

CHAPTER IV.

THE STRUGGLE FOR A CONTINENT.

FOR the possession of the North American continent two nations, France and England, representing the two civilizations, Roman and Teutonic, which dominate respectively Southern and Northern Europe, contended. France, in America, embodied the Roman or more ancient type of civilization, in which government and order were represented by the priest and the soldier, while the people had little or nothing to do with the government, except to obey. External authority was everything; inward condition, little or nothing. The French system was not that of real colonization, but of military possession; and the desired form of social and political order was that based on monarchy and feudalism. In the despotism of a Church subordinate to a ruler in Italy, and of a State represented by a monarch, the individual was lost, and the people's function was simply to submit and pay taxes. They were taught to look upon their privileges and enjoyments as the gifts of the sovereign and of the Church. Authority emanated from the government, which represented God, and represented Him infallibly.

The English colonists, whose leaders had been largely trained in the Dutch Republic, represented the best elements of Teutonic civilization, those of

English blood being more English than the Englishmen left behind, and more Teutonic than the Germans. Most of the principles and institutions wrought out in the experience of the colonists, especially those now seen to be most peculiarly American, were not of British, but of continental origin. New England was settled mostly by immigrants who had left England before 1640 ; and nearly all their leaders had come by way of Holland, receiving their political and military education in the United States of Holland, and under its red, white, and blue flag.

The strong hereditary instincts of Germanic freedom were best represented in the seventeenth century by the Hollanders, who in the little republic had long lived under democratic institutions. Nearly all the leading men who settled New England had come to America after a longer or shorter stay in Holland, where they imbibed the republican ideas which they transported as good seed to America. The Pilgrims, who were the first settlers of Massachusetts ; many of the Puritans who came later to Boston and Salem ; the leaders of the Connecticut Colony, — Hooker, Davenport, and many of their company, — had all been in Holland. The military commanders — Miles Standish, John Smith, Samuel Argall, Lyon Gardiner, Governor Dudley, and others — had been trained in the Dutch armies. Thus it came to pass that while the makers of New England were English in blood and language, their peculiar institutions were not of England, but directly borrowed from the one republic of Northern Europe.

The Middle States were all settled under the Netherlands influences. Even in New York, where through the patroon system semi-feudal institutions very much like those of aristocratic England had begun, the innate love of liberty in the people ultimately broke through these as a seed through its shell. The full growth was the typical American State of New York, whose constitution possessed more of the features of the National Constitution of 1787 than any other of the original thirteen States. Feudalism and its ideas were thus for the most part left behind or soon outgrown. The Church, even when united with the State, as was the case in some of the colonies, was of democratic form. The system of landholding and registry, the town-meeting, and the written and secret ballot, — all Germanic ideas, — with many customs and practical political ideas brought from Holland, made the people free, developed the individual man, and gave the colonies a reserve of strength and endurance impossible in Canada.

In their plan of strategy, the French idea was to limit the English domain within and east of the Alleghany Mountains by a chain of forts stretching from Quebec along the Great Lakes, down the Ohio and the Mississippi to New Orleans. This was a scheme of magnificent distances, involving enormous energy and expense, especially while the English held the sea-coast and bases of supplies. It was evident that for any hope of success in their mighty territorial scheme the aborigines must be secured as allies. In this work the priest could do more than the soldier. Hence

the zeal and energy of the spiritual orders were invoked, and put under tribute to the grand design of Gallicizing America.

On the other hand, to overcome the plans of the French, there must be that which could neutralize the wiles of the Jesuit as well as the ability of the soldier. In every war between France and England, Americans must bear a part; and until the ultimate question should have been decided, the Indian held, on this continent, the balance of power. Neutrality to red or white man was impossible. The spring, the dominating idea of diplomacy and war in Europe was this doctrine of the balance of power; but in America it was less a speculative notion than a practical reality. The American Indian would be the decisive element until one or other of the two nations and civilizations became paramount.

A fresh disturbance of this doctrinal stability in European politics occurring near the middle of the eighteenth century, at once caused the scales to oscillate in America, gave the French the first advantage, and compelled William Johnson to follow up Van Curler's work, and to be the most active agent and influence among the Mohawks which had been felt since the death of "Brother Corlaer." This series of episodes is called in Europe "The War of the Austrian Succession." It was begun by Frederick the Great of Prussia, against Maria Theresa of Austria. In America it is known in history as the "Old French War."

The "Old" French War (not that of 1753) was

declared by Louis XV., March 15, 1744. The news was known all along the Canada borders by the end of April. The tidings travelled more slowly in the English language ; and it was the middle of May, after the French had attacked the English garrison at Canso and compelled it to surrender, before the startling facts aroused the colonies. Already the Indian hatchets had been sharpened, and the plan of raid and slaughter well made, when the governor of New York, relying on the Indians as the great breakwater against the waves of Canadian invasion, called a council of the chiefs of the confederated Six Nations at Albany, which met June 18, 1744.

The settlers soon found that, in this as in previous wars, the French and Canadian Indians were the more aggressive party, while the military authorities of New York relied on a defensive policy. The governor, George Clinton, — not the ancestor of the Clintons in the United States, but the sixth son of the Earl of Lincoln, — had arrived in September, 1743. He was an old sea-dog, an ex-admiral, who knew as much about civil government as one of his powder-monkeys on shipboard. It seemed to be the policy of the British Government to send over decayed functionaries and politicians who were favourites at court, but in every way unfitted for the great problems of state in the complex community whose borders were on Canada, where French power was entrenched. Too many of these nominees of the Crown considered it to be their first duty to build up their private fortune. Nevertheless, it was Clinton — who had probably been

been decoyed and captured, the fortress was surrendered. Warren became an admiral ; and Pepperell, a merchant like Johnson, was made a baronet, — the former one day, the latter one month, after receipt of the news in England.

Chronology was in this case a key to English jealousy of the colonists, whose growing strength and republicanism monarchical Britain feared. The joy of the Americans was excessive. It culminated in Boston, where "Louisburg Square" still preserves the name. The gladness on this side of the Atlantic equalled the astonishment, flavoured with jealousy, which fell upon Europe. One would have thought that it would salt wholesomely the inborn contempt which the regular officers of the king's troops felt toward provincial fighters, but it did not ; and Braddock, Loudon, Abercrombie, and their foolish imitators were yet numerous to come. Indeed, this success of provincial Americans induced a jealousy that was to rankle for a generation or more in British breasts, to the serious disadvantage of both Great Britain and the colonies, as we shall soon see.

Meanwhile, Indian affairs were in a critical condition, and the signs of danger on the frontier were ominous. For reasons not here to be analyzed, there were bad feelings between the Iroquois and the Albany people. Rumours of the purpose of the English to destroy the Indians were diligently kept in circulation by both lay and clerical Frenchmen. Those who wore canonicals and those who wore regimentals were equally industrious in fomenting dissatisfaction. The

uneasiness of the Mohawks was so great that they sent several chiefs to confer with their brethren, the Caughnawaga Indians, in Canada. It was generally believed that the French would attack Oswego. There is also evidence that attempts were made to kidnap Johnson, against whom, as a relative of Admiral Warren, as one of the captors of Louisburg, and as the man who especially influenced the Iroquois in favour of the English, the French had an especial grudge. It was known that from the fort at Crown Point scalping parties issued at intervals; but mere rumours turned into genuine history when Longmeadow, Massachusetts, was attacked and burned by French Indians. On Nov. 17, 1745, the poorly fortified Dutch village of Saratoga on the Hudson was attacked by an overwhelming force of over six hundred French and Indians. After easy victory the place was given over to the torch, and the sickening story of the massacre of Schenectady was repeated.

In French civilization the priest and the soldier always go together. They are the two necessary figures, whether in Corea, Africa, Cochin China, or Canada. The soldier, Marin, was in this case led by the priest, Picquet. Besides the massacre, in which thirty persons were killed and scalped, sixty were made prisoners; and the whole fertile farming country, blooming with the flower and fruit of industry, was desolated for many miles. Many of the captives were negroes, and a majority of the whole number died of disease in the prisons of Quebec. One of the best accounts of this massacre — meagre in details — is con-

tained in a letter to Mr. Johnson from Mr. Sanders, of Albany. It was nine days after this event that Johnson received the urgent letter inviting him to move for safety to Albany.

A line of fire and blood, ashes and blackness, was now being drawn from Springfield to Niagara. All men were under arms, and each was called to watch every third night. No house was safe, except palisaded or built of logs for defence. The forts were repaired and garrisoned. The bullet moulds were kept hot, and extra flints, ramrods, and ammunition laid out all ready, while weary sentinels strained ear and eye through each long, dark night.

Out from the gateway of Crown Point, like centrifugal whirlwinds of fire, swept bands of savages, who swooped down on the settlements. Almost under the shadow of the palisades of Albany, Schenectady, and the villages along the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys, men were shot and their scalps taken to decorate Canadian wigwams. The little "God's Acre" in every settlement on the Mohawk began to fatten with victims who had died out of their beds. Perhaps none of these ancient sleeping-places has been reverently emptied in order to consign their memorials of once active life to more enduring public honour in the modern cemeteries, but the number of perforated skulls surprises the beholder. In these mute witnesses to the disquiet of the past, he reads the story of ancestral danger and suffering. The devout frontiersman made his way to church on the Lord's Day with his loaded gun on his shoulder, its flint well picked

and its pan well primed. He took his seat at the end of the pew, only after sentinels had been posted and arms made ready for instant use. Slight wonder was it that the effects of all-night vigils, and the unusual posture of repose in a pew, rather than the length of the Domine's sermon, induced sleep even in meeting.

Most of the churches were loop-holed for defence, and even in the few old houses occasionally found with projecting second floor, we see an interesting survival of the old days, when from both church and dwelling a line of gun-barrels might at any hour decorate the eaves with gargoyles spouting fire and death. Away from the villages, the farmers, building a block-house on some commanding hill, and if possible over a well or spring, kept a sentinel on the roof while they laboured in the fields. Horn in hand, the watcher surveyed the wide stretches of valley, or scrutinized the edges of the clearing, to give warning of the approach of skulking red or white murderers. Yet human nerves would weary, and after constant strain for months with no near sign of danger, vigilance would often relax at the very moment when the enemy opened fire and raised his yell. Men would laugh to-day at warnings, while, perhaps, the boys in play would set up mock sentinels at the gateways, who on the morrow would be scalped or be bound and on their way to Canada.

The twofold plan of campaign decided on in England was the old one first formulated by Leisler in 1690, looking to the invasion and subjugation of Canada, attempted again in 1711, when a German

regiment in New York was raised for the purpose, and which was frustrated by the disaster to the British fleet. The land and naval forces of New and Old England were now to make rendezvous at Louisburg, and move up the St. Lawrence to Quebec, while the provincial militia of the middle and lower colonies, combined with the Iroquois if possible, should capture the French fort, St. Frederick, at Crown Point, and the city of Montreal.

The disastrous inaction of King George and the London lords, arising probably from jealousy of the provincials, and the rumours of a great French fleet under D'Anville to be sent against New England, caused the abandonment of the expedition to Quebec. This, however, was not known by submarine electric cable; and meantime New York politics, at which we must now glance, had become interesting.

Two friends, the Chief-Justice De Lancey and Governor Clinton, quarrelled over their cups at a convivial gathering, and this took place just after the latter had renewed the former's commission for life. Happening, too, on the eve of the great council of the Six Nations, which Clinton had summoned at Albany, just when that town was pestiferous with small-pox and bilious fever, the outlook for successful negotiations was not very promising. Messrs. Rutherford, Livingston, and Dr. Cadwallader Colden were the only members of his council who came with Clinton, while of the expected Indians only three had arrived. These, for the two scalps with the blood hardly dried on the hair, were rewarded with strouds and laced coats, and

sent to drum up recruits, while the governor waited a month for the tardy, suspicious, and sullen savages to appear before him.

Matters looked dark indeed. Yet when Mohawk runners, despatched by Johnson on a scouting expedition to Crown Point, arrived, bringing news of French preparations for a descent upon Schenectady and the Valley, and possibly upon Albany, the governor was unable to see the imminent danger. He still waited; he still believed wholly in the defensive policy, and seemed satisfied, because for the fort on the Hudson at Saratoga, now Easton, a sum equal to about eight hundred dollars had been voted by the Assembly. This sum enabled the colonial engineers to build a palisade one hundred and fifty feet long, with six redoubts for barracks, all of timber, and to mount on platforms twelve cannon of six, twelve, and eighteen pound calibre. In this way the summer was wasted in waiting; for the Indians came not, and Clinton's ambition to be a powerful diplomatist with the Indians was for the present baffled.

Believing this was a matter between French and English alone, strongly inclining to neutrality, and diligently persuaded thereto by the French Jesuits, the Iroquois sulked at home. Not only did they flatly refuse to meet the governor, but some of the chiefs went openly over to the French.

Meanwhile the white settlers were, according to Johnson's report, abandoning their farms along the Mohawk, and concentrating in the block-houses or palisaded towns. Besides having sent Indian scouts

to the Champlain country, Johnson wrote urgent letters to Clinton stating the case, and asking him to open his eyes to the facts. To protect Johnson's stores of eleven thousand bushels of grain, while standing his ground, the governor sent a lieutenant and thirty men. Another militia company was despatched to the upper Mohawk Castle. Having done these things, Clinton, who had as early as the 4th of August officially notified Governor Shirley of Massachusetts that he would proceed against Crown Point with the warriors of the Five Nations, was at his wits' end. He had alienated Colonel Schuyler and the members of the Board of Indian Commissioners, mostly faithful and trusted men well known in the provinces. In the quarrel of the governor with De Lancey, these ranged themselves on the side of the chief justice.

It is too clumsy an attempt at explanation of the difficulty between the king's agent, Clinton, and the Board of Indian Commissioners, to ascribe the causes chiefly or entirely to the "rascality" of the commissioners, who "abused their office for private speculation," or to the ambition of De Lancey. It is not necessary in one who appreciates the great abilities of Johnson to describe him as a white lily of honesty and purity. English authors, the Tory historians of the Revolution, and the prejudiced writers of American history, who reflect their own narrowness and sectional views, take delight in maligning the character of the men of colonial New York simply because they were Dutch. As matter of unsentimental fact,

there is much to be said on both sides. The people of New York were not anxious to send the Indians on the war-path, nor to furnish white soldiers to guard their squaws and papposes while they were away from their villages. They were not at all persuaded of the superior honesty either of the governor or his advisers and appointees. The greater facts are also clear, that the New York Assembly was vigilantly jealous of the people's liberties, and was determined at all hazards to limit the royal prerogative as far as possible. Since his quarrel with De Lancey, the governor had shown excessive zeal in maintaining the rights of the king. On the other hand, most of the steps necessary to make New York an independent state had, as the British Attorney-General Bradlee declared, already been taken by his Assembly, which of twenty-seven members had fourteen of Dutch descent. These men were determined to teach the king's agent that he must bow to the will of the people, who were more important than king and court, and make no advance in monarchical ideas. They saw that the governor was under the close personal influence of Cadwallader Colden, a radical Tory, who they suspected prepared most of Clinton's State papers ; and they set themselves in array against this intermeddler on royalty's behalf. Again the petty jealousy which burned steadily in all the colonies made these Dutchmen enjoy paying back the New Englanders in their own coin some of the slights and insults of the past. The former had long looked down in contempt on the settlers of New Amsterdam, and their sons now repaid them in kind, and were on

the whole rather glad to snub Shirley and to annoy Clinton for so deferring to the wishes of the latter. Clinton seemed lacking in tact, and was unable to conciliate the members of the Board of Indian Commissioners, who one and all, led by Schuyler, resigned.

In a word, Clinton had begun his administration by trying to bully and drive the Dutchmen. Now, those who know the men of this branch of the Teutonic race have always found by experience that when their hearts are won they are easily led. All attempts to drive them, however, usually result as Alva's and Philip's plans resulted in the Netherlands, where three hundred thousand Spaniards were buried; or as in South Africa, where Dutch boers hold their own against British aggression. It took Clinton some years to learn the lesson, but it was the same experience of failure and retreat.

At his wits' end, Governor Clinton turned to the man for the hour. William Johnson was offered the appointment of Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and at once accepted. Thus, at thirty-one years, opened in full promise the splendid career of the Irish adventurer.

While no man in the province or continent comprehended more clearly the gravity of the situation, no one better understood all the elements in the case, the ground of faith in the immediate improvement of affairs, and the ultimate supremacy of the British cause. Johnson was a man of continental ideas. Without losing an instant of time he at once set himself to the task of getting hold of the chief men of the Six Nations. He first sent wampum belts to the Penn-

sylvanian Indians and the Esopus tribe, asking their co-operation with the Albany Council. He put on Indian dress, and for weeks gave himself up to their pastimes. Sparing not paint, grease, ochre, feathers, games, or councils, he arrayed himself as one of their own braves. He encouraged them to get up wurdances, in order to excite their martial spirit. He was speedily successful in turning the tide of opinion in one whole canton of the Confederacy in favour of attending the Albany Convention.

It was probably about this time that Johnson was formally adopted into the Mohawk tribe, made a chief, and received that name which was ever afterward his Indian title. This habit of the Iroquois, of especially and significantly naming prominent personages, is still in vogue. When some Dakota Indians visited Boston in 1889, after seeing Charlestown and Bunker Hill Monument, they called on Governor Brackett, and named him the "Great Rock in the Clouds."

The title which the Mohawks gave their new white chief and leader in 1746, was, according to the anarchic and unscientific spelling of the time, War-ragh-i-yah-gey. The term may be translated "Chief Director of Affairs." It may with economy of vocables be spelled Wa-ra-i-ya-gé.

Other matters contributed to this success, and utilized the work of others. Conrad Weiser, the Pennsylvanian German interpreter, had been recently among the tribes as far as Ohio, influencing them in favour of the English. A happy accident — the coming of a delegation of Chickasaws from the West and

South to invade Canada, and to invite the Senecas to take part and pilot them — awoke this most western division of the Iroquois Confederacy to the importance of the accession. The simultaneous offers of alliance and aid by other scattered tribes led to a complete change of views. In a word, the Senecas resolved to sit at the Albany caucus. With the tribes at each end, the west and the east of the Long House, thus in substantial accord, Johnson directed the Mohawks to send out runners to the whole confederation. Thus the work of winning over the other few tribes, at least so far as attendance at Albany was concerned, proved to be comparatively easy.

Even the feuds and quarrels which at the time divided the Long House seemed to work for Johnson's fame and the English cause. For some reason in Iroquois politics, occult to a white man, the house was divided against itself: the Senecas, Onondagas, and Mohawks composed one great faction; the Oneidas, Cayugas, and Tuscaroras formed the other and weaker. The latter tribe from the Carolinas, which had joined the Confederacy a generation before, in 1712, were far from being won over so as to take up arms for the English. When the fighting braves and counselling old men came to pow-wow with the large faction, the first thing done by them was to give the Mohawks, especially, a vigorous scolding for having acted so presumptuously and independently without taking council of the whole Confederacy. After lively debate and rejoinder, it was agreed by all to go to Albany, but with the river between the factions on

their journey. So, along the banks of the Mohawk the delegates of the Confederacy marched as far as Schenectady, when quitting the river, the trail across country and to Norman's Kill was followed. All but three of the Mohawk chiefs had been won to the English side. Of these, two of the Bear-totem clan lived at the upper castle at Canajoharie, and the third of the Tortoise-totem clan at the lower castle on the hill near Schoharie Creek. These dignitaries were finally persuaded by Rev. Mr. Barclay, then living among the Mohawks, and the famous Dr. Cadwallader Colden, who knew the Indians well, and later became the historian of the Six Nations.

It was a decisive moment in the history of America when on the 8th of August, 1746, the two rival divisions marched down old Patroon Street, the Clinton Avenue of to-day, and into State Street to Fort Frederick. Leading the Mohawk band in all the paraphernalia of Indian dress and decoration, with abundant ochre and plumes, was the pale-faced man, Johnson, who could whoop, yell, leap, dance, run, wrestle, play racket, and eat dog-hash — drawing the line at the cannibal feast, — with the best champions in any of the six tribes. The double column moved past Fort Frederick, where now stands the Episcopal Church, the Indians firing their guns and the fort its ordnance. Then the gates of the sallyport swung open, and in the largest room of the fort the red men squatted and were served with food.