so late in the year, and letters he received by the *Little William*, arrived lately, by which he learns his affairs do not require his presence in London until June."<sup>15</sup> Such shifting about was

<sup>15</sup> Carleton to Halifax, Nov. 21, 1766.

<sup>14</sup> She died at Repentigny, near Montreal, June 22, 1771, aged 82 years.

little calculated to inspire confidence, but nothing has been noted in the correspondence of the time in any way reflecting on his character. There is much which shows he was ardently devoted to his brother Chabert. His subsequent career has not been traced, though it may be noted that according to Lieutenant-Governor Carleton, he "was bred a Jesuit, left that Society and took up the title of Abbé, a little before their expulsion from France."<sup>16</sup> He is elsewhere referred to as the vicar-general at Grasse.

As has been indicated, in giving the list of children of the elder Joncaire (I, 151), there were, besides the two brothers who have figured so largely in our history, three other brothers who reached maturity, none of whom married.<sup>17</sup> One of these was Louis Romain de Joncaire, born 1710; another, Louis Marie de Joncaire, born 1715. Both of these were older than Chabert, and one of them may have been the Abbé whose Canadian visit so disturbed the officials; but it was probably a younger brother, François, not known to have married, who at the time of Chabert's return to Canada was 42 years old.

So far as the correspondence of Sir Guy Carleton and other British officials indicates, Chabert himself was unfairly dealt with. The Indian trade was the only trade he knew; and as soon as he could command funds, he bought a stock, hired his men, loaded his canoes, procured a license and was about setting out for Niagara and the West, when an order was issued forbidding him to pass beyond Montreal. He had taken the oath of allegiance and had sent to France for his two surviving sons, who had joined the family in Montreal. No charge of any sort lay against him, nor was there evident any reason why he should be debarred from the privileges which the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763, had extended to all loyal subjects, French or English.

The source of the restriction which was put upon him is found in the following extract from a letter by Sir William Johnson, dated "Johnson Hall, April 25th, 1767":

<sup>16</sup> Murray to Halifax, June 24, 1765.

<sup>17</sup> According to Tanguay, *Dic. Gén.*, III, 283,



I am well informed that Chabert Joncaire of Montreal is preparing to set out with a large cargo of goods for Niagara, or Detroit, and heartily wish he could by any means be prevented, for I am fully convinced that no good can come of that journey, and that he will be as ready to infuse ungenerous sentiments into the minds of the Indians, as they will be to give credit to all he says, from the great esteem in which he is held by them.<sup>18</sup>

Sir William was Superintendent for Indian Affairs in the Northern District, and out of deference to his wishes, Chabert was forbidden to proceed, though Carleton virtually admits that he thought the prohibition unjust. In a long letter<sup>19</sup> he sketched Chabert's career, adding that in consequence of the restraint put upon him, much of his merchandise remained on his hands "and much of the remainder was lost by the misbehavior of his factors." He had inquired closely into his conduct and found it "irreproachable." "I found," wrote Carleton, "that he had taken the oaths of allegiance to his Majesty; that he had relations and possessions in the Province, which would be so many pledges of fidelity; that he had sent to France for his two surviving sons, in order to receive their education here — a point of the greatest importance to the British interests in this Province — and who are since arrived; that he was willing to submit to the established regulations, nay, promised, as far as in him lay, to employ the little interest he had amongst those savages, for his Majesty's service." Unable to see any valid reason for withholding consent to Chabert's proposed trade, Carleton had granted it, first taking the precaution to instruct the officers in command at Niagara and Detroit to have an eye on his conduct. As soon, however, as Sir William's objections were known, the license was revoked.

Chabert was in despair. "I am ruined," he wrote to Carleton,<sup>20</sup> "unless you remove the obstacles to my journey. I was just setting out for La Chine; two of my canoes were already *en route*; 30 employes came yesterday; 20,000 francs spent for supplies, outfit, canoes, etc.; 100,000 livres worth of merchan-

<sup>18</sup> Johnson to Gen. Gage, April 25, 1767.

<sup>19</sup> Carleton to the Earl of Shelburne, Quebec, July 8, 1767.

<sup>20</sup> June 5, 1767.

dise packed up; work of all sorts carried on for three months; the transport of other shipments put in agents' hands on shares; my departure known to everybody, my credit reëstablished, debts paid or arranged with creditors, terms made with my debtors — a reputation to maintain; my farewells said to my family. Plunged into a thousand embarrassments, behold the precipice from which I am thrown — and why? I have quit France, all my family are in this country, my two children have just arrived from London — all my interests are here. I cannot go back to France after the solemn renunciation I have made of her service. I have always conducted myself as a man of honor. Why then ruin me?"

The force and eloquence of this letter to the Lieutenant-Governor suggest that perhaps after all Chabert had little need of assistance in the composition of his memoirs. He goes on to say that he thinks "*le Chevalier Johnson*" may be "piqued" because the application for a trade permit had not been made directly to him, and begs permission to go and plead his own cause with Sir William. He promised to take with him M. Perthuis, a friend of Johnson, to use his own men and boats, to make the journey and be back in Montreal in three weeks. "I give you my word of honor," he wrote, and added to his request a characteristic touch: "Whatever may be the outcome, I beg you to take my house; for if I do not go to the upper country I shall be obliged to put up with a much smaller one, and if I do go I can no longer take care of it." Carleton took him at his word and granted the necessary passports for a journey to Sir William Johnson's manor on the Mohawk. He also took the precaution to send along his own nephew Lieutenant Carleton.

Beyond question it was an interesting moment when Chabert again faced the man to whom he had surrendered at Fort Niagara eight years before. A good many years of strenuous opposition lay behind them. More than any other living men, they represented the strife by which Central and Western New York evolved from a savage wilderness to a British colonial possession of vast promise. Neither man could speak the other's language, but they had a common knowledge of the Seneca,

and it is not unlikely that it was in the tongue of his adoptive people that Chabert was given permission once more to visit Niagara in trade. At any rate, permission was granted. In a subsequent letter to Carleton,<sup>21</sup> Sir William sought to justify his position on general as well as specific grounds. His case "is certainly hard," he wrote. "I could not do less than to mention what I did, as well in consequence of the sentiments of the Government respecting him, as from my knowledge of his interest, particularly with the Senecas, and from stories propagated by the chiefs of that and other nations [which] made it my duty to treat the affair as I did. . . . Mr. Chabert must know that I have no personal dislike to him, having given him at the desire of the French Minister as favorable a certificate of his losses at Niagara, as I could have done to any man, and I have only acted in this case as I would do were he my brother. I am willing to hope that Mr. Chabert will not attempt anything to the prejudice of the British interest. I am persuaded it is in his power, but I am not inclined to judge hardly of him on bare suspicion."

Sir William's caution in this matter found some warrant in the treasonable or suspicious conduct of certain French Canadians, in the years following the Conquest. The reader will also bear in mind that only four years prior to Chabert's visit, the Senecas had shared with western tribes in the futile but bitterly hostile uprising headed by Pontiac. Their allegiance to the English was still fickle; they still lent ear to widely-circulated tales that the French were soon to return with a great army and repossess themselves of all they had lost.

Chabert Joncaire's subsequent trading journey to Niagara and Detroit, and his removal to this last post, where he ended his days, belong, not to the story of the Niagara and the Lower Lakes under the French, but to the chronicles of the region under the British. He had played his difficult part, under the French, so far as existing records show, faithfully and effectively. That he was for so many years intrusted with difficult and delicate tasks, is proof that he was held in high regard by the civil and military officials of Canada, throughout

<sup>21</sup> June 24, 1767.

more than one administration. He had shown the qualities of a diplomat, in councils at Quebec as well as in the lodges of the Iroquois. That the discharge of the duties intrusted to him, year after year, called for more than ordinary address, strength and resourcefulness, must impress any one who peruses the narrative here submitted. A review of his life, and of the lives and services of his father and brother who were in turn history-makers in the region we have studied, warrants a claim for them all, of greater distinction, of greater recognition, than has heretofore been accorded them.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Chabert Joncaire died at Detroit, July 5, 1771. For some further genealogical record of the family, *see* Appendix.

Something relating to Daniel Joncaire-Chabert and his brother officers could no doubt be gleaned from the Archives of the Bastille, which the present writer has had no opportunity to examine. *See* J. Edmond Roy's report, *Can. Arch.*, 1911, pp. 863-866. There are no copies of these papers at Ottawa. British correspondence regarding Chabert has some mention in the Fifth Rept., Royal Commission on Historical MSS., London, 1876. *See also*, among the Lansdowne papers, a letter from Lt.-Gov. Carleton, Nov. 9, 1766, recommending Chabert for his address and knowledge of the Indians; and one from Lord Shelburne to Carleton, Nov. 14, 1767, on Chabert's case.

In a list of Bastille prisoners, as printed in Roy's "*Rapport sur les Archives de France*" (*Pubs. Can. Arch.*, No. 6), "*Daniel Joncaire dit Chabert*" is set down as commandant at Miramichi in Canada! Obviously an inadvertence.

## APPENDIX

### PORTRAITS OF LA SALLE

(Vol. I, op. p. 70.)

The first of these is reduced from an engraving by Waltner, published in Margry's volume, "*Voyages des Français*," etc., Paris, 1879. Margry says the original was one of two portraits preserved with papers relating to La Salle, and he chose the one which seemed most likely to be the explorer! If it is a portrait of La Salle, it shows him in youth, before hardship had set its stamp upon him.

The second is from a plate in Gravier's "La Salle" (Paris, 1870), said to be copied from an engraving in the Bibliothèque de Rouen entitled "*Cavilli de la Salle François*." A woodcut reproduction is in Winsor, IV, 244. No satisfactory evidence of the authenticity of either picture is submitted; nor is any authentic portrait known.

### SOURCES OF MAPS AND PLANS

The map, II, 260, is based on Pouchot's British Museum map, 1757, and on an English map in Canadian Archives, dated "Ft. Niagara, 1759."

The map, II, 322, combines data from Pouchot's British Museum map; from a British "plan of Ft. Niagara with its environs," July, 1759; and from "A Plan of Niagara with the adjacent [*sic*] country surrendered to the English army," etc., "engraved and published by Michael & Son, Godhart De-Bruls, in New York, North America," dedicated to Sir Wm. Johnson.

The maps of "Fort Frontenac, 1685"; of Ch. de Léry's "*Entrée de la Rivière de Niagara*," dated at Niagara, June 21, 1726; and of De Léry's proposed fort at the mouth of the Oswego (II, 170), dated Quebec, Oct. 11, 1726, are from photos made for this work, from the originals in the Colonial Archives ("*Depôt des Colonies Françaises*"), Paris. Copies of these and numerous other maps which illustrate our subject, are also preserved at Ottawa; among them, De Léry's "Entrance to the Oswego river," made at Quebec, Oct. 8, 1749, with a plan of the redoubt and house built there by the English, 1726-27.

The pictures showing types of English and French vessels on Lake Ontario, 1756 (II, 150, 162), are from modern paintings in Hon. J. Ross Robertson's collection of historical views relating to Canada, in the Toronto Public Library. The paintings are redrawn from sketches, ascribed to La Broquerie, on a map in the British Museum, which give names to the vessels as follows:

In the English group, the largest, pierced for 9 guns, is *Le Moncalm*; *Lejorge* (*George*) shows 8 ports. A smaller two-master (in the rear at the left), bears an indistinct name, which has been transcribed in the meaningless form, "*Lactraquence*." The others are *Les Evive* (two), *Le Vigilant*, and *L'Ontario*, the latter at the right of the sketch.

The French fleet, left to right, are: *La Marquise de Vaudreuil*, *La Hurault*, *La Louise*, *Le Victor*.

The type of vessel shown on Pouchot's map in the British Museum, referred to in our text (II, 161), is shown in facsimile, Vol. I, at page 50. It is probably as trustworthy a drawing as any we have, of a lake brig of that period.

#### DENONVILLE'S "ACTE" OF TAKING POSSESSION OF NIAGARA, 1687

(Vol. I, Chapter III)

Jacques René de Brissay, Chevalier Seigneur Marquis de Denonville and other places, Governor and Lieutenant General for the King in the whole extent of Canada and country of New France.

This day, the last of July of the year one thousand six hundred and eighty-seven, We declare to all whom it may concern, in presence of Hector, Chevalier de Callières, Governor of Montreal in the said country and commandant of the camp under our orders, and of Philippe Derigaud, Chevalier de Vaudreuil, commanding the King's troops, being encamped with all the army at the post of Niagara, returning from our expedition against the Seneca villages, that being come to the camp of Niagara situate south of Lake Ontario west of the Senecas, twenty-five leagues above them, in the angle of land east of the mouth of the river of the same name, which is the outlet of Lake Erie, coming from Lakes Huron, Illinois, the great Lake Superior and several others beyond the said great lake, to reiterate anew for, and in the name of the King, the taking possession of the said post of Niagara, several establishments having been formerly made there many years since by the King's order,

and especially by Sieur De la Salle having spent several years two leagues above the great fall of Niagara where he had a bark built which navigated several years Lakes Erie, Huron and Illinois, and of which the stocks (*les chantiers*) are still to be seen. Moreover the said Sieur De la Salle having erected quarters (*logemens*) with settlers at the said Niagara in the year one thousand six hundred and sixty-eight which quarters were burned twelve years ago by the Senecas, which is one of the causes of discontent that with many others have obliged us to wage war against them, and as we considered that the houses we have thought fit to rebuild could not remain secure during the war, did we not provide for them,

We have resolved, to construct a fort there in which we have placed one hundred men of the King's troops to garrison the same under the command of Sieur de Troyes, one of the veteran captains of His Majesty's troops with a necessary number of officers to command said soldiers.

This Acte has been executed in our presence and in that of Monsieur Gaillard, commissary on behalf of the King attached to the army and subdelegate of Monsieur de Champigny, Intendant of Canada: which Acte we have signed with our hand and sealed with our seal at arms, and caused to be subscribed by Messrs. de Callières and Vaudreuil and by Monsieur Gaillard, and countersigned by our Secretary. And they sign: J. René de Brissay, Marquis de Denonville, le Chevalier de Callières, Chevalier de Vaudreuil, Gaillard; and lower down by Monseigneur Tophlin.

#### CAPTAIN LE MOYNE'S COMMISSION AS FIRST COMMANDANT AT FORT NIAGARA

(Vol. I, p. 243)

"Charles Le Moyne, Baron de Longueuil, Chevalier de St. Louis, gouverneur de Montréal, et commandant général pour le roy en toute la Nouvelle-France.

"It est ordonné au Sieur de Longueuil, capt. des troupes destinées pour Niagara, de se rendre avec le plus de diligence qu'il pourra au poste de Niagara, avec le détachement que nous lui avons donné, afin d'y exécuter les ordres dont nous l'avons chargé pour le service de Sa Majesté.

"Enjoignons aux officiers et soldats du susdit détachement et au Sieur de Joncaire, lieutenant des troupes, que nous avons fait partir pour se rendre des premiers à Niagara, de reconnaître le dit Sieur

de Longueuil pour commandant et de lui obéir en tout ce qu'il leur commandera pour le service du Roy; ordonnons pareillement aux voyageurs qui passeront à Niagara, tant en montant qu'en descendant, de luy obéir en tout ce qu'il pourra leur commander pour le service de Sa Majesté.

LONGUEUIL."

"*Fait à Montreal, le vingt-huit Avril, 1726.*"

### CÉLORON'S LEAD PLATE

(Vol. I, op. p. 418)

The inscription on all the plates which Céloron carried into the Ohio valley was the same, save that in a blank space the place of deposit was filled in before the ceremony. The plate that was stolen from Joncaire and carried to Col. Johnson, read "at the confluence of the Ohio and Tchadakoin, this 29 July"; otherwise it was like the one we picture, found at the junction of the Ohio and Great Kanawha, and now preserved by the Virginia Historical Society.

#### TRANSLATION

"The year 1749, in the reign of Louis XV, King of France, We, Céloron, commandant of a detachment sent by Monsieur the M[arquis] de La Galissonière, commander in chief of New France, to restore tranquility in some Indian villages of these districts have buried this plate at the mouth of the river Chinodahichetha the 18 August, near the river Ohio, otherwise Beautiful river, as a monument of the renewal of possession which we have taken of the said river Ohio and of all those which fall into it, of all lands on both sides of it as far as the sources of said streams, as enjoyed or ought to be, by the preceding Kings of France and as they have maintained themselves by arms and treaties, especially by those of Ryswick, Utrecht and Aix La Chapelle."

What the plate gives as "Chinodahichetha," Céloron wrote "Chinondaista," and the priest Bonnecamps "Chinodaichta." There are many variants before the name comes into its present form, Kanawha.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER OF REV. JOHN OGILVIE TO  
THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE  
GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS. WRITTEN  
AT ALBANY, FEB. 1, 1760

(Vol. II, p. 287)

I attended the Royal American regiment upon the expedition to Niagara, and indeed there was no other chaplain upon that depart-



ment, though there were three regular regiments, and the Provincial regiment of New York. The Mohawks were all upon this service and almost all the Six Nations; they amounted in the whole to 940 at the time of the siege. I officiated constantly to the Mohawks and Oneidas, who regularly attended divine service. I gave them exhortations suitable to the emergency, and I flatter myself my presence with them contributed in some measure to keep up decency and order amongst them.

The Oneidas met us at the lake near their castle, and as they were acquainted with my coming, they brought ten children to receive baptism. The young women, who had been instructed in the principles of Christianity, came likewise to receive that holy ordinance. I baptized them in the presence of a numerous crowd of spectators, who all seemed pleased with the attention and serious behaviour of the Indians upon that solemn occasion; and indeed, bad as they are, I must do them the justice to say, that whenever they attend the offices of religion, it is with great appearance of solemnity and decency.

During this campaign I have had an opportunity of conversing with men of every one of the Six Nation Confederacy and their dependents, and of every nation I find some who have been instructed by the priests of Canada, and they appear zealous Roman Catholics, extremely tenacious of the ceremonies and peculiarities of that Church; and from very good authority I am informed that there is not a nation bordering upon the five Great Lakes, or the banks of the Ohio, the Mississippi, all the way to Louisiana, but what are supplied with priests and schoolmasters, and have very decent places of worship, with every splendid utensil of their religion. How ought we to blush at our coldness and shameful indifference in the propagation of our most excellent religion! The harvest truly is great but the labourers are few. The Indians themselves are not wanting in making very pertinent reflections upon our inattention to these points.

The possession of the important fortification of Niagara is of the utmost consequence to the English, as it gives us the happy opportunity of commencing and cultivating a friendship with those numerous tribes of Indians who inhabit the borders of Lakes Eric, Huron, Michigan and even Lake Superior; and the fur trade, which is carried on by these tribes, is so very considerable, that I am told, by very able judges, that the French look upon Canada of very little importance without the possession of this important pass. It cer-

tainly is so, and must appear obvious to any one who understands the geography of this country. It cuts off and renders their communication with their southern settlements almost impracticable.

In this fort there is a very handsome chapel; and the priest, who was of the Order of St. Francis, had a commission as the King's chaplain to this garrison. He had particular instructions to use the Indians who came to trade with great hospitality (for which he had a particular allowance), and to instruct them in the principles of the faith. The service of the church here was performed with great ceremony and parade. I performed divine service in this church every day during my stay there, but I am afraid it has never been used for this purpose since, as there is no minister of the Gospel there. This neglect will not give the Indians the most favourable impression of us.

ARTICLES OF CAPITULATION  
SIGNED AT FORT NIAGARA, JULY 25, 1759

(Vol. II, p. 327)

Art. 1. The garrison shall march out<sup>1</sup> with arms and baggage, the drums beating and match lighted at both ends, and with one small cannon, to take passage upon bateaux or other vessels, to be furnished by his Britannic Majesty's general, to be conducted to New York by the nearest route, and the shortest time. [Granted.]

2. The garrison shall lay down their arms upon embarking, and shall retain their baggage. [Granted.]

3. The officers shall retain their arms and equipages.

4. The French ladies, and other women with their children, as well as the chaplain, who are here, shall be sent away, and shall be furnished by the general of His Britannic Majesty with the necessary vessels and subsistence. They shall be sent as soon as possible to the nearest French post. Those who may wish to follow their husbands, shall be free to do so. [Granted, except with regard to those women who are His Britannic Majesty's subjects.]

5. The sick and wounded obliged to be left in the fort, shall upon leaving, be allowed to carry away all that belongs to them, and as soon as able to bear the journey, they shall be conducted in safety to the destination of the rest of the garrison. In the meantime,

<sup>1</sup>They might have specified by the breach, which would have been very easy, if the garrison had not to embark on the opposite side.—*Note in Original.*

they shall be furnished with a guard to protect them from the insults of Indians, and shall be fed and cared for at the expense of His Britannic Majesty.

6. The commandant, the officers and troops, together with all who pertain to the king's service, shall march out without being subject to any act of reprisal of any kind or under any pretext whatsoever. [Granted.]

7. There shall be prepared an inventory of the munitions of war that are found in the magazines, and of the artillery. They shall be left in good faith, as well as the other effects belonging to the king, and in the magazines at the time of capitulation. [Granted, and the vessels and boats were included in this article.]

8. The soldiers and militia shall not be pillaged, nor separated from their officers. [Granted.]

9. When the garrison shall march out from the fort, it shall not be allowed to debauch the soldiers to induce them to desert.<sup>2</sup>

10. The garrison shall be conducted by an escort to the place destined for their sojourn. The general shall expressly order the escort to protect them from the Indians, and that they shall not be allowed to insult the garrison, when they lay down their arms to embark. The same care shall be given during the whole route. [Granted.]

11. There shall be prepared an exact list of names and surnames of the soldiers of the different troops, as well as of the militia and others in the king's service. [Granted, in the first article.]

12. The employees in whatever quality they may be, shall retain their equipment and share the lot of the garrison.<sup>3</sup>

13. All the Indians who may be found in the place, of whatever nation they may be, shall be free to go away and without insult. [Granted, but it will be advisable for them to go as privately as possible.]

14. The post shall be surrendered to the Britannic Majesty's general. [Granted, to-morrow at seven o'clock in the morning.]

(The French text of the foregoing, as preserved in the Canadian Archives, is published in the Champlain Society's edition of Knox's "Journal," vol. III. A list of ordnance and stores found in the fort by the English, as scheduled by George Wray, clerk, was widely published at the time, has often been reprinted, and is here omitted.)

<sup>2</sup> This article is not included in English copies.

<sup>3</sup> Not included in English copies.

COMMANDANTS ON THE NIAGARA BEFORE  
THE ENGLISH CONQUEST

- 1678 Dominique de La Motte-Lussière (under La Salle).  
 1687 Chevalier de Troyes (under Marquis de Denonville).  
 1688 Raymond Blaise Desbergères de Rigauville.  
 1707 De Clerambaut d'Aigremont. (Temporary authority  
with no post or command.)  
 1720 Louis Thomas, de Joncaire-Chabert (at *Magazin Royal*,  
now Lewiston).  
 1720 De La Corne (*Magazin Royal*).

AT FORT NIAGARA

- 1726 Captain Charles Le Moyne (afterwards 2d Baron de  
Longueuil).  
 1726 (Dec.) De Joncaire.  
 1727 M. Pommeroy. (In this year also, Jean Baptiste de St.  
Ours, the Sieur Deschaillons, was first aide major at  
Niagara, and is sometimes mentioned as commandant.)  
 1728 De Joncaire (interim only).  
 1729 Nicolas-Blaise de Bergères, de Rigauville. (Appears to  
have continued in command until 1740, with rank of  
lieutenant.)  
 1740 Pierre Boucher, Sieur de Boucherville. (Third of the  
name; rose from ensign to Chevalier, Order of the Cross  
of St. Louis.)  
 1740 Sieur Michael.  
 1740 Etienne Robert, Sieur de La Morandière. (Lieut., later  
captain. An engineer, he rebuilt the fortifications at  
Fort Niagara. His daughter, Marguerite Elizabeth  
Ursule, married Daniel de Joncaire.)  
 1742 Pierre Joseph Céloron, Sieur de Blainville.  
 1743 Lieut. de Raymond.  
 1744-45 Céloron de Blainville.  
 1745-46 Capt. Duplessis-Faber, François Lefebvre.  
 1747-48 Lieut. (later Capt.) Pierre Claude de Pécady, Sieur de  
Contrecœur (relieved May 28, 1748).  
 1748-49 Capt. de Raymond.  
 1750 M. de Becancour.  
 1750-51 Daniel Hyacinth Mary Liénard de Beaujeu. (Captain  
of the Marine; Chevalier, Order of St. Louis; later in

- command at Detroit, at Duquesne, and of victorious French forces in the battle of July 9, 1755, in which he was killed.)
- 1751 De Rigauville.
- 1751 M. de Becancour (De Rigauville, fort major, appears to have been in command in July).
- 1752 De Lavalterie (Or La Valtrie. The family name was Margane. This officer, whose stay at Niagara was brief, is not clearly identified.)
- 1753 Ensign Contreœur (son of Capt. de C.). (Boishébert is also mentioned as in command this year.)
- 1755 Duplessis-Faber (Nov.).
- 1755 Capt. François Pouchot of the Regiment of Béarn. (Arrived Oct. 28; in charge of construction work, but not in command of the garrison; departed, July, 1756.)
- 1756 Duplessis-Faber.
- 1756-57 Capt. Pouchot returns to Fort Niagara Oct. 12, and for the first time has command of the garrison.
- 1757-59 Capt. Jean François de Vassan, relieving Capt. Pouchot in Oct.
- 1759 Capt. Pouchot reaches Fort Niagara, Apr. 30, relieving de Vassan May 5, and continuing in command until July 25th, when he surrendered to Sir Wm. Johnson.

## AT FORT LITTLE NIAGARA

- 1750-59 Daniel de Joncaire, Sieur de Chabert et de Clausonne.

## NOTES ON THE FAMILY JONCAIRE-CHABERT

[The following is compiled from data kindly furnished by Mrs. John P. Bronson, of Monroe, Mich., a great-great-granddaughter of Lieutenant Daniel Joncaire de Chabert et Clausonne; by Mr. Francis H. Maisonville, of Detroit, also a descendant; from a MS. by Rev. Christian Denissen, Burton Library, Detroit; from Tanguay's "*Dictionnaire Généalogique*"; from the parish records of St. Anne's church, Detroit, and from the Dominion Archives. No attempt is made to present a full record of the very numerous descendants of later generations.

The parish registers give always the dates of baptism and burial, but not always those of birth and death. In these notes "b" stands for "baptized," the birth-date being usually one day earlier.]

The house of Chabert is one of the ancient families of Provence, and is readily traced at least to Antoine Chabert of 1444. It has long been represented at Arles, Tarasçon, Beaucaire, and Avignon.

Other families of the same name, but different origin, have long resided at Grenoble and other localities of the Dauphiné. In Paris, 1906, was published a brief "*Généalogie de la maison de Chabert*," by the Baron du Roure, but it does not indicate any connection with men in the American service.

Of the family Joncaire in France, no record can be submitted save the names and residence of the parents of Louis Thomas de Joncaire, first of the family known to have come to America. These parents are therefore here spoken of as "First Generation."

#### FIRST GENERATION

Antoine Marie de Joncaire, m. Gabrielle Hardi; resided in the parish of St. Remi, diocese of Arles, Provence, France.

#### SECOND GENERATION

Their son, Louis Thomas de Joncaire, sieur de Chabert, b. 1670; entered the army, came to Canada about 1687; served as interpreter, became lieutenant; at Montreal, Mch. 1, 1706, m. Magdelene Le Guay (b. Montreal, Oct. 6, 1689, d. of Jean Jerome Le Guay and Magdelene Just). Magdelene Le Guay was buried in the church at Repentigny, June 22, 1771. Her husband, Louis Thomas de Joncaire, d. at Fort Niagara, June 29, 1739. They had ten children.

#### THIRD GENERATION

Children of Louis Thomas and Magdelene (Le Guay) de Joncaire:

1. Philippe Thomas, b. Jan. 9, 1707; m. July 23, 1731, to Madeleine Renaud; d. prior to 1766.

Interpreter and agent for France among the Iroquois of New York and on the Ohio; a captain in the Marine Corps in Canada.

2. Madeleine, b. May 8, 1708, d. May, 1709.

3. Jean Baptiste, b. August 25, 1709, d. Nov., 1709.

4. Louis Romain, b. Nov. 18, 1710.

5. Marie Madeleine, b. Apr. 4, 1712, d. Aug., 1712.

6. Louis Marie, b. Oct. 28, 1715.

7. Daniel, b. Repentigny, 1716 (according to Tanguay). At Montreal, Jan. 19, 1751, he married Margaret Elizabeth Ursula Robbert de La Morandière (b. Montreal, Nov. 26, 1730, d. of Etienne Robbert, sieur de la Morandière, and Margaret Puységault). Daniel was buried at Detroit, July 5, 1771. Margaret his wife was buried at Detroit, Jan. 21, 1773.

Daniel was interpreter among the Iroquois in what is now New York State, and the Ohio valley; special agent of France, leader of many expeditions, for peace and for war; builder and commandant, Fort Little Niagara, 1750-59; Master of the Niagara Portage, trader; builder of Ft. Machault; lieutenant of infantry in the regiment of Guienne, and styled "Sieur de Chabert et de Clausonne."

8. Madeleine Thérèse, b. March 23, 1717; m. Aug. 25, 1749, to Philippe Antoine Dautrive.

9. Louis Marie, b. Aug. 5, 1719.

10. François, b. June 20, 1723.

All of these children appear to have been born in or near Montreal. After Lieut. Daniel's return to Canada, 1765, his home was Montreal until his removal to Detroit in 1766.

#### FOURTH GENERATION

Children of Philippe Thomas Joneaire and Madeleine Renaud:

1. Marie Madeleine, b. 1732; m. Nov. 10, 1755, to Louis Charles Daillebout.

2. Gabrielle, b. June 5, 1736; m. Sept. 19, 1757, to Lieut. Honoré Dubois de La Milletière.

3. Philippe Charles, b. Apr. 19, 1741.

4. Marie Louise, b. June 9, buried July 30, 1745.

#### FOURTH GENERATION

Children of Daniel Joneaire and Margaret Roebert:

1. Philippe Daniel, b. Montreal Dec. 2, 1752; m. at Detroit, Feb. 12, 1783, Judith Gouin (b. Detroit, July 2, 1763, d. of Claude Thomas Gouin and Mary Joseph Cuillerier *dit* Beaubien). Judith was buried at Detroit, July 21, 1790. Her husband, Philippe (Daniel's eldest son) was buried at Detroit, Apr. 30, 1793.

2. Margaret, b. 1755, m. at Assumption (Sandwich, Can.), June 30, 1773, Jean Alexis Loranger *dit* Maisonville (b. Batiscan, Sept. 15, 1728; son of René Alexis Rivard *dit* Loranger and Mary Charlotte Lafond). A former wife of Jean Alexis was Mary Frances Guevremont. Margaret Chabert Loranger was buried at Assumption, Feb. 6, 1811. Jean Alexis her husband d. Detroit and was buried at Assumption, Sept. 16, 1814.

3. Louis Joneaire de Chabert. (No data.)

4. Francis Joneaire de Chabert, b. 1757 (apparently at Montreal), m. at Detroit, April 10, 1780, Mary Josette Chene (b. "at

the coast of the Pottawatamies" near Detroit, Feb. 7, 1762, d. of Isadore Chene and Teresa Becquet). Francis Chabert was buried at Detroit Nov. 24, 1813. He was two years old when his father was taken prisoner at Fort Niagara, and was one of the sons referred to in the narrative (II, 428) as rejoining the family after Daniel's return to America. His first name usually is given in the English form, used increasingly with later generations.

5. Jacques Noël Joncaire de Chabert, b. Bout de l'Isle, Montreal, March 30, 1762; buried there the next day.

6. Angèlique Margaret Joncaire de Chabert, b. Detroit, Sept. 3, 1770, buried at Sandwich, Sept. 16, 1770.

#### FIFTH GENERATION

Children of Philippe Daniel Joncaire de Chabert and Judith Gouin:

1. Judith, b. Detroit, Nov. 21, 1783, m. Richard Pattinson, buried at Sandwich, May 21, 1804.

2. Margaret, b. Assumption, Sandwich, Mar. 15, 1787, m. James McGregor, buried at Sandwich, Feb. 3, 1820.

3. Felicity, born in April, 1788, baptized at Detroit June 30, 1788; m. at Assumption, Sandwich, May 8, 1812, to Denis Campau (b. Detroit, Oct. 10, 1781, son of James Campau and Catherine Menard). Felicity Campau was buried at Detroit, Feb. 16, 1814. Denis her husband was buried at Detroit Dec. 19, 1818.

#### FIFTH GENERATION

Children of Francis Chabert and Mary Josette Chene:

1. Margaret, b. Detroit, Feb. 26, 1781.

2. Mary Catherine, b. Detroit, Jan. 29, 1783; m. 1808, François La Fontaine.

3. Francis, b. Detroit, Oct. 17, 1784; m. Mary Louisa Parmier.

4. Isadore, b. Detroit June 19, 1789.

5. Rosalie, b. Detroit, Nov. 3, 1791; m. at Detroit Oct. 25, 1809, Joseph Loranger (born St. Antoine, Can., son of Claude Loranger and Margaret Menançon).

6. George, b. Detroit, Mar. 26, 1793.

7. Philip, b. Detroit, Oct. 16, 1795; m. Teresa Campau.

8. Richard, b. Detroit, July 9, 1798.

9. Henrietta, b. Detroit, Feb. 22, 1803; m. at Detroit, Sept. 29, 1825, John Nathan Hubbell (born in New York State, 1801, son of Isaac Hubbell and Eunice Hilton).



10. Victoria, b. Detroit, Sept. 7, 1805.
11. Denis, b. Detroit, Sept. 21, 1808.

## SIXTH GENERATION

Children of Francis Chabert and Mary Louisa Parmier:

1. Francis Louis, born Aug. 1, 1821, baptized at Detroit, Feb. 21, 1822.
2. Philip, born Mar. 13, 1824, baptized at Detroit, Oct. 25, 1824.
3. Lucy, b. St. Antoine, Raisin river, Mar. 4, 1826.

## SIXTH GENERATION

Children of Philip Chabert and Teresa Campau:

1. Infant, b. Detroit, Feb. 18, buried Feb. 23, 1827.
2. Alexander, b. Detroit, July 3, 1828.
3. Margaret, b. Detroit, Apr. 3, 1831, d. 1834.

The interpreter, L'Oranger, whose service with Tonty has been mentioned (I, 179) was Claude Rivard L'Oranger, a son of Robert Rivard *dit* L'Oranger and Magdelene Guillet, and was born 1665. Records show that in July, 1703, he agreed with François Dumontier of Montreal and Etienne Voiland de Radisson of Detroit, to go to the latter place as interpreter. He is found serving there in that capacity, in Aug., 1717. The name early became "Loranger" in the vicinity of Detroit, and from the days of French settlement the family has been prominent in southern Michigan. Its most distinguished member was Joseph Loranger, born in Detroit, 1811, in a house which was said to be more than a century old at the time of his birth. His father shared in the disturbances of the Pontiac Rebellion, the Revolution, and the War of 1812. When Joseph was a year old, he was kidnapped by a renegade Potawatamic and carried into the wilderness near Ecorse; but was recovered by his parents a few days later, unharmed. During his life in Monroe, Mich., Mr. Loranger held numerous posts of distinction in his home community, one of them being Deputy United States Marshal during the Patriot War of 1837. He was a grandson of Mary Josette Chene, who married Col. Francis Chabert de Joncaire. An unverified tradition states that she had blood relationship with Louis XIII of France.

Jean Alexis Loranger, husband of Margaret Chabert, and his brother François, both took an active part in military affairs around Detroit, and were with Lt. Gov. Henry Hamilton in his expedition against Vincennes in 1778. François was captured in Vincennes with Hamilton, partially scalped and taken to Williamsburg, Va.;

because of long confinement his mind gave way and he committed suicide, Aug. 1, 1780.

One line of descent from Margaret Chabert and her husband is as follows:

1st generation: Toussaint Maisonville and Catherine Drouillard.

2d generation: Oliver Maisonville and Elizabeth Prat.

3d generation: Francis Henry Maisonville and Frances Maloney.

4th generation: Francis Henry Maisonville, of Detroit.

Rosalie Chabert, daughter of Col. Francis Chabert and granddaughter of Daniel Joncaire de Chabert, was born in Detroit in 1791; and baptized in old Ste. Anne's church by Rev. Father Couture, Dec. 9, 1791. She married Joseph Loranger, Oct. 25, 1809, and was the mother of ten children. One record states that she died upon the farm "granted about 150 years ago by the French Government to her father," obviously an error, since French dominion in Michigan ceased some years before her grandfather (Daniel) went there. The same record says she was taken by the Indians during the War of 1812, and narrowly escaped the scalping-knife.

Philippe, eldest son of Daniel Chabert, was a captain of volunteers during the Revolution. A memorial signed by him, addressed to Gov. Haldimand, "Detroit, May 5, 1784," is one of several documents relating to him, preserved among the Haldimand papers.

A Detroit record of the marriage of François Chabert and Josette Chene, states that the former was "second son of the late Ezechiel Chabert, Captain of Industry, and the late La Ronronnière, his father and mother in lawful marriage." ("Register of Detroit," ser. M, vol. 76.) "Ezechiel" may have been one of Daniel's names, but it has not been elsewhere noted. "La Ronronnière," an unknown name, is obviously an error for "La Morandière," well known in French-Canadian history. Copies of the marriage contracts of several members of the family Joncaire-Chabert, prior to or during the Revolution, are preserved by the Buffalo Historical Society.

The Joncaire-Chabert line is merged through marriage with the families Chene (in early years Chesne), for whom a street in Detroit is named; La Fontaine, Loranger, McBride, Miller, Kellogg and others, many of them prominent in Detroit and vicinity for a century and a half. Another branch is represented by the Fitzsimmons family of Albany.

## A JONCAIRE TRADITION

(Letter to the *N. Y. Sun*, Some Years Since)

The little town of Franklin, Pennsylvania, is greatly agitated over the discovery of a chest containing \$27,000 in gold and silver coins by a resident of that place. For many years there has been a belief that during the occupation of this part of the country by the French a large amount of treasure was secreted in Franklin, near where the old fort stood. Columbus Brown had a mania in regard to this treasure, and for years the thought of becoming possessed of riches in this way has haunted him. About two years ago two Frenchmen, supposed to be relatives of the old commandant of the fort, arrived at Franklin with maps and commenced a systematic search, but it proved fruitless. Brown became excited at this and since that time has continued the search. On Friday night last, he dreamed that he was handling a chest of gold, and that he had found it buried in the earth at the foot of a tree in an open field. He was informed by a man with a foreign accent, dressed in a military uniform, that if he would measure a certain distance from the center of a rock in the run, due north, and then measure 33 feet due west from that point, he would find the treasure he had so often seen in his dream. He arose, and with spade and pick went to the owner of the field in which the tree stood and gained permission to dig. He had not been at work more than two hours when he came upon an iron chest. The box was nearly two-thirds filled with gold and silver coin tarnished and covered with sand and mold, but nevertheless gold. The coins are mostly French, but a number of English, German and Spanish coins are among the lot. They bear the dates of 1729, 1744, 1751, and various other dates, the latest of which is 1754, which is the same year that Fort Machault was completed. On a brass ruler found in the chest the name "Joncaire" is plainly stamped. It is a well-known fact that this was the name of the officer in command of the French troops. The fort was evacuated in July, 1759, and very hastily. The location of this field is about 75 rods west of the fort, and was no doubt selected for the burial of the treasure with a view of securing it at a subsequent date. Mr. Brown took the chest to his home, and many of the coins have since been on exhibition in the banks.

## A RELIC OF FORT LITTLE NIAGARA

(Vol. II, p. 306)

This old stone chimney is the only existing construction on the Niagara frontier, except the mess-house ("castle"), the powder magazine and perhaps the bake-house, at Fort Niagara, which can be ascribed to the French period. If, as appears probable, it belonged to one of the buildings in Chabert's fort, it may date from 1750. Withstanding the destruction of Fort Little Niagara in 1759, it was subsequently utilized for English structures. According to Lossing ("Field-Book of the War of 1812," p. 380, note), the Hon. Augustus Porter dwelt for a time, prior to the War of 1812, in a house built up to the old chimney. That structure was burned by the British in 1813. In 1840 Gen. Peter B. Porter erected a frame house with a stone wing which connected with and utilized the old chimney. The house was torn down about 1880, again leaving the chimney, a striking landmark. As its site was desired for factory extensions it was taken down and in 1898 reconstructed, of the same stones similarly placed, in a more convenient locality. See "The Story of the Old Stone Chimney," by Hon. Peter A. Porter, Niagara Falls, N. Y., 1915.

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## CORRIGENDA

- Vol. I, p. 93, l. 14, for "Sixteenth century," read "Seventeenth century."
- Vol. I, p. 372. The portrait of the Chevalier de Beaujeu is after a miniature, a copy of which was given by Count Saveuse de Beaujeu to the late Dr. John Gilmory Shea; to whom (and to any who may have succeeded to his interest), it is here desired to give due credit.





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