

head of Lake George. The Mohawks, fearing an invasion of their villages by the Canada Indians, were permitted to return to their homes. The services of General Johnson on this occasion were rewarded with a baronetcy, his office of superintendent of Indian affairs was confirmed, and he was granted the sum of five thousand pounds. From this event was acquired the title by which he was ever afterwards known—"Sir William Johnson."

CHAPTER VI.

French and English War Continued—Results of the Campaigns in 1756—French Successes in that and Succeeding Years—The Iroquois Divided—Johnson's Efforts to Unite Them—Webb's Disgraceful Conduct—The Mohawk Valley Invaded—Palatine Village Destroyed—Abercrombie's Neglect and Inefficiency—Campaigns of 1757-58—English Successes—French Reverses—Johnson's Achievements—Extinction of the French Power in America.

STRANGE as it may appear, after the hostilities described in the preceding chapter, it was not until the following summer that war was formally proclaimed between Great Britain and France.

Three principal campaigns were organized in 1756; one against Fort Niagara with six thousand men, the second against Fort Du Quesne with three thousand men, and the third, by far the largest army yet assembled in the country, a force of ten thousand troops designed for the reduction of Crown Point, the occupation of the Champlain valley, and, if necessary, the invasion of Canada.

General John Winslow was in command of the latter, but was soon joined by General Abercrombie with reinforcements from Lord Loudon, governor of Virginia. Abercrombie at once removed the provincial officers and placed men in their stead men from the regular army, who, though versed in tactics, were wholly destitute of a knowledge of the methods of conducting military operations in such a region. Through the inactivity of the commanding officers nothing was accomplished in the way of taking the French strongholds, while at other points the results were equally unsatisfactory, and the campaigns ended with much greater advantage to the French than to the English.

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The campaign of 1757 was arranged by the English in proportions equal to its predecessor, while the French army under Montcalm was by no means inactive. The latter had by this time not only gained the friendship of many of the western Iroquois, but had succeeded in enlisting them under the French standard. The league of the Iroquois was now so weakened as to have lost much of its power of union, and the brethren were no longer averse to warring against each other. In fact, at this time a large number of the Iroquois had become settled in Canada, chiefly on account of French successes in previous years and the constant apathy of the English; and even the strong influence of Sir William was no longer effectual in enlisting them in the cause which he represented. The greater part of the Mohawk nation, however, remained true to Sir William, their adopted chief, and were, with a fragment of other nations, factors in this campaign and that of the following year. Instead of being aggressors, the English officers appeared to prefer a mere defense. Their strong points in this province were at Fort William Henry and Fort Edward; the former garrisoned by Colonel Munro with five hundred men, and supported by seventeen hundred troops in an entrenched camp. General Webb was at Fort Edward, only fifteen miles away, with four thousand effective men. Munro therefore felt strong in his position, but when Montcalm laid siege to the fort and assistance became necessary, and was solicited, the cowardly Webb¹ withheld it, and even suggested that Munro should make terms of surrender with the French. Sir William Johnson with his Mohawk warriors and militia started to relieve the besieged garrison, but the commander in charge ordered his return. The natural and only result was the surrender of Fort William Henry, followed by the indiscriminate slaughter of a number of the prisoners, although, in justice to Montcalm, it must be said he did all in his power to prevent it. Fort William Henry was totally destroyed and its stores and munitions captured; and this with a loss to the French of only fifty-three men.

¹Another evidence of the consummate cowardice of General Webb was made apparent in his conduct at the German Flats, in the Mohawk valley. Two days before the surrender at Oswego Webb had been sent to the relief of that position. On the 20th day of August following, Sir William Johnson with two battalions of militia and three hundred Indians was sent to support Webb. At the Oneida carrying place news was received of the fall of Oswego, whereupon the terrified Webb, "fancying he already beheld his own scalp dangling from the waist of some brawny savage," caused trees to be immediately felled across Wood creek, and fled with his troops to the German Flats.

Webb at once prepared to retreat to the Hudson. Montcalm had intended an invasion of the Hudson river region, and the capture of Albany, but from the fact that his Canadian soldiers were needed at their homes to harvest their fields in order to avert a threatened famine, he retired satisfied with his success and glory. Meanwhile Loudon had had taken a position on Long Island; the English had been driven from the Ohio; Montcalm had restored the St. Lawrence valley to France, and Great Britain and her colonies were not only humiliated but were naturally fearful for the future. During the year 1757, there was made another disastrous invasion of the beautiful Mohawk valley by the French and Indians. At that time there were scattered settlements all through the vicinity of the river, the pioneers being chiefly Germans, or Palatines. They had become thrifty and were possessed of dwellings and fairly well tilled fields. They had been sufficiently apprised of the threatened invasion, and had they heeded the warnings give by the Oneida Indians they might have escaped, at least a part of the vengeance that fell so fearfully upon them. General Abercrombie too, was negligent in giving protection to the settlers and to the friendly Indians, although frequent requests had been made. Before daylight on the morning of November 12, the dwellers at the Palatine village were aroused by the terrific war-whoop, and immediately three hundred Canadians and Indians under Belletre, attacked each block house. Some show of resistance was made, but without avail. The people of the village asked for quarter, but no mercy was shown. The dwellings were burned and their occupants ruthlessly tomahawked while they vainly endeavored to escape. Forty Germans in all were massacred and one hundred and fifty others carried away captives. In addition to these bloody horrors, the invaders captured large quantities of grain, three thousand cattle and as many sheep. This invasion so alarmed the settlers of the whole region that the inhabitants living elsewhere in the valley sought safety in flight to the settlements at Schenectady and Albany, and the villages of Stone Arabia and Cherry Valley became almost depopulated.

At the time this massacre took place Sir William Johnson was confined to his room by sickness, but through his secretary he at once sent word to the Oneidas and Tuscaroras, enquiring of them why they had

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The capture of Ticonderoga, however, and the descent upon Montreal was the most important of these campaigns, being indeed the vital point in the war. A force of about 7,000 regulars and 9,000 provincials and a heavy train of artillery was assembled at the head of Lake George by the beginning of July. Unfortunately, however, the command of this fine army was given to General James Abercrombie. Judging well of his incapacity, Pitt sought to avert the probability of failure by the selection of Lord Howe, to whom was given the rank of brigadier-general, and he was made the controlling spirit of the expedition.

Early in the morning of July 5th this splendid army embarked upon Lake George, and two days later made a landing on Lake Champlain at the point that now bears Lord Howe's name. In the first engagement that took place he fell mortally wounded,¹ and his death destroyed all the hope of a successful campaign. On the morning of the 8th Sir William Johnson arrived, accompanied by nearly four hundred Mohawks and other Indian warriors,¹ but at the same time the French army was reinforced by the arrival of De Levis and his 400 veterans. He had designed another invasion of the Mohawk valley, but had been ordered back to join the main body under Montcalm. During the engagement which followed, and in which the British were seriously defeated, Johnson and his Indians were posted on Mount Defiance (then known as Sugar Loaf Hill), and from their position were prevented from taking an active part in the battle. The details of this sanguinary conflict need not here be narrated; they are emblazoned on the pages of many a history. The assault was hopeless from the beginning, and while its bloody scenes were being enacted, under the watchful eye of the brilliant Montcalm, Abercrombie looked after the welfare of his own noble person amid the security of the saw-mills, two miles from the battle

¹ To give to the reader something of an idea of the difficulties that attended the gathering of this body of Indians, attention is directed to the following extracts from a letter addressed by Sir William Johnson to General Abercrombie: "Camp in the woods within ten miles of Fort Edward, July 5, 1758, six in the morning.

"SIR: I arrived here last night with near 200 men of the Five Nations and others. Mr. Crogan and some of the Indian officers are within a day's march of me with about 100 men, as I hear from letters from him." "I set off from my house last Tuesday with as many as I could there get sober to move with me, which were but a few, for liquor was as plenty among them as ditch-water, being brought up from Schenectady by their and other squaws as well as whites, and sold to them at night in spite of all I could do. These have since joined me by small parties. I assure your excellency, no man ever had more trouble than I have had to get them away from the liquor; and if the fate of the whole country depended upon my moving a day sooner, I could not do it without leaving them behind, and disgusting all the nations, etc."

field, and before early dawn of the morning of the 10th, he had placed the length of Lake George between himself and his conquerors. The total loss to the British was more than 2,000 men; of the French, about 500 men. This terrible and probably unnecessary catastrophe was partially offset by the successful siege of Fort Frontenac, which capitulated to Bradstreet on the 26th of August.

While Abercrombie thus dallied in contemptible indecision, Montcalm, reinforced with 3,000 Canadians and 600 Indians, was vigilant and persistent, striking wherever he could detect a vulnerable point. The events thus far recorded seem to indicate an early approaching triumph of the French cause in America, but really a dark reverse was imminent. Canada was suffering the horrors of famine and was almost depopulated of men who had been required to fill the military ranks. Montcalm was persistently appealing to the crown for aid, but the government could only furnish provisions and ammunition. On the other hand the English now appeared to have been stirred to renewed action through the zeal of William Pitt, and the year 1759 opened with far better prospects of success for the British arms. Changes had been made in military affairs; Abercrombie had been superseded by General Amherst, and when the latter appealed to the colonists for militia reinforcements they willingly complied with the request, although they were heavily burdened with debt on account of previous expenditures.

The proposed campaign of the year comprised, in addition to the conquest of Ticonderoga, the capture of Fort Niagara and the siege of Quebec. On the 7th day of July, General Prideaux was joined by Sir William Johnson, between whom there existed warm friendship, quite the reverse of the relations between the latter and Abercrombie. It was agreed by both officers that Oswego and Fort Niagara were important positions, and ought to be taken during the campaign. For this purpose Johnson was to assemble as many as possible of the Iroquois and join the expedition under Prideaux. As early as January 18, Johnson held a conference with Mohawk and Seneca chiefs¹ at

¹ The Senecas were by this time distrustful of the French and wavered between uncertain possibilities. They desired to be with the victors, and the general result of the previous year had not brought to the French arms the success the commanders had promised. Moreover the Indian faith in the French had been considerably shaken by treacheries, and many of the savages were anxious to return to their old allegiance.

Canajoharie castle, his purpose being to call a general council of as many of the Iroquois as could be induced to attend, and if possible unite them all under his standard. The result was that in April following, another council was held at Canajoharie and assurances given by the savages of their willingness to join Johnson in the expedition. When he arrived at Prideaux's camp, Johnson had in his command no less than 700 dusky warriors, as well as a strong force of provincial troops.

After the surrender of the fort at Niagara, Johnson and his forces remained in the neighborhood, and also at Oswego, until the 14th of October when he departed for Mount Johnson.

In the Champlain regions the English armies were also successful. Montcalm had taken a position at Quebec, to defend the stronghold against the assaults of General Wolfe; and there both of these brave officers found their graves. General Amherst laid siege to Ticonderoga, which was defended by a garrison of 400 men under Boulamarque. The fort was evacuated on July 26, and this was soon followed by the withdrawal of the French from Crown Point.

The domination of France was ended by the fall of Quebec, September 18, 1759, thus leaving the English masters of all Canada, for the surrender of Vaudreuil on the 8th of the next September was an inevitable result.

Although hostilities between the two nations had now ceased, a formal peace was not established until 1763, when, on the 10th of February, the treaty of Paris was signed, by which France ceded to Great Britain all her possessions in Canada. On the 30th of July, 1760, Governor De Lancey, of New York, suddenly died, and the government passed into the hands of Cadwallader Colden, who was commissioned lieutenant governor in August, 1761. In October of that year General Robert Monkton was appointed governor of the province of New York.



John Semford