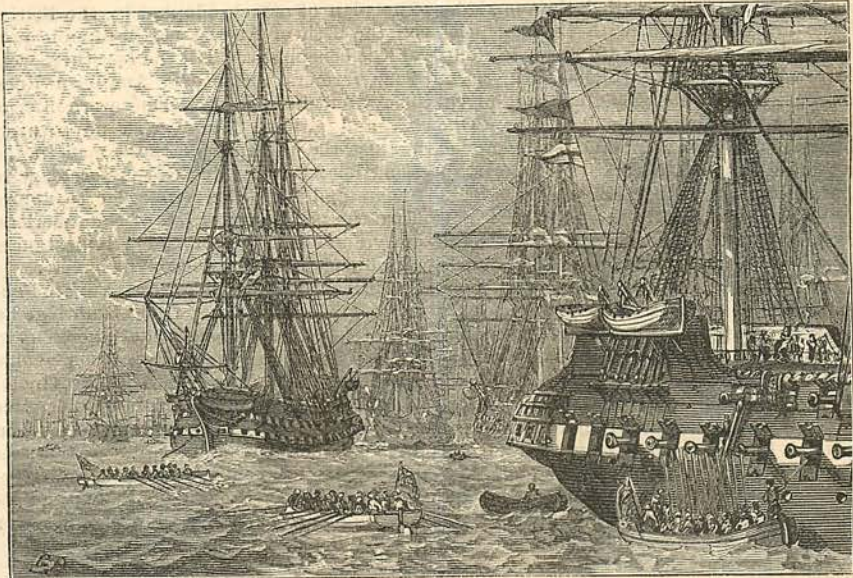


## THE BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND.



THE BRITISH FLEET IN THE LOWER BAY.

THE object of the battle of Long Island was to defend the city of New York, but the military importance of the battle, as involving the possession by the colonies or the enemy of the principal colonial city, sinks into insignificance in comparison with its moral importance as the first battle of the new nation for its recently asserted independence. The yeomanry who fought at Lexington and Bunker Hill did not contemplate the secession of the colonies from the mother country as a possible result of their resistance to oppression. The suggestion of such a result would have palsied many an arm that struck its hardest on those fateful days. The idea of independence was intolerable to Washington at the time when he became commander-in-chief, and for many subsequent months. But gradually in his, as in many other minds, the conviction became firmly rooted that the way of "independency" was the only way of personal safety or of the common weal. On the 2d of July, 1776, this conviction bore the fruit of separate nationality.

Three days previous Washington had written that Howe, with forty ships and more, laden with troops, had arrived at Staten Island, and that the remainder of the fleet was expected very soon. A letter from his new adjutant-general, Joseph Reed, of nearly the same date, cast a most dismal horoscope. "Had I known the true posture of affairs, no consideration would have tempted me to have taken an active part in this scene; and this sentiment is universal."

The attempt on Canada was just drawing to a melancholy close. The army was making its way to Crown Point by slow and painful stages, death and desertion vying with each other to reduce its numbers. In every tent there was a dead or dying man. From thirty to forty were buried every day. Aware of all these things, the fifty Congressmen at Philadelphia published their resolution and the immortal Declaration. Had the telegraph been in use at that time, news from South Carolina would in some degree have counteracted all these reasons for depression. There, on the 28th of June, the fleet and forces of Sir Henry Clinton had been ignominiously repulsed by the guns of Fort Moultrie, with a loss of one 28-gun frigate, 34,000 pounds of powder, and 170 men. But as if to make the spirit of the Philadelphia Congress seem all the more superior to every motive of expediency and every ground for fear, the news of this inspiring victory did not arrive till after the passage, on July 2, of the resolution of independence, if, indeed, it did till after the adoption of the Declaration the next day but one.

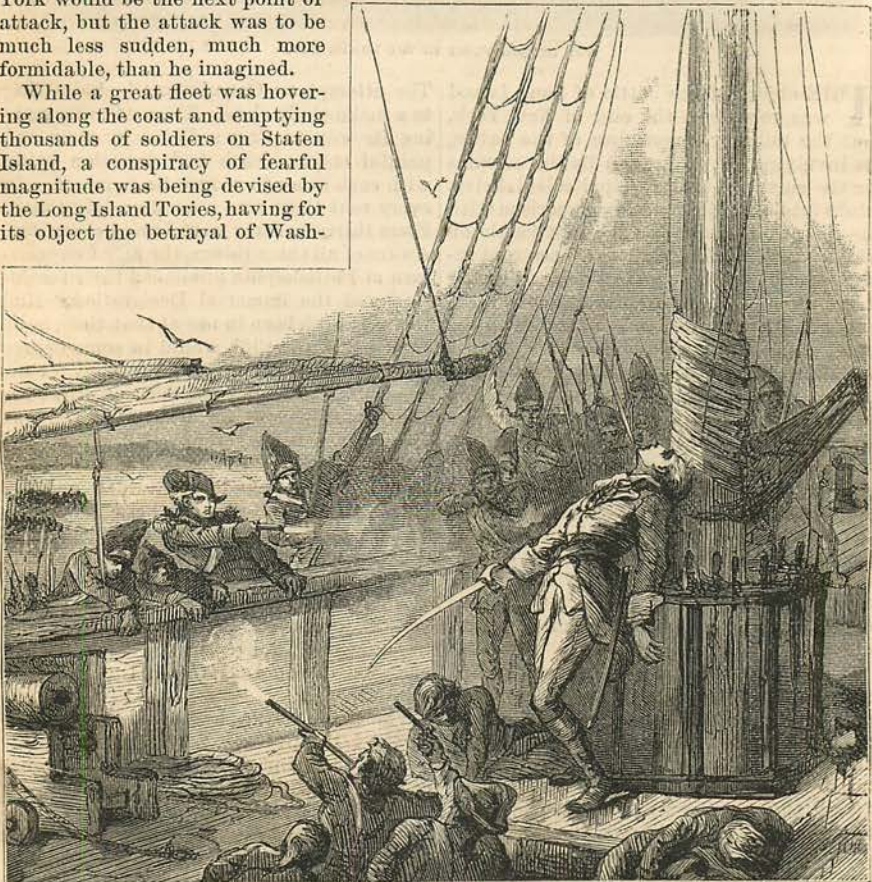
The British army had evacuated Boston on the 17th of March, taking along with it about a thousand royalists, including eighteen clergymen. For some ten days longer the fleet lay at anchor in Nantasket Roads, and then sailed away. "Neither hell, Hull, nor Halifax," wrote a British officer, "can afford worse shelter than Boston." Of these three places, Halifax proved the immediate

destination. Washington had ordered five regiments of infantry and part of the artillery to New York the day after the evacuation. When the fleet sailed, the remainder of the army followed, with the exception of five regiments, one of which, Colonel Glover's regiment of Marblehead fishermen, was stationed at Beverly to fit out privateers and man them from its ranks. One of the privateers thus manned, commanded by James Mugford, a captain of the regiment, captured, on the 17th of May, within sight of the British fleet, a part of which still lingered in the roads, the transport *Hope*, containing, for one item, 1500 barrels of powder, than which nothing was more needed. Two days later Mugford lost his life while trying to defend his little schooner against overwhelming odds. The regiment marched for New York on the 20th of July, and arrived there on the 9th of August, little guessing what important service it would be called to perform before the month was over. Washington had left Boston for New York on the 4th of April. He had not misreckoned in supposing that New York would be the next point of attack, but the attack was to be much less sudden, much more formidable, than he imagined.

While a great fleet was hovering along the coast and emptying thousands of soldiers on Staten Island, a conspiracy of fearful magnitude was being devised by the Long Island Tories, having for its object the betrayal of Wash-

ington into the hands of the invaders, and the capture of his forces by a simultaneous movement of the hostile fleet and army. The plan of attack adopted by the British on the 27th of August was a humble part of this conspiracy. Till the last there were Tory farmers inside the American lines. They went in and out. They were informers and guides. There was no security against the presence of these men in the Long Island companies. It is necessary to understand these facts in order to appreciate the perilous position of the American army, and the variety of circumstances which conspired in favor of the enemy.

General Lee had reached New York in February, 1776. On his way from Cambridge he had stopped long enough in Connecticut to enlist 1200 men. With these men at his heels, he reached the New York provincial boundary. Here he was met by delegates from the Provincial Congress begging him to go no further. The captain of the *Asia* man-of-war, at anchor off the city, with Tryon, the royal Governor, on board, had threatened to destroy the city if he should enter



CAPTAIN MUGFORD'S DEFENSE.

it. Lee was sufficiently headstrong not to be deterred by these assurances. He pushed on, and arriving at New York, soon dispossessed the local Committee of Safety of all authority, Congress appointing in its place, at his suggestion, three of their own number to confer with him in regard to the best means of defense. The resolve to hold New York, if possible, did not originate with Washington. It was contrary to his judgment, which harmonized with that of Jay, who thought it best to burn New York, lay waste Long Island, and prevent New England being left out in the cold by defending the Hudson at West Point. But the Continental Congress had resolved that New York must be held, and Washington, desiring "to obey the orders of Congress with a scrupulous exactness," promised "his utmost exertions under every disadvantage." The disadvantages from the start were indeed great and numerous. It was necessary to be on the defensive at so many points, so many fortifications were necessary, and so many men to garrison them properly. Lee projected the fortifications on the comprehensive scale demanded by the situation. The most important of these were to be on Long Island, stretching across from Wallabout Bay to Gowanus Creek. There were to be others on Long Island opposite Hell Gate, to guard against a movement through Long Island Sound; at Kings Bridge, where Manhattan Island almost touches the main-land; and at various places along the shores of East River and the Hudson. Hardly had Lee projected these works before he was ordered to South Carolina, where the gallant defense of Fort Moultrie, though undertaken in opposition to his judgment, added a dangerous lustre to his reputation.

Lee was succeeded by Lord Stirling, notable as the only lord we had upon our side; nor was he much of one, his title never having been allowed. But though little of a lord, he was a good deal of a man; had already done good service on the Jersey coast in capturing a valuable transport, and brought to his new position abundant energy and some little military knowledge. He had not been a fortnight in command before the evacuation of Boston liberated the army there, which soon started for New York, and on the 14th of April Washington made his appearance on the scene. Going to Philadelphia toward the end of May for a few days, he left General Putnam in command in New York, and General Greene in charge of the works still in progress upon Brooklyn Heights—positions which they held respectively till a few days before the battle. And still the enemy did not arrive. Perhaps the leaders were not eager for the struggle to begin. The longer the delay, the better the preparation. Immediately on Washington's arrival a thousand men had been sent to

Governor's Island, and these, through all the bright June weather, went on digging and digging, making the island one great battery. Every thing was done that could be done to obstruct the two channels by which East River communicates with the inner bay. From Governor's Island to the New York side vessels were firmly anchored, with sharpened timbers projecting from them. There, too, hulks were sunk to increase the difficulty of forcing a passage. This precaution had also been taken on the Brooklyn side of Governor's Island, and this channel was defended by batteries on Brooklyn Heights and at Red Hook—a projection of the shore not far from Gowanus Creek—as well as by the batteries upon Governor's Island.

On the 11th of June the British fleet, which had sailed from Boston a few weeks before, set sail from Halifax, and on the morning of the 29th it was seen entering the lower bay. The 4th, that day made "glorious" at Philadelphia, was celebrated by an attack upon the *Asia*, which was sailing near the shore, from a little battery occupying the site of our Fort Hamilton. The *Asia* answered with a whole broadside, and for some time a lively duel was kept up, the ship getting much the worst of it. A few days later another fleet arrived, a seriously battered one, with a crest-fallen admiral and general on board. It was the fleet of Sir Peter Parker, which on the 28th of June had fared so badly at Fort Moultrie. Its transports bore the army of Sir Henry Clinton, which was to have taken Charleston as a prelude to the capture of New York. And still the "catalogue of the ships" was far enough from being finished. They came from all directions: one day, from the coast of Florida; another, from the West Indies; another still, from the English harbors of the Mediterranean. The 12th of August saw the last great addition. All the winter before, King George had been bartering for mercenary troops in Brunswick and Hesse Cassel, agreeing to pay thirty-four dollars and fifty cents for every man killed, and to reckon three wounded as one dead—"less than we could have expected," wrote Lord North. Now, all the arrangements had been completed; "the fine thin dancing pumps" furnished by an English contractor had been exchanged for more serviceable shoes, and at last the mercenaries had embarked. Seven thousand eight hundred Hessians, in eighty-two transports, convoyed by six men-of-war, after a voyage of thirteen weeks' duration, saw with delight the lovely wooded hills of Staten Island, and the Highlands of Navesink, and the Long Island farms, waiting to be despoiled of their just ripening fruits. Their brave old general, De Heister, had exhausted his stock of patience and tobacco weeks before, and was in a towering rage. With

his arrival the spectacle presented by the lower bay reached its climax of portentous brilliancy. Here was another Great Armada, more numerous in ships and men than that which Philip of Spain had organized to subvert the liberties of England. And no providential storm rolled up to shatter this one like the other. The pleasant summer weather smiled upon its awful menace, as it lay securely at anchor in the great bend between Sandy Hook and Staten Island. There were thirty-seven men-of-war, guarding 400 transports; 35,000 men in all, soldiers and sailors, the soldiers numbering 27,000.

Washington had at his disposal, on August 8, about 17,000 men, of whom nearly 4000 were unfit for duty. The urgency of the situation increased the number of available men to nearly 20,000. Governor Trumbull, of Connecticut, was particularly active in raising new regiments. But the great trouble was that they were new, and so were almost all the others. The constant departure of militia-men enlisted for brief terms of service, the arrival of others only a little greener in their places, made good discipline impossible. Less than 6000 had been in the ranks a year. Not a single regiment was properly equipped. There were not enough muskets to go round, and many of them were nearly or quite useless. The cannon were small and poor and without efficient gunners. Knox, the artillery colonel, was brave as a lion, or any braver thing, but he had been lately summoned from his Boston book-selling. General Sullivan had been a lawyer. Lord Stirling's military experience had been very limited. General Putnam's only tactics were to engage the enemy whenever and wherever he could manage to; he was careless of defense, and indifferent to strategy. If General Greene could have remained in command upon Long Island till after the battle of the 27th, its result would very likely have been different, for Greene was as skillful and cautious as he was brave; but he unfortunately fell sick of a raging fever a few days before the battle. The command devolved upon Sullivan, and from him was transferred to General Putnam, who was second in command to Washington, but who had little or no acquaintance with the destined scene of action.

Where the scene of action was to be, had long remained in doubt. But the doubt was clearly resolved on the 22d of August, when the British troops that had been disembarked on Staten Island began to re-embark on a great number of fleet-boats and galleys, which at a given signal directed their course toward the Long Island shore under the protection of the men-of-war. Before noon 15,000 men, with forty pieces of artillery and a regiment of dragoons, had been landed at or near Denyse's Point (then a ferry land-

ing, the boat plying across the Narrows from Staten Island), now the spot where Fort Hamilton's grassy embankments look so peaceful and smiling in comparison with its frowning masonry and monstrous guns. The house—whose inmates must have had the finest opportunity to see this striking spectacle, and, being Tories, doubtless improved it—still remains in tolerable preservation, a little to the east of the fort on the Bath Road. The enemy took up their line of march for Gravesend. There some of them halted, while the main body pushed on to Flatlands and Flatbush, the American Colonel Hand, retiring with his Pennsylvania riflemen, driving before him what cattle he could, and setting fire to the great stacks of provender to prevent the enemy from profiting by them. Along with him flocked the disloyal islanders, while the more loyal, tricked out with Tory badges, hastened to make their peace with the invaders. Long Island, then, was to be the scene of the approaching struggle. Regiments were hurried over from New York. Washington did his best to inspire them with hope and courage. He clearly set before them the importance of the struggle in which they were about to engage. But he spoke to men who, if not fearful of danger, were not sanguine of success. Contemporary letters and other memorials of the day bear witness to an awful shadow brooding over the Continental army.

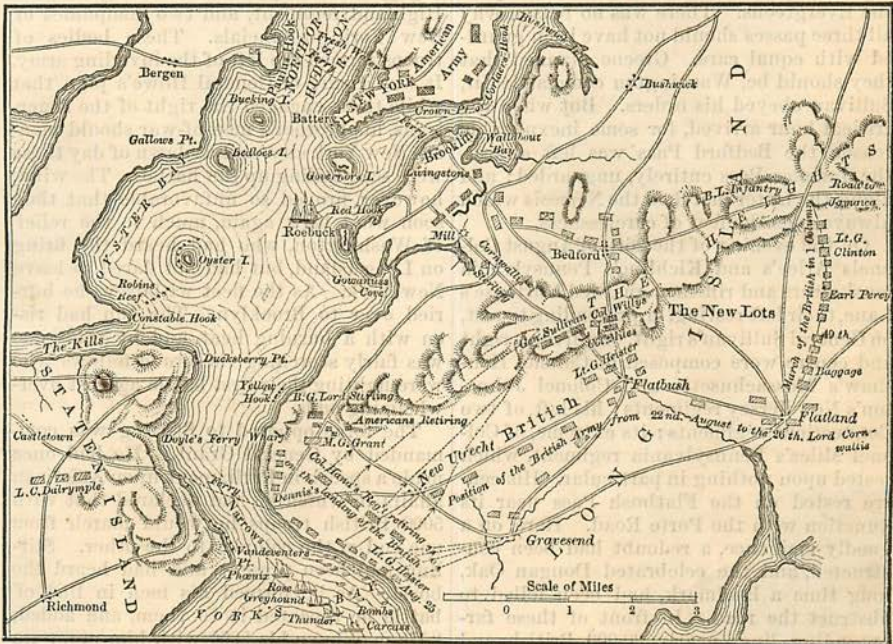
Brooklyn and its environs present a very different appearance now from that which they presented a century ago. The Brooklyn of 1876 has a population of nearly, if not quite, half a million. The Brooklyn of 1776 had a population numbering between three and four thousand, and these were scattered over a territory as extensive as the present city boundaries, clustering a little thicker around the ferry and the tavern near it, around the church situated a mile and a quarter from the ferry on the old Jamaica Road, around another queer little octagonal church in Bushwick, now Williamsburg, and around Bedford Four Corners, not far from where the present Bedford Avenue intersects Fulton Avenue. These clusters included only a fraction of the total population. The rest were sprinkled about on the great comfortable Dutch farms. The City of Churches had then but two church buildings. Where it now has six hundred miles of streets, it then had one country road leading from the ferry to the church, branching off a little beyond the church on the left toward Jamaica, on the right toward Gowanus, and then a little farther on toward Flatbush.

The situation of Brooklyn was favorable to defensive operations. The heights were a sort of peninsula made by the deep indentation of the Wallabout Basin on the East River side, and by the deeper indentation

of Gowanus Bay and the mill-ponds connected with it on the south. Across from one of these indentations to the other it was less than a mile and a half, and much of the land in this line was high, with wooded eastern slopes, making it easy to fortify. The low land near the Wallabout was defended by a deep moat; the soil excavated from this moat made a good earth-work along its edge. A continuation of this earth-work led up the side of what is now Washington Park, still called Fort Greene—a name which it acquired during the war of 1812, when it was refortified. In 1776 it was Fort Putnam, a strong redoubt mounting five heavy guns, having a deep wide ditch surrounding it, a formidable abatis of felled trees in front, their sharpened branches

commanding the approaches to East River, and Corkscrew Fort, a small redoubt upon an eminence near the Brooklyn Athenæum of to-day, commanding Red Hook Lane, and meant for its defense in case the enemy should cross Gowanus Creek. Tradition says that the redoubt was sixty or seventy feet above the present grade of Atlantic Avenue at this point. From this lofty perch the eye of the commander swept the field, and gathered up its various tokens of disaster. "Good God!" he cried; "what brave fellows I must lose this day!" as he saw the young Marylanders fling themselves again and again upon the enemy.

The event proved that the line of defense we have described was less impregnable than it would seem from our description.



MAP—BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND.

pointing outward. From Fort Putnam the line of earth-works zigzagged across to Fort Greene, the second-best redoubt, midway between Fort Putnam and Freeke's Mill-pond, the farthest inland point of the Gowanus indentation. There was a third redoubt, midway between Forts Putnam and Greene; and still another, Fort Box, upon high ground a little south of Freeke's Mill-pond, intended to guard the bridge by which the Porte Road (a road leading from the Flatbush Road to Red Hook Lane) crossed the mill-dam. Gowanus Creek and the adjoining mill-ponds continued the line of defense, which was completed by the battery upon Red Hook, called Fort Stirling. Within this line were Fort Stirling, a large redoubt

The fact was that it was overlooked at what was meant to be its strongest point by high land in the vicinity of Fort Putnam, and only a few hundred yards away. This fact had been concealed by a growth of intervening trees. The trees were cut down to strengthen Fort Putnam, but at the same time its weakness was revealed.

But it was not the design of Washington to risk every thing upon this line of fortifications. These were an inner line, which, if worst came to worst, he would fall back upon. But first he would defend the approaches to this line by means of an outer line of defense, about two miles from the inner, which he found ready-made by the natural configuration of the country. A

range of hills heavily wooded stretched across the country. The enemy would not be likely to come through the woods. He must come by some one of the various passes by which the hills were cleft. These were, first, Martense's Lane, which still exists, in part forming the southern boundary of Greenwood Cemetery; it led from the old Flatbush and New Utrecht to the Gowanus Road; at its junction with the latter stood the Red Lion Inn; second, the Flatbush Pass, now known as Battle Pass, in Prospect Park, and indicated by a bronze tablet set in a rock; third, the Bedford Pass, made by the old "Clove Road" near the present boundary line between Flatbush and Bedford; and fourth, three miles to the east of Bedford, the Jamaica Pass, situated within the present boundaries of the Cemetery of the Evergreens. There was no reason why all three passes should not have been guarded with equal care. Greene planned that they should be, Washington commanded it, Sullivan obeyed his orders. But when the critical hour arrived, for some inexplicable reason, the Bedford Pass was left almost, the Jamaica Pass entirely, unguarded; and along the latter marched the Nemesis which always dogs the feet of carelessness.

On the evening of the 26th of August Colonels Atlee's and Kichline's Pennsylvania musketeers and riflemen guarded Martense's Lane, their left resting, or pretending to rest, on General Sullivan's right. Sullivan's right and centre were composed of Colonel Henshaw's Massachusetts and Colonel Johnston's New Jersey regiments; his left, of two Connecticut regiments; its extreme, of Colonel Miles's Pennsylvania regiment, which rested upon nothing in particular. His centre rested on the Flatbush Pass near its junction with the Porte Road. Here, on a goodly eminence, a redoubt had been constructed, and the celebrated Dongan Oak, long time a landmark, had been felled to obstruct the road. In front of these far-extending lines nearly 20,000 British and mercenary soldiers lay peacefully encamped on the great plain of Flatbush and Flatlands. To the Americans, who were themselves concealed among the woods, they were plainly visible. For five days they thus remained, withheld, it might seem, from the encounter by the mystery of the American position. In reality it had but little mystery for them, so numerous were the tell-tale partisans. Their delay was but a feint intended to make the Americans expect them by the roads they did not mean to take. It succeeded, with the disposition of their forces, in convincing Putnam that they would try to force their way through the Flatbush Pass, and through Martense's Lane along the Gowanus Road. Their plan, as finally developed, proved that both of these movements were entirely subordinate to a

flank movement far to the east, through the Jamaica Pass.

And hence it happened that when Kichline's riflemen, who had been stationed on Martense's Lane, discovered a body of the enemy approaching the Gowanus Road along this lane, and hurried off a messenger to Putnam with the news, that sturdy veteran, who had not been to sleep at all for the night, roused up Lord Stirling at three o'clock on the morning of the 27th, and ordered him to take three regiments, and "advance beyond the lines and repulse the enemy." Colonel Smallwood's Maryland and Colonel Hazlett's Delaware regiments started off at once; Huntington's Connecticut soon followed.

The force which Stirling was about to engage was composed of two brigades, one Highland regiment, and two companies of New York provincials. These bodies of troops formed the left of the invading army. It was a part of General Howe's plan that while these engaged the right of the Americans, his brother's men-of-war should menace New York city, and at dawn of day these were seen sailing up the harbor. The wind, however, proved so unfavorable that they soon went back again, much to the relief of Washington, who had heard the firing on Long Island, but had not dared to leave New York. As the fleet withdrew, he hurried over to Brooklyn. The sun had risen with a burning heat, and by this time was fairly scorching the brave fellows who were fighting their first battle against overwhelming odds.

The force opposed to Stirling was commanded by General Grant. He had once made a speech in Parliament upon American affairs in which he had declared that with 5000 British troops he would march from one end of the colonies to the other. Stirling had been present, and had heard the boast. As he formed his men in line of battle he repeated it to them, and added, "He may have his 5000 with him now; we are not so many, but I think we are enough to prevent his advancing further than that mill-pond." Half a mile before reaching the Red Lion Tavern, Stirling met Atlee's picket corps retiring from that point, and saw the van-guard of the enemy approaching along the Gowanus Road, by which he was himself advancing. Ordering forward Atlee's skirmishers, he at once formed his line of battle. Its right rested on Gowanus Bay, occupying a winding road that crossed a great sand hill, called Bluckie's Barracks; its left far away on the Flatbush Road near its junction with the Porte Road; its centre, composed of the Maryland and Delaware regiments, of which, in the absence of their colonels, Smallwood and Hazlett, Stirling took command in person, on the high ground now known as Battle Hill, in Greenwood

Cemetery, near its western boundary. Here, at the most obtrusive angle of his line, he succeeded in planting two field-pieces. These, with the galling fire of Kichline's riflemen, posted behind a hedge at the foot of the Greenwood hills, obliged the British to fall back from their advanced position, and enabled Atlee's skirmishers to re-occupy an orchard from which they had been driven a short time before. General Grant's line was about 600 yards in front of Stirling, stretching along the hills, and resting on the shore in front of Bluekie's Barracks. At this point there was some hard fighting, and elsewhere, off and on, and for six hours, the Americans innocently imagining that they were holding the enemy in check. Their illusion was augmented when, soon after ten o'clock, Grant was re-enforced by two regiments from the fleet; whereupon Stirling ordered forward his reserves. Their position was, in fact, a strong one; but there is no telling what the result would have been if Grant's orders had not been to desist from any vigorous attack until a certain signal had been given. While he is waiting for this signal, let us turn our attention to the Flatbush Pass, where General Sullivan was confronted by General De Heister and his 8000 Hessians.

The red glare of the rising sun revealed to Sullivan no change in the position of the enemy directly in his front. There had, however, been important changes of which he was not aware. Cornwallis had not

"Folded his tents like the Arabs,  
And as silently stolen away."

He had stolen away without folding his tents, leaving them standing to disguise the fact of his departure. In front of Sullivan only the Hessians and one British regiment now remained of all the host that for five days had been lying there on the broad plains of Flatbush and Flatlands. But for an hour or two already Sullivan had heard firing far away on his right, and as it grew more regular, and deepened every now and then into the roar of cannon, the mass in front of him, so long lethargic, began to show signs of activity. The lighter troops came sweeping up from Flatbush to the right and left of the Flatbush Road; not far behind, the grenadiers and several pieces of artillery. These were no sooner brought into position, half a mile away, than they opened fire upon the battery upon the knoll which makes one side of Battle Pass, in Prospect Park. De Heister, like Grant, far to his left, was waiting for a preconcerted signal, and would have been satisfied with this artillery duel till he should hear it sound. But his fierce Colonel Donop had been "spoiling for a fight" for several days. Would his general be so kind as to permit him to lead forward the sharpshooters and

grenadiers? De Heister could not find it in his heart to refuse him altogether, but he must not advance beyond the edge of the woods in which the Americans were posted. Along this edge a sharp skirmish was kept up for two hours. These tactics soon began to excite the curiosity of Sullivan. Taking 400 men, he started on a reconnaissance, probably to the eastward of the Flatbush Road, along the slopes of the hills on which he had stationed two Connecticut regiments and one Pennsylvania, that of Colonel Miles. While he was gone, De Heister heard the signal he was waiting for—the boom of two heavy guns in the rear of the Americans. These also heard it, and asked each other, with white faces, what it meant. It meant they were outflanked; that they were caught between an upper and a nether millstone; that almost every other man of them was doomed to sudden death.

It was nine o'clock when De Heister heard the signal guns in the rear of the Americans. In the deepening twilight of the previous day Cornwallis had withdrawn his division from Flatbush to Flatlands. About nine o'clock the advance-guard, commanded by Sir Henry Clinton, took up its line of march toward the northeast, along the king's highway which led from Flatbush to New Lots. He had with him the light dragoons, a brigade of light infantry, and Cornwallis's reserve, with the exception of a single regiment which had been left upon De Heister's left, the Seventy-first Regiment, and fourteen pieces of artillery. The main body of the army, consisting of thirteen regiments, with ten field-pieces, led by Lord Percy and accompanied by General Howe, marched shortly after Clinton, and these in their turn were soon followed by the Forty-first Regiment, with four 12-pounders, the baggage bringing up the rear. The road along which they marched has not yet been sacrificed to the modern passion for right angles. Its pleasant curves still wind along from Gravesend to East New York, fringed upon either side with shrubs and straggling vines, bordered with foot-paths that invite to solitary rambles. Many a house still stands, past which the British marched that night the projecting roofs, and great doors opening in two horizontal sections, the upper pierced with bull's-eyes, confirming the traditions of the occupants. Many a great tree still shades the road which lent a deeper shade to it that night, as Clinton, Percy, and the rest stole silently along—so silently that the heavy Dutch sleep of the adjacent people was in some recorded instances unbroken. At Schoonmaker's Bridge, a little southeast of the present site of East New York, resistance was expected—unwarrantably, it proved; and now the country lay all open, to the foot of the hills through which the Brooklyn and Ja-

maica road came out upon the level ground of East New York. Leaving the road, with Tory guides to lead him, Cornwallis struck across to Howard's Tavern, situated on the king's highway, and still standing there, at the intersection of Broadway with the Jamaica turnpike. This tavern and every other house in the vicinity were immediately surrounded by the troops. Howard and his son were suddenly awakened to find their tavern full of British officers anxious for something to drink, but more anxious to be instructed about a certain "Rockaway

all right," was the answer; "stick to your country and your principles; but you are my prisoner, and must guide my men over that hill. If you refuse, I shall have you shot through the head." This argument was irresistible. Father and son went together, and led the way through the Rockaway Path, which can be traced to-day among the grassy barrows of the Cemetery of the Evergreens, coming out into the cleared fields close by the northern gate. The caution, however, had been needless. The Jamaica Pass thus flanked was found



JOHN CALLENDER SAVED BY A BRITISH OFFICER.

Path," a wood road leading round the eastern side of the hill, on the western side of which was the Jamaica Pass. This pass the British expected to find strongly guarded, and they desired to turn the enemy's position by the other road. One of the generals (probably not Howe, as reported by young Howard, he being somewhat in the rear with Percy) demanded of Howard that he should point out the way. "We belong to the other side, and can't serve you against our duty," said the host. "That is

to be unguarded, in spite of every thing that Greene and Sullivan and Washington had planned and ordered.

Immediately the main body was pushed forward. Having gained the pass, a rest was ordered and breakfast on the adjoining hills. Starting again along the Brooklyn and Jamaica road, by half past eight the van-guard was at Bedford Four Corners. Here the long spell of silence and secrecy was broken; the bands struck up; the troops broke out into loud cheers; and push-



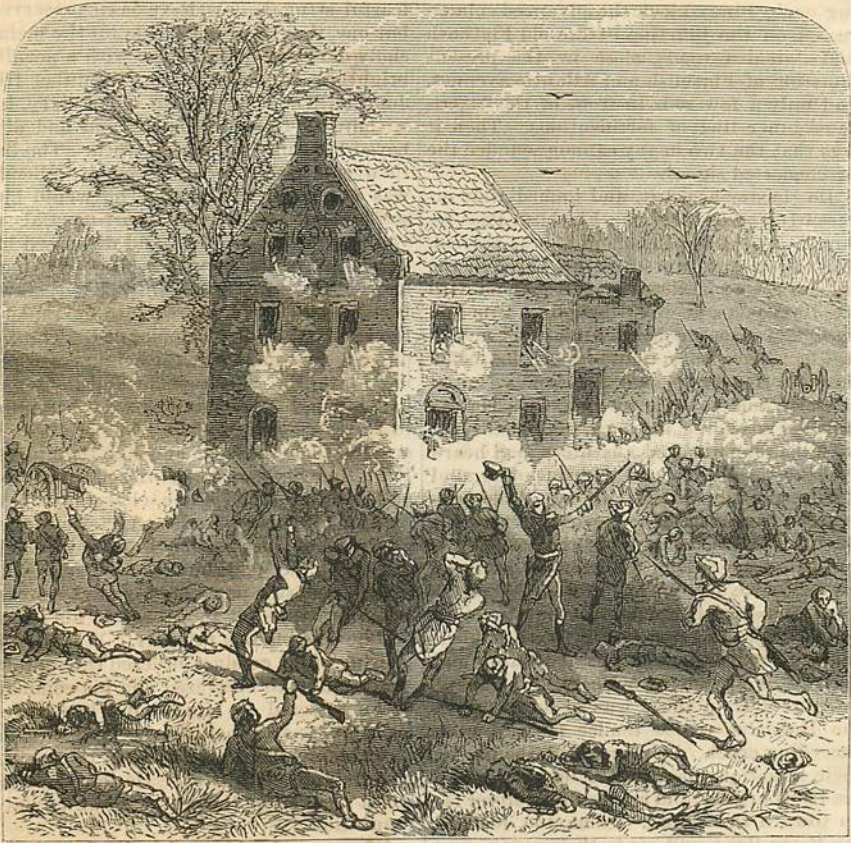
ing on, by nine o'clock the advanced column rested on the junction of the old Flatbush and Jamaica roads, close by the present junction of Flatbush and Atlantic avenues, and only a few rods in front of the Americans' inner line of fortifications. Then it was that the two heavy cannon sounded the preconcerted signal.

De Heister heard it, and immediately ordered Donop to carry the Flatbush Pass redoubt. A sudden rush, and it was carried. The Hessian yagers swept up through the woods; the grenadiers came after them with fixed bayonets, keeping their lines firm and unbroken even among the trees and underbrush. Back, back they pressed the feeble lines of Henshaw's and Johnston's Massachusetts and New Jersey men, with Hand's riflemen scattered among them. Sullivan, with his four hundred absentees, had heard the signal guns, divined their meaning, and started for the fortified lines. A detachment of the British had marched through the Clove Road, and reached the rear of Colonel Miles, posted on the extreme left, and his men were soon in full retreat. The different bands of fugitives mingling together on the slopes of Prospect Hill, were suddenly confronted by the troops of Clinton and Cornwallis advancing with fixed bayonets. To retreat from these was to retreat upon the Hessians, whose tender mercies were exceeding cruel. A few, made desperate by their situation, managed to break through the Hessian lines, and reached East River far up toward the Sound. Some, too, reached the Porte Road, and made their way across Freeke's mill-dam into the shelter of the lines. But these were a minority. The greater part found themselves shut up in a triangular inclosure, whose walls of steel and fire pressed closer every moment, like some horrible contrivance of Inquisitorial torture. The retreat became a rout, the rout a massacre. Surrender was no longer a security against death. The Hessians gave no quarter; the British set them, the example. Men who had thrown away their arms were shot down without remorse, or transfixed with bayonets to the trees. The survivors saw there was no pity in the breasts of their assailants, and peaceful farmer-folk, who a month before would not have hurt a field-mouse in the furrow, grew terrible with a resolve to lose their lives at the severest cost to their assassins. For two hours the area which is now inclosed between Atlantic, Flatbush, and Clinton avenues saw our poor men, unused to arms or discipline, struggling in vain against a force nearly ten times their own, splendidly disciplined and officered. Before the struggle ended, more than a thousand of our yeomanry lay dead upon the field.

Out of the many instances of individual bravery which must have signalized this

fearful struggle, few have been preserved; but one, that has been, lights up the melancholy darkness of the scene with a peculiar brightness. At the battle of Bunker Hill, John Callender, a captain of artillery, had withdrawn from the battle, and had disobeyed Putnam's orders to return. The battle over, Putnam declared that if Callender was not cashiered or shot, he would himself leave the service. A court-martial convicted him of cowardice and dismissed him "from all further service in the Continental army as an officer." Coward or not, he was brave enough to step down into the ranks of the company he had commanded. The 27th of August found him on the heights overlooking Flatbush. His captain and lieutenant had fallen, his companions were beginning to retreat. Springing in front of them, he ordered them to return and man their pieces. For a time his courage nourished theirs; but at length he stood alone, charging a field-piece, while his comrades were swept away by a tremendous onset of the enemy. Courting death, he made no signal of surrender when the hostile bayonets were at his breast; but a brave officer interfered in his behalf, and he was made a prisoner. Washington, hearing of his conduct, ordered the sentence against him to be erased and his command to be restored to him; and when, a year later, he was exchanged, he gave him his hand before the army, in token of his great respect and admiration. He left the service at the end of the war with an enviable reputation.

It was nearly eleven o'clock when General Grant heard a second time the signal guns of Lord Cornwallis. Boom! Boom! The first time he knew well enough they were intended for De Heister. This time he knew as well that they were meant for him. He had just been re-enforced by two fresh regiments from the fleet, and with their arrival his period of inaction ceased. Pushing rapidly forward, Colonel Atlee and his faithful skirmishers to the number of 235 were soon killed or made prisoners. The Connecticut regiment of Colonel Huntington fared little or no better. And almost simultaneously with the fierce onset on Stirling's front the Hessians came streaming in upon his left along the hills, and Cornwallis, whom he imagined to be far away in Flatbush, came hurrying down upon his rear, seizing the junction of the Porte and Gowanus roads, and pushing on a little beyond this point, as far as the old Cortelyou house, which stood on the upper side of the Gowanus Road, a few hundred feet from the creek, with which its original owner, Nicholas Vechte, had connected it by a canal, which he found a great convenience, but which proved very inconvenient on the 27th of August, 1776. The situation was terrible, but Stirling did not lose in



LORD STIRLING'S LAST STRUGGLE AROUND THE OLD CORTELYOU HOUSE.

any least degree his self-possession. His titular lordship might be denied him by English peers, but he would prove this day that he was one of nature's noblemen. He saw that if he could not drive Cornwallis back beyond the Porte Road, or at least hold him where he was, his whole command would suffer death or capture. He resolved upon a costly sacrifice, if haply one more costly might be prevented. Changing his front, and taking with him less than 300 of the Maryland regiment, he ordered the remainder of it and all his other troops to retreat across the marsh and creek, which the rising tide was making every moment less and less passable. He knew the quality of the young men whom he had chosen for a perilous duty. They were indeed young, hardly more than boys, sons of the "first families" of Maryland, bright ardent spirits, eager to do something for liberty; eager too to win distinction for themselves and for their beloved State.

Stirling invited them to no hardship which he did not mean to share. Taking his place at their head, he led them rapidly along the Gowanus Road, which made quite

a sharp bend three or four hundred yards from the Cortelyou house, and till they reached this point the steep road-side with its brambly hedge concealed them from the enemy. Turning this bend, they came at once upon their advanced guard, and with impetuous courage drove them back upon the house. Whereupon Cornwallis brought two field-pieces into position at the corner of the house, from whose doors and windows his grenadiers poured a steady fire, while from the adjacent hills the Hessian riflemen sent many a messenger of death. The slender column was lessened every second. At last it halted, closed up its ranks as the field-pieces thinned them out with grape and canister, stood for a moment, and then sullenly withdrew beyond the bend in the road.

Looking across the marshes and the mill-dams, Stirling saw hundreds of his men in full retreat. Once more he called upon the remnant of his chosen band to interpose themselves between these fugitives and the advancing foe; once more he found them ready; once more, turning the bend, they encountered the same dreadful fire of rifles,

musketry, and cannon; once more they drove back the advanced guard, quite to the house this time, reached the house themselves, drove the gunners from their pieces, seized them for a moment, and then reeled again under the incessant firing from the house, and again slowly retreated. Again, again, and yet again, this little band of heroes, smaller every time, rallied around their leader, and returned with him

"Into the jaws of death,  
Into the mouth of hell."

After the fifth encounter there were too few remaining to make another rally possible, and, indeed, it was not needed. The vicarious sacrifice had done its work. The fugitives had nearly all escaped. Two hundred and fifty-six killed, wounded, and missing were reported by the colonel of the regiment. Apparently the prisoners were few. Of the whole number the tradition is that nearly all were killed outright or pierced with mortal wounds. Considering what the prisoners were obliged to suffer, the fortune of the dead was happiest. Their mangled forms were gathered up by friendly hands, and laid to rest under a little mound, which, only a few years ago, was visible in the vicinity of Seventh Street and Third Avenue. Now, by the grading of these streets, it has been hidden. But the old Cortelyou house, which still stands at the junction of Third Street and Fifth Avenue, is a rude and crumbling monument, better than any that could be cast in bronze or carved in marble, of the heroism that swayed back and forth before its venerable walls on that eventful day. A feeble remnant of the regiment struggled across the creek, bearing their tattered colors with them. Stirling, unable to do more, but disdainful to surrender to an English officer, spurred away across the hills until he found De Heister, and to him he gave his sword. Taken on board the fleet, he found Sullivan already there.

And so the battle ended ere yet it was high noon. Four or five thousand men had been surrounded by four times as many of the enemy. More than a thousand had been made prisoners; the dead were more than these. In his official report General Howe estimates the total loss of the Americans at 3300. Washington's figures are very different from these, and, it is generally conceded, much less accurate, though Howe's exceed the truth. His own losses he returned as 367 killed, wounded, and missing. They were probably much greater.

That the result was not still more disastrous, the thanks of the Americans were due to General Howe rather than to any of their own generals. He it was, mindful, it has been suggested, of his terrible experience at Bunker Hill, who held in leash his generals, Robertson and Vaughan, who were

intensely eager to carry the fortifications by assault while the battle on the Flatbush Heights was still progressing. Indeed, Colonel Stuart, with the Thirty-second Regulators, without waiting for orders, made a sudden rush across the open fields before Fort Putnam, and was close upon the parapet, when he was ordered back. Had Howe but given the word, it would, no doubt, have been an easy matter at this juncture to carry the works by an impetuous assault. But few troops were left at this time in the intrenchments, and those that were left were



STATUE OF GENERAL GLOVER.\*

not to be relied upon. The detachments ordered over from New York had not yet arrived. When, a few days later, Howe came into possession of the works, as if they were a witness against him, he ordered them to be at once obliterated, and others of a more scientific and formidable character to be erected in their place.

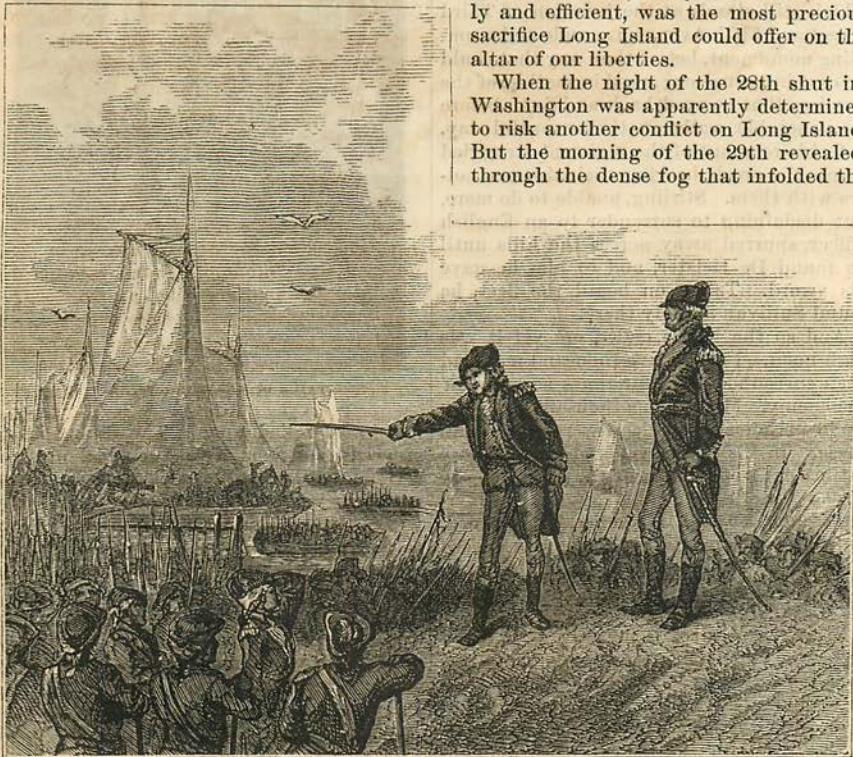
The space inclosed by the original fortifications must have presented a more unique appearance the night after the battle than at any other time in its history, but an appearance as melancholy as it was unique.

\* This statue stands in Commonwealth Avenue, Boston—the gift of John T. Read to that city.

As the day closed there fell a drenching shower, increasing in no small degree the general discomfort. Few of the soldiers had tents or barracks. The patriotic inhabitants of the outlying farms, who had sought the lines on the landing of the British, huddled about their wagons and such household stuff as they had brought along with them. From 1200 to 1500 head of cattle, that had been driven in to prevent their falling into the hands of the invaders, roamed about the camp hungry and scared, making night hideous with their bellowing. The vague terrors of the night at length gave place to the more definite apprehensions of another day. A thick mist clung to the landscape, through which, at four o'clock, came Washington to cheer up his shattered and dispirited battalions. A little later Shee's and Magaw's Pennsylvania regiments came over, and Colonel Glover's regiment of Marblehead fishermen, trimly dressed in navy blue and wearing sailors' jackets. These new arrivals were greeted with a shout of welcome as they marched along to take their stations on the low ground between Fort Putnam and the Wallabout. There were now 9000 troops in the intrenchments. As the mist cleared away a little, it revealed a force of 20,000 redcoats and Hessians stationed along the hills and undulating fields facing the

fortifications. A heavy rain set in, filling the trenches waist-deep with water, soaking to their skin the new-comers, who had no tents provided for them, but doing some good service in keeping the enemy in their tents till late in the afternoon, when they appeared and began to throw up intrenchments 500 yards away. There was some skirmishing during the day, but the most tragical event was far away in Jamaica village, where Nathaniel Woodhull, a provincial general, who had been president the year before of the New York Provincial Congress, was made a prisoner. Commanded to say "God save the king," he said "God save us all," whereupon Oliver De Lancey, a partisan trooper, or some creature of his, proceeded to slash him with his sabre on his head and arms. Mortally wounded, he was taken to the little church through whose broad aisle had galloped the adventurous youth one Sunday morning. The church was filled with other prisoners, patriots whom De Lancey's partisans had officiously arrested. A venerable friend, Elder Baylis, did his best to comfort them. Later, General Woodhull was taken to the little Dutch church in New Utrecht, used as a prison; when dying, to a house close by, which has disappeared since 1850, when it was nearly two hundred years old. The life of Woodhull, always brave and manly and efficient, was the most precious sacrifice Long Island could offer on the altar of our liberties.

When the night of the 28th shut in, Washington was apparently determined to risk another conflict on Long Island. But the morning of the 29th revealed, through the dense fog that infolded the



COLONEL GLOVER SUPERINTENDING THE EMBARKATION.



GIVING INFORMATION UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

opposing armies all day long, a redoubt in process of construction near the present junction of De Kalb and Clinton avenues, a point already spoken of as overlooking Fort Putnam, the highest point in the American line. Washington's resolve was at once taken. He must evacuate Long Island. A great number of row-boats and barges, with some sail-boats, had been brought together on the New York side, as if with the intention of carrying over fresh detachments from New York city. Only a few leading officers were intrusted with the secret. Colonel Glover's regiment of mariners had been busy all day long collecting every available means of transportation. As soon as it was dark the first troops were sent over. Colonel Glover, a man whose modesty alone had prevented his name from being among the signers of the Declaration with his great townsman's, Elbridge Gerry, whose bosom-friend he was, took his position near the ferry stairs to superintend the embarkation. His humble stature must have contrasted almost ridicu-

lously with the towering form of Washington, who stood beside him all night long. It was a piece of singular good fortune that brought the two together at this critical juncture. Without just such a body of men as Glover had at his command, the retreat would have been absolutely impossible. It required skillful oarsmen and men long used to handling the tiller to contend successfully with wind and tide—to row and steer 9000 men, with field artillery, much heavy ordnance, provisions, ammunition, horses, and camp equipage, across East River in a single night, enveloped as it was in fog for nearly half the time. Washington never forgot the service rendered him by Glover and his men at the most critical moment of the Revolutionary struggle.

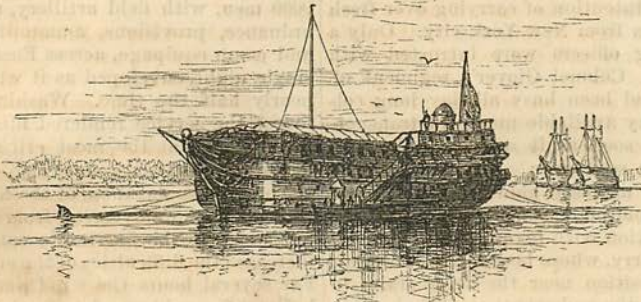
The intense darkness of the night helped to conceal the movement from the enemy, but added to the inevitable confusion, and increased the difficulties of the embarkation. For several hours the wind and tide were both unfavorable, and only the row-boats could be used. Later, the wind changed to

the right quarter, and the sail-boats came into play. At two o'clock a heavy fog set in, and lengthened out the night an hour or two beyond its ordinary bound. The least-disciplined troops were taken over first—the Pennsylvania regiments of Colonels Hand, Shee, and Magaw, the Delawares, and the brave remnant of the Marylanders being reserved until the last. There was all manner of marching and countermarching to deceive the men in regard to what was going on. The most critical moment was when General Mifflin, having received mistaken orders, came marching down to the ferry with all the troops that had been left in the intrenchments. For a moment there were sharp words between Washington and Mifflin; then the brave Pennsylvanian led his men back to the intrenchments, there to await the proper time for their departure. The last boats were still upon the river, one of them bearing Washington, who had not slept, and had hardly been out of the saddle, for forty-eight hours, when a detachment of the British were seen clambering over the intrenchments. Well might General Greene write, "Considering the difficulties, the retreat from Long Island was the best effected I ever read or heard of."

But it was only because the Hessians were not acquainted with the English language that it was not the most sanguinary and disastrous retreat imaginable; for scarcely had it begun ere a Tory wife, living within the lines and near the ferry, whose husband, John Rapalye, had suffered much indignity at the hands of his Whig neighbors, sent off a negro slave to inform General Howe of the fact. Thus would her many wrongs, she thought, and especially her painful separation from her husband, be splendidly avenged. Escaping through the American lines, the negro fell in with a company of Hessians, and told them his story. They, unable to understand him, locked him up till morning, and with him his precious secret. In paying our Centennial debts, let us not forget how much we owe to their stupidity.

A sadder tragedy than the battle of Long Island is associated with the history of

Brooklyn subsequent to that event—a tragedy of many years' duration. It is the tragedy of the Wallabout prison-ships, related to the Revolutionary war as the prison-pens of Libby and Andersonville to the late civil war. On the 20th of October, 1776, the *Whitby*, a large transport, anchored in the Wallabout, and was soon filled with prisoners. From year to year, as the war dragged on, many other ships were detailed for the same purpose, and their names, *Stromboli*, *Scorpion*, *Hunter*, *Falmouth*, *Scheldt*, and *Clyde*, became synonyms for all the horrors that confinement and bad air, bad water, scanty and poor provisions, could accumulate on the devoted heads of the unfortunate prisoners. The old *Jersey*, oftener called "the Hell," became in later times the type and synonym of the whole fearful company of hulks, of which she was the largest, and on that account, if on no other, the most horrible. More than a thousand prisoners were sometimes living, or rather dying, on board of her at a time. The sufferings of these prisoners were no more terrible than their courage was simple and sublime. When death had terminated their sufferings, they were buried in the light sandy soil around the basin, in such shallow graves that the storms and tides soon brought their skeletons to light. The sun bleached them and the waves hustled them about until 1808, when some of them were gathered up and placed, with most bombastic and ridiculous ceremonies, it must be allowed, in a queer structure near the Navy-yard, built as a tomb and monument by the Tammany Society of New York. This structure going to decay, after a good deal of agitation an act of the State Legislature was procured appropriating \$7500 to build upon Fort Greene a tomb, which, it is hoped, will one day be surmounted by a monument. Within this handsome tomb the precious bones now rest from all their wanderings—among them, it is easy to believe, the bones of many a patriot whose living feet once trod the place where now he lies, and who went forth from it to battle, one refulgent August morning, full of high hope and eager expectation.



THE PRISON-SHIP "JERSEY."