COLONEL PHILIP VAN CORTLANDT AND THE NEW YORK CONTINENTALS.

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[The following paper was read at the regular monthly meeting of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society by the kind permission of Mrs. Pierre Van Cortlandt, of Croton, the only sister of its accomplished authoress, the late Mrs. Helen L. Beck Parmelee, and is published with her assent. These two ladies were the daughters of the late Dr. Theodric Romeyn Beck, the distinguished author of the great standard work on "Medical Jurisprudence," Professor of Materia Medica in the Albany Medical College, head of the Albany Academy, and Secretary of the Regents of the University of New York.

Mrs. Parmelee was the younger, and a few years after her sister's marriage to Col. Pierre Van Cortlandt, of Croton, became the second wife of the Hon. William Parmelee, for many years County Judge of Albany County, and Recorder and Mayor of the city of Albany. The paper is chiefly drawn from the private papers and diary of Philip Van Cortlandt himself, who was the uncle of her sister's husband, and is, therefore, as authentic as it is interesting.

Both Judge and Mrs. Parmelee died several years ago, and the paper has ever since remained in the possession of Mrs. Van Cortlandt. E. F. DE L.]

THE traveller on the Hudson River Railroad, in crossing the long bridge which spans the Croton River just before its junction with the Hudson, may see fronting the bay formed at its mouth a long, low, brown

building, with a high piazza and dormer windows, half hidden by old trees and shrubbery.

This picturesque dwelling is one of the oldest houses in this country, having been built as partly a fort and partly a manor-house in the times when the whole country about it was inhabited by the native tribes; and the port-holes are still to be seen in the heavy stone walls which were used as a defence against their attacks.

Among the earliest settlers of the province of the New Netherland was Oloff Stevensen Van Cortlandt, burgomaster of the city of New Amsterdam, whose name we find as one of the signers of the remonstrance transmitted to Holland complaining of Kieft and Stuyvesant, and who was also one of the commissioners who met the English deputies to treat for the surrender of the colony.

His son, the Hon. Stephanus Van Cortlandt, Mayor of New York in 1677, purchased large tracts of land from the Indians on the east bank of the Hudson, and on both sides of the Croton River, and in 1697 received a grant from William the Third, converting his large possessions into a manor containing 83,000 acres, and extending ten miles along the Hudson and twenty eastwardly to the borders of Connecticut. These letters patent invested the grantee with all the privileges of lord of the manor, giving the right of sending a member to the Provincial Assembly, and reserving to the crown a yearly rent of forty shillings, "to be paid on the feast day of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in lieu and stead of all other rents and services, dues, duties, and demands whatsoever for the afore-recited tracts and parcels of land and meadow, lordship, and manor of Cortlandt and premises." Stephanus Van Cortlandt lived only three years after having obtained his patent, and at his death he bequeathed Verplanck's Point to his eldest son, John, and the rest of the manor to be divided amongst his eleven surviving children, of whom Philip, the third, and, by the decease of his elder brothers, John and Oliver, without male heirs, eventually the head of the family, received the lands at Croton River, and on his death, in 1746, bequeathed them to his fifth son Pierre (afterwards the first Lieut.-Gov. of the *State* of New York), who married Joanna, daughter of Gilbert Livingston, and with his wife and child, Philip, who was born in the city of New York on the 1st of September, 1749, removed to the manor-house.

Pierre's numerous children, with the exception of the eldest, were all born at the manor; and, as they grew up, a small school-house was erected about half a mile from the house, where they, with some of the neighboring children, received the rudiments of their education, and at the age of fifteen, Philip, the eldest, was sent to Coldingham Academy, then under the care of William Adams, a young Scotchman, afterwards Professor Adams, where he remained a part of a year learning surveying, bookkeeping, and other useful branches; and on his return home was placed with a surveyor, who was principally employed on the manor of Cortlandt, and thus became familiar with the surrounding country, being frequently employed by the heirs of the Hon. Stephanus Van Cortlandt in laying out and disposing of lands in the patent. And, as in the case of his illustrious commander, this proved an excellent training for the habits of military life. He also engaged in trade and in milling in the immediate neighborhood of his home. He made numerous visits to New York, where his relatives were among, and allied with, the members of the

Government. The Tory kinsmen of the young man were anxious to influence him in favor of the mother country, the signs of disaffection having already appeared, and he was invited to dine at the Fort, and introduced to the government officials. Governor Tryon offered him a major's commission in a regiment raised in the manor of Cortlandt, of which James Verplanck was colonel, which was accepted, and the duties entered upon, and for a time performed.

In 1774, Governor Tryon, accompanied by his wife and secretary, Colonel Fanning, visited Pierre Van Cortlandt, at the manor-house. Pierre Van Cortlandt was the executor of his father's (Philip Van Cortlandt's) estate, and the representative of the manor in the Provincial Assembly; and, in the prospect of a collision between the disaffected and the authorities of the province and of the mother country, it was an important matter to obtain his influence for the side of the crown. The numerous alliances of the family with the officials of the province, and with the members of various noble families in England, rendered it highly probable that the family influence would be thrown in that scale. Philip, his nephew, the eldest son of his eldest brother Stephen, the head of the family, did take the side of the king, and removed to England at the close of the war, where his descendants still reside, but the younger brother remained true to his native land.

Tryon, after some conversation, proposed a walk over the farm, and led his host to an eminence commanding an extensive view of fertile lands in every direction, and here entered upon the purpose of his visit, which was to induce him to pledge himself to sustain the interests of the crown during the coming struggle, and to relinquish his opposition to the measures of the king and parliament, observing that there were yet rich lands in the power of the crown to grant, and that places of interest and a title, if desired, would not be withheld.

"My father," says Colonel Philip, "observed, that he was chosen a representative by unanimous approbation of a people who placed a confidence in his integrity to use it with all his ability for their benefit and the good of his country as a true patriot, which line of conduct he was determined to pursue." Governor Tryon turned abruptly to Fanning, and said, "I find our business here must terminate, for nothing can be effected in this place, so we will return." And taking a hasty farewell, and without waiting to partake of the dinner prepared for them, they embarked for New York.

This patriotic resolve of the father was fully shared by his son, Philip. His friends in the city endeavored to persuade him to receive an additional appointment from the governor, but he threw Tryon's commission in the fire, declared himself ready to sacrifice life and property in the defence of his country, and accepted an appointment as member of the State Convention from Westchester County.

Immediately after the battles of Lexington and Concord, Congress having decided upon despatching troops to Canada, a commission was sent him as lieutenant-colonel in the Fourth Battalion of New York troops, under the command of General Montgomery. This commission was dated June 18, 1775, and signed by John Hancock, President of Congress.

He immediately abandoned his store, mill, and other property, most of which became a total loss. The manor-house being situated on that

"neutral ground" which was overrun with the predatory bands of both sides, his father and family not long after were forced to abandon their home and retreat to Rhinebeck.

The family of Pierre Van Cortlandt at this time consisted of Philip, Gilbert, who died unmarried in 1786, Stephen, a lad of sixteen, who was dangerously ill at this time with a putrid sore-throat, and who died shortly after his brother's departure, and Pierre, a boy of thirteen, afterwards the late General Pierre Van Cortlandt of Peekskill, for many years Member of Congress from Westchester. (The last married the daughter of Governor George Clinton, and, secondly, Miss Stevenson of Albany, who left one son, Pierre, who inherited and now resides at the manor-house. The late General Pierre died at Peekskill in 1848.) His daughters were Catharine, married to Abraham Van Wyck; Cornelia, married to Gerard Beekman; and Ann, married to the Hon. Philip S. Van Rensselaer of Albany, the only brother of the old Patroon.

Cornelia, the second daughter, was one of the remarkable women of the Revolution, gifted with no common talent and resolution. She resided during that period at another house belonging to the Van Cortlandt family, still standing, about two miles north of Peekskill, and for many years the residence of her younger brother, Pierre. Here she kept her ground through the whole of the war, surrounded by tories and menaced by British soldiery, her husband on one occasion summoned to Tryon's camp, and only rescued by the opportune arrival of American troops.

Shortly before the capture of André, an American officer, Lieutenant Webb, left in her charge his uniform, and desired her on no account to deliver it up without a written order from himself. In some way it became known that this was in her possession, and Joshua Hett Smith came to her with a pretended message from the American officer claiming the uniform, and used every effort to induce her to give it up to him, but she steadfastly refused; and, as it afterwards appeared, her firmness in all human probability saved her beloved country, as it was his design to use it for the disguise of André on his journey to the British lines. Mrs. Beekman remained at Peekskill until after the war, when her husband purchased a portion of the confiscated Philipse manor near Tarrytown, and they removed to the old manor-house of Philipsburgh, in the immediate vicinity of the old Dutch Church, consecrated alike by its ancient memories, and by the genius and the grave of Irving, where she ended her eventful life in the full possession of her faculties in the year 1847, at the great age of 94 years.

To return to our youthful colonel: Recruiting, disciplining, and fitting out new troops was an arduous undertaking, especially as the young government possessed but small means of supply. Not long after entering on his duties he was obliged to promise one company clothing from his own purse; and, immediately on arriving at Albany, he was forced to borrow money to pay his troops, a mutiny having broken out, which he quelled with difficulty; and at last succeeded in getting his men off to Ticonderoga, where on his arrival, worn out with exertion, and grieving for the loss of his favorite brother, Stephen, the news of whose death had reached him in the midst of the mutiny, he fell ill of a nervous fever, and lay for a long time at the point of death. On recovering enough to be moved, General Philip Schuyler, his father's first cousin, whose house

seems to have been alike the refuge of friend and foe, took him to Albany, where he was carefully nursed until able to return to his friends.

In the spring of 1776 he reported to the commander-in-chief at New York, who gave him orders to rejoin General Schuyler, and await the disposition of the army.

After Lieutenant-Colonel Van Cortlandt's return to Ticonderoga, General Gates arrived there on his retreat from Canada, and took the command, and Colonel Van Cortlandt was ordered on a court-martial for the trial of Colonel Hazen, arrested on the complaint of General Arnold for disobedience of orders. Arnold himself was very near being arrested, his conduct in procuring vast quantities of goods from the merchants in Montreal being fully proved, and his behavior before the court being manifestly improper; but he managed to procure an order from General Gates sending Colonel Van Cortlandt to Skeensborough, now Whitehall, the day after the adjournment of the court, and by this means he escaped. On arriving at Skenesborough, now Whitehall, Colonel Wynkoop being unwell, the lieutenant-colonel took command, his duties being to forward the troops and superintend the building of galleys. On the recovery of Colonel Wynkoop, Lieutenant-Colonel Van Cortlandt, having himself an attack of fever and ague, returned to the south for the recovery of his health, and joined General Washington at Kingsbridge, near the country-house of his cousin, James Van Cortlandt, the then head of the Van Cortlandts of Yonkers, the junior branch of the family. Here he acted for a few days as aid to the commander-in-chief. The British were at this time landed at Throgg's Neck, and shortly after the battle of White Plains took place. At this battle Colonel Ritzema, commanding the 2d New York Regiment, remained several miles in the rear, leaving his lieutenant-colonel, Baron Frederick Weisenfels, in command, and shortly after, disbanding many of his men, joined the British in New York. On the discovery of this treachery, Washington filled up one of the blanks furnished him by Congress with the name of Philip Van Cortlandt, which bears date November 30, 1766, and sent him the commission as colonel by express.

Immediately on its receipt he took leave of his companions-in-arms, and set out to take command of his regiment; and passing through New Jersey, accompanied only by a friend and a servant, was nearly captured by the enemy at Pluckemin.

Suspecting that there would be a battle at Trenton, he pushed on as fast as possible until his horse broke down, when he took that of his servant. Meeting a captain of his regiment, he hastened forward, but, being overtaken by a storm of hail, snow, and rain, lost his way, and had the disappointment of hearing, by the firing three miles off, that the battle had commenced, which resulted in the capture of the Hessians, and a victory in which he could not participate.

After this the regiment recruited, and in the spring of 1777 was ordered to Peekskill, where they remained a short time, and then after crossing to Bergen, and having a skirmish with the enemy, Colonel Van Cortlandt took command at White Plains. He was here opposed to a line of redoubts extending from Morrisania to the North River on heights contiguous to each other, and garrisoned by about 2,500 men. Colonel Van Cortlandt had in all but 600 men, and his nearest reinforcements were twenty-five miles distant, his own position being at no time more than ten

miles distant from the enemy, and frequently in sight of their redoubts. This rendered duty very severe, being obliged constantly to shift his quarters to avoid being surrounded by a force three times his number. In this manner he kept them at bay guarding the neutral ground, and frequently alarming their defences.

Whilst at Eastchester a Mr. Williams came to the camp from the new jail in New York, from which he had just been released, on promise of carrying a letter to General Burgoyne. Taking from his coat a slip of silk sewed inside of it, the following words were found written thereon:

"To General Burgoyne:

Our destination is changed. Instead of going to L. D., we shall, in three ways, sail for B. N. Regulate your conduct accordingly.

Howe."

General Howe was aware that the father of the messenger, Ezekiel Williams, was a member of the Committee of Safety. He was sent on to General Putnam, and soon after Colonel Van Cortlandt set off for the headquarters, which had moved before he reached Bound Brook and met the enemy near Smith's Clove. On waiting on the commander-in-chief, Washington made enquiries whether he had seen a fleet sail up the Sound. "I replied," says the colonel, "that I had two or three shallops reported by an armed brig and schooner going to Lloyd's Neck for forage for the fleet destined to the Chesapeake, and then mentioned the letter of Williams."

Some questions respecting precedence with Colonel Henry B. Livingston, of the 4th Regiment, being settled, Colonel Van Cortlandt returned to his command, while the army marched towards Philadelphia; and shortly after the 2d and 4th Regiments, under the command of Colonel Van Cortlandt, were ordered to the relief of Fort Stanwix, which, being situated on the carrying place between the waters of the Mohawk and Wood Creek, was considered the key to the communication between Canada and the Mohawk. And when General Burgoyne left Montreal on his way to attack Albany, a detachment of British troops under General St. Leger, with a regiment of loyalists and a large body of Indians under Brant, were despatched for its capture.

They arrived at the fort on the 3d of August, and found General Peter Gansevoort of Albany in command, with 750 men. The fort was invested by the enemy, but a diversion was made by the attack, which resulted in the battle of Oriskany, and during this engagement Colonel Willett made a sortie from the fort with 280 men, which put the enemy to flight, capturing camp equipage, clothing, etc., with five British standards, and the baggage and papers of the officers. The siege was, however, continued, and Colonel Willett and Major Stockwell, making their escape from the fort, reached the headquarters of General Schuyler at Stillwater, and obtained a relief party under the command of General Arnold; and the British, upon hearing of their approach, raised the siege, and withdrew to Oswego and thence to Montreal. On the arrival of Colonel Van Cortlandt at Albany he was joined by the New Hampshire troops, and marched on to Schenectady, and thence up the Mohawk, where he was met by the intelligence that the enemy had retreated, and that Arnold was returning. They then rejoined the brigade of General Poor, en-

camped on Van Schaick Island, at the junction of the Mohawk and the Hudson, opposite what is now the village of Lansingburgh. Burgoyne's army was advancing, and they moved on to Stillwater, and encamped on the banks of the river.

"One day while at dinner with General Arnold," says Colonel Van Cortlandt, "we were informed that the enemy had a reconnoitring gunboat that proceeded every night down the river in sight of our advance-guard, and then returned; upon which I observed that, if I was permitted to take a command of my men, I would that night capture them, if a few battoes with muffled oars could be fitted for me. The general answered: 'Prepare the men, four boats are at your service.' I proceeded as far up as Fish Creek, where I concealed my boats and waited the approach of the gunboat, which did not arrive. The reason was, the enemy had the day previous advanced from Saratoga, and were encamped southwest from Blind Moses's, at whose house, about half a mile from me, they had an advance-guard, which my patrolling officer discovered. I then resolved to surprise that guard, not knowing that their army was near. I moved to the southwest in order to surround them, which brought me to a fence, where I halted my men; and, in order to ascertain the best place to make my attack on the guard, I advanced in company with Matthew Clarkson, since made a general, into the field. The morning being very foggy, I did not see the sentinels of the enemy until I had passed and was challenged; but an owl croaking deceived the sentinel, and we stood still until I discovered we were near the tents of the enemy, who were lighting up their fires as far as I could see, and was certain all their army was there, with their right wing extending southwest a considerable distance. I then retired silently to the road I had left near the river, and stopped at a house on an eminence which was empty, and sent a non-commissioned officer express to inform Generals Arnold and Poor and Colonel Morgan that the enemy was advancing, so that they might make arrangements immediately to check them; which was done, for Colonel Morgan had a skirmish with their advance-guard the same day, which had the desired effect of forcing them to the left nearer the river and more in our front, which was a fortunate circumstance, for had they that day passed our left they might, by a forced march, have proceeded to Albany, for they would have had possession of the heights all the way, and we must have approached them with disadvantage. But, as it was, the next day we met their advance on equal ground, and a severe engagement ensued, and I am happy to say that my discovery of the enemy's advance saved the capture of the city of Albany."

In the battle of the 19th of September Colonel Van Cortlandt's regiment was engaged, first against the Hessians, and next against a troop of light infantry. Colonel Livingston, upon whom Colonel Van Cortlandt called for assistance, filing off with his men, and the Hessians rallying and returning, he fell back to a footpath three feet lower than the level of the ground upon which they had been engaged. The sun had set, and directing his men to await the enemy's fire, and then aim under the flash, the bullets rattled over their heads, and the return fire of the Americans was given with deadly effect, the enemy having advanced to within four or five rods, and suffered severely.

This was one of the longest, warmest, and most obdurate battles fought in America. "The theatre of action," says General Wilkinson, "was

such that, although the combatants changed ground a dozen times in the course of the day, the contest terminated on the spot where it began. The British line was formed on an eminence in a thick pine wood, having before it Freeman's farm, an oblong field stretching from its centre towards its right, the ground in front sloping gently down to the verge of this field, which was bordered on the opposite side by a close wood. The sanguinary scene lay in the cleared ground between the eminence occupied by the enemy and the wood just described. The fire of our marksmen from this wood was too deadly to be withstood by the enemy in line, and when they gave way and broke, our men, rushing from their covert, pursued them to the eminence, where, having their flanks protected, they rallied, and charging again, drove us back into the wood, from whence a dreadful fire would again force them to fall back; and in this manner did the battle fluctuate, like the waves of a stormy sea, with alternate advantages for four hours without one minute's intermission. The British artillery fell into our possession at every charge, but we could neither turn them upon the enemy nor bring them off; the wood prevented the last, and the want of a match the first, as the linstock was invariably carried off, and the rapidity of the transaction did not allow us time to provide one. The slaughter of this brigade of artillerists was remarkable, the captain and 36 men being killed and wounded out of 48. It was truly a gallant conflict, in which death by familiarity lost its terrors, and certainly a drawn battle, as night alone terminated it; the British army keeping its ground in the rear of the field of action, and our corps, when they could no longer distinguish objects, returning to their own camp."

From this time until the 7th of October the hostile armies lay opposite to one another, the one strengthening its position, and the other its forces, and constant attacks taking place on the pickets.

The details of the memorable battle of Saratoga, which resulted in the surrender of Burgoyne, are too well known to need repetition here. Poor's Brigade, to which the 2d Regiment, under Colonel Van Cortlandt, was attached, was engaged, and bore themselves with gallantry.

The history of Arnold's remarkable conduct on this day receives additional proof from the account given by Colonel Van Cortlandt. Having been relieved of command, and on ill terms with General Gates, he yet remained on the field, and, though bearing himself with his usual bravery, confused the troops by issuing on his own responsibility useless and contradictory orders, which have been attributed not only to rashness, but intoxication. One ill consequence of his interference is thus related by Colonel Van Cortlandt: "I being with General Poor's brigade, and advancing, the enemy retiring towards their battery, as the Hessians went towards theirs, General Arnold, now in the field, and in sight of their nine-gun battery, sent his aid to the right, ordering General Poor to bring his men into better order; as we were pursuing, this order arrested our progress, and prevented our taking the British battery in less than ten minutes, as we should have entered it almost as soon as the British, as Morgan did that of the Hessians, which Arnold discovered after sending the above order to General Poor; and as he had also sent another order to the left, by his other aid, he now rode as fast as he could to counteract his own order, hurrying on the left, and the Hessian battery, where he was wounded; finding it too late, after the British had gained their battery, and rallied after their panic, and could again fire

their cannon at us, which they could not do while running from us, we had orders to return to our encampment, it being near night. The next morning our brigade was ordered out at daybreak, and we found that the enemy was gone from the battery and retired towards the left, keeping possession of the high lands near the river, and defended by woods and cannon mounted, near which General Lincoln was wounded. The following night they retired to Saratoga, where they surrendered October 17."

After the surrender, Colonel Van Cortlandt "accompanied Adjutant-General Wilkinson to Albany." This is the simple entry in his diary; but General Wilkinson, in his memoirs, states that, being unable to keep his seat on horseback, he was placed on a bed in a wagon by the side of Colonel Philip Van Cortlandt, who was reduced to a similar state of debility, and conveyed to Albany. Here he remained until the arrival of General Poor, and then proceeded down the river where the enemy were burning Kingston and other places; but as they retreated, the brigade halted, and, General Poor being ill, Colonel Van Cortlandt took command and joined the main army under Washington, and hutted at Valley Forge. When the army moved, Colonel Van Cortlandt was stationed at Radnor Meeting House, nine miles from Philadelphia, and when they left he was ordered to remain and superintend the encampment. To this he demurred, and appealed to the commander-in-chief, pleading the prospect of an engagement and his desire to participate in it. Washington replied that "it was not always convenient to have recourse to the Army Register when a confidential officer was wanted for a particular purpose." There was no reply to be made to this, the colonel remained, and the 2d Regiment was engaged in the battle of Monmouth without its leader, which deprivation he deeply felt. Obedience to orders and a soldier's duty alone consoled him.

When the army marched, upwards of 3,000 men were left in the camp and hospital, 1,500 of whom were too unwell to be moved. A fever, resembling the yellow fever, raged violently. One of the physicians died, and the colonel's old faithful soldier and attendant, Mr. Lent, one of the tenants from the manor, where many of his name still reside.

When relieved of his onerous and painful post, Colonel Van Cortlandt rejoined his regiment, and afterwards returned home for a few days; and whilst there, General Clinton applied for the 2d Regiment to be detailed to guard the frontier, where Brant and his Indians were burning and destroying, which position they occupied during the winter of 1778 and 1779.

In the spring of 1779, Brant being stationed on the Delaware, Colonel Van Cortlandt, with 250 men, set off to surprise him, but was met on his way by despatches from General Washington ordering him to Pennsylvania, to join General Sullivan. He returned, and was preparing for his march, having summoned the militia of Ulster Co. to relieve him, when on the 3d of April, having called in the guard from the block-house, smoke was discovered rising from a village about six miles to the southeast, and a lad came in from the neighborhood, informing him that the Indians were engaged in their work of destruction. This calamity was caused by the desertion of two men of the regiment, who had informed Brant that their comrades waiting for the wagons, and for the militia under Colonel Cantine, who had arrived only that day, had caused a delay of which the

Indians were not aware. They were, therefore, entirely unprepared for the advance which was immediately made. Brant had with him about 150 Indians, who retired on the approach of the troops. Colonel Cantine pursued them, but the Indians crossed the swamp and escaped. As Colonel Van Cortlandt was leaning against a pine-tree waiting for his men to close up, Brant ordered one of his men to pick him off, but the ball passed three inches above his head. The conclusion of this story is characteristic of both men. Some years after the war was ended, General Van Cortlandt was seated in church, a small Methodist church built upon the farm at Cortlandt Manor, about a mile from the house, the lieutenant-governor and his wife, in common with some others of the connections of the Livingston family, being devoted members of that communion. The main road from Albany to New York winds through the farm, passing directly in front of the church and leading down to the bridge of the Croton. At that time the stages from Albany passed constantly, the tavern where they rested being on the road a short distance north of the church. As the general was seated by the window he saw a stranger passing through the adjoining graveyard, and who, as he went by, glanced in at the window. The face was a striking and a familiar one. Where had he seen it? A few minutes' meditation solved the question. When Brant visited England in 1776 he was received at court with marked distinction, and Romney painted his picture in full war costume. From this likeness some fine engravings had been published, and the general (for he was breveted a general after the war) had at the manor-house a framed copy of this portrait, still in the possession of one of the family. The moment that the conviction "This is Brant" crossed his mind, he rose and quietly left the church, and, walking after the stranger, accosted him by name. Brant replied politely, but expressed surprise that he should be recognized in that neighborhood. The general introduced himself, and, falling into conversation, they walked back to the tavern, where they dined together, and talked over their various adventures during the war. In the course of their interview the skirmish near Saghawack was spoken of, and Brandt related his orders to shoot down the commanding officer, but the man's sight was deceived by the fluttering of the leaves or some such cause, and he sighted an inch or more too high. "Had I fired myself," continued Brandt, "I should not have had the pleasure of meeting you to-day." "Indeed," replied the general, smiling, "I am very happy that you did not." "And I, sir," said Brant, bowing—for, with all his native ferocity, he was a polished gentleman—"And I, sir, am also extremely happy I did not."

Two days after the attack on the Indians, Colonel Van Cortlandt marched his regiment to Fort Penn, and there received orders from General Sullivan to make a road through the wilderness to Wilkesbarre on the Susquehanna, a distance of thirty miles, and passing the great swamp; which he performed with 600 men in thirty days. For this duty his early business of a surveyor, and his experience of life in the woods, had peculiarly fitted him. At Wilkesbarre he took post in advance of General Hand's men, and waited the arrival of Sullivan, who marched over the road with Maxwell's and Poor's brigades. The atrocities of the Indians at Wyoming and in Western New York had stirred up Congress to active measures, and the force put under command of General Sullivan consisted of the 2d and 4th New York Regiments, rein-

forced by some other troops now with him; and the 1st and 3d New York, with some troops from other States, under the command of General James Clinton, were now on their way through Central New York to join him. The army passed up the Susquehanna in 150 boats, and, saluted by guns from the fort and the cheers of the soldiery, formed an imposing display. Arriving at Tioga Point, a detachment was sent forward to Chemung, where a skirmish ensued, ending in the burning of the Indian town.

General Clinton had arrived at Canajoharie early in the spring, and sending out a detachment against the Onondaga Indians, destroyed their whole settlement, killed between twenty and thirty warriors, and took thirty-seven muskets. He then, with great labor, opened a road from Canajoharie to the head of Otsego Lake, carrying his boats on wagons. After passing through the lake he made a dam at its outlet, the eastern branch of the Susquehanna, and, when all was in readiness, broke it away, when the current carried the boats swiftly down the river, and on the 22d of August they joined the main body at Tioga, when all moved on to Newtown, now Elmira, where Brant and Butler had made a stand. The name of Butler's rangers struck terror into the hearts of the frontier, and at the massacre of Cherry Valley, the year before, the cruelties of Walter Butler far exceeded those of Brant, sparing neither friend nor foe.

The Indians had scoffed at the intelligence of the expedition, believing it impossible for regular troops to force their way through such a wilderness, but, on their approach, prepared to oppose their progress. The action commenced at sunrise on the 29th by General Hand's men, reinforced by Maxwell's and Poor's brigades, and General Clinton, at nine o'clock, was ordered to the right, where they were obliged to mount a hill occupied by Indians. "I requested General Clinton," says Colonel Van Cortlandt, "to permit me to charge with bayonets, as soon as I gained the heights, on the flank of the Indians. He consented, and ordered the charge to be made, he leading the 1st Regiment and I the 2d, which ended the battle in five minutes." The enemy were completely routed, and ran, and left their dead, which they seldom do unless obliged to leave them, and threw away their packs and arms. The Americans lost only three men, and not one of the New York brigades was either killed or wounded.

Brant, after the war, informed Colonel Van Cortlandt that he had 1,800 Indians, which, with refugees and Butler's command, made 2,200 men, and being asked why then had they fled, replied that his Indians would never stand against bayonets.

The army then advanced through Catherine's Town, between Seneca and Cayuga Lakes, which derives its name from the celebrated Catherine Montour, a half-breed of Canada, said to have been the daughter of a French governor. After the death of her husband, a Seneca chief, she frequently accompanied the deputations of the Six Nations, and one of her sons was accused of great cruelty at the massacre of Wyoming. The corn-fields and orchards were destroyed, and about thirty dwellings. They met on their way with many fine towns, apple and peach orchards, and good houses. One, Kanadasaga, at the foot of Seneca Lake, near the present village of Geneva, the capital of the Senecas, contained sixty houses. After passing Geneva and Canandaigua, they encamped at Honneyoye. Here Lieutenant Boyd, with sixteen men, was sent out to

reconnoitre, taking with him a guide, Hanyous, or Hanyeny, a friendly Oneida. They killed two Indians, but on their return were met by Butler's men, who had been in front, and were all killed but the lieutenant and his sergeant, who were taken prisoners. The Oneida, having incurred their deadly hatred, was literally hewed in pieces, and Boyd, according to Butler's statement, was sent forward under a guard to Niagara, but in passing through a Genessee village was tomahawked by an old Indian. But Colonel Van Cortlandt states that the prisoners were sacrificed that night, and that they found them killed, tomahawked, and scalped, and their heads cut off, and lying on the ground where they had their dance. At this place were 120 houses, which the troops destroyed. This was on the Genessee flats, and, after destroying the Genessee Castle, the army returned to Honneyoye, and from thence to Newtown, now Elmira, on the 24th, and reached Easton on the 15th of October. The whole distance from Easton to the Genessee Castle was 280 miles, and the army lost not more than forty killed and wounded, notwithstanding the fatigue and exposure. The Indians were driven back to Niagara, and few ever returned to their old homes. The Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca countries being laid waste, these tribes depended on the British for support, and, remaining about Niagara, many perished during the ensuing winter, and the power of the confederacy was broken for ever.

General Gansevoort, with 100 men, was detached to Fort Schuyler, with instructions to proceed and destroy the Mohawk Castle, but to spare the Upper Castle inhabited by the Onheskas, and, in passing through the country of the Oneidas, to be very careful to do them no damage. These instructions were carefully followed. The troops passed down, and succeeded in their attack on the Mohawk Castle, but, when about to destroy the dwellings, the frontiersmen, who had been driven from their homes, applied to General Gansevoort for permission to inhabit them, as they were furnished with household utensils, and had grain, horses, cows, etc., which were distributed among the refugees. The deserted territories of these hostile tribes were settled shortly after the war, this expedition serving to open the roads, and to acquaint the soldiers with the richness and beauty of these magnificent lands. In 1788, General James Clinton, General Hathorn, and General Cantine, commissioners on the part of the State, surveyed a portion of the southwestern part of this region, and settlers poured in rapidly. An account is given in the diary of an officer belonging to Sullivan's army of the surprise and delight of the officers and men on emerging from the forest upon the Genessee flats, with miles of grass ten feet high, a rare sight before the prairies were laid open to the eyes of civilized men.

After this expedition the 2d Regiment encamped at Morristown, and remained all winter, making huts of logs when the snow became deep. Colonel Van Cortlandt was ordered to Philadelphia on a court-martial for the trial of General Arnold. On this board were four officers who had been at the court-martial held at Ticonderoga for the trial of Colonel Hazen, and they were unanimously for cashiering Arnold, but were overruled, and he was sentenced only to a reprimand from the commander-in-chief, a fatal lenity, as events subsequently proved. The regiment remained at Morristown until the spring of 1780, and then marched toward the northern frontiers of New York. The colonel, returning to West Point, was selected to command a regiment of infantry under General Lafayette,

just then returned from his fifteen months' visit to France. The two brigades under his command were one under General Hand, Colonel Stewart of Pennsylvania, Colonel Ogden of New Jersey, and Colonel Van Cortlandt of New York. The other brigade was commanded by General Poor, with Colonel Shepherd of Massachusetts, Colonel Swift of Connecticut, and Colonel Gerardt, a French officer, with Colonel H. Lee and his troop of cavalry and a major commanding artillery. This command was stationed at Tappan, menacing the enemy in New York, but they gave them no opportunity of engaging them, although they marched to Bergen and to Staten Island; and in November, 1780, the officers of Major-General Lafayette's division were ordered to join their respective regiments, while he proceeded to Virginia. In December the five New York regiments were ordered to be consolidated into two; the 1st and 3d to be under the command of General Van Schaick, and the 2d, 4th, 5th, J. Livingston's, and that part of Spencer's belonging to this State, to be under the command of Colonel Van Cortlandt. These troops were scattered all along the Mohawk, the old 4th being stationed at Fort Schuyler, now Utica. The colonel was ordered to that place to relieve Colonel Cochran, who had been appointed his lieutenant-colonel, and who left on a furlough, after having had a trying post, destitute of nearly every supply. It was probably during this occupation of Fort Schuyler that the following incident occurred. Batteaux had arrived at Fort Herkimer with provisions, but around Fort Schuyler lay Brandt and his Indians. Colonel Van Cortlandt despatched a messenger to say that it was unsafe to send on the supplies. The runner started, and, when about two or three miles on his journey, came to a bridge over a dry run, which was filled with white-oak branches, with their leaves on. Apprehending danger, he returned, and another messenger volunteered. Taking off his shoes as he approached the bridge, he discovered a place where he might pass the centre without treading on a leaf, which he did with great caution, and reached Fort Herkimer in safety. In the interview before described between Brant and Colonel Van Cortlandt he informed him that every oak branch was in the hand of an Indian, who, upon the slightest rustle, would have started to the attack. A light fall of snow discovered the footprints, by which they knew that the messenger had passed. Brant's object was to have the provisions sent on, to attack the sleds, and, after killing the escort, to dress his own men in the clothes of the drivers, and so introduce them into the fort. This, the colonel informed him, would not have succeeded, as he never suffered the gates of the fort to be opened without calling the guard and manning the cannon which commanded the entrance. Fort Schuyler was at this time in a very ruinous condition, and shortly after the barracks took fire and destroyed what was left. Colonel Van Cortlandt, who was in Albany, went on and brought off the cannon, etc., to Fort Herkimer, and a new fort was commenced under the direction of a French engineer, Major Villefranc. After approving the plan and clearing off the timber and brush, being joined by a few nine months' men under Captain Ellsworth, Colonel Van Cortlandt was ordered to Albany and to call in his men from Fort Plainstone, Arabia, Johnstown, Schoharie, etc., leaving Captains Ellsworth and Moody at Fort Herkimer, where the former was killed by Indian scouts three days after while out on a fishing party. The regiment having all joined, they encamped on the Patroon's flats, near Albany, to await the

building of thirty-four boats, and, when they were completed, embarked with their baggage for West Point, where Colonel Van Cortlandt had an interview with the commander-in-chief, and received secret orders to proceed through New Jersey, taking boats, entrenching tools, etc., and to proceed with deliberation, informing him daily of their progress, for which purpose he sent a dragoon every day, this being the rear-guard of the army. On arriving at Trenton they took boats down the Delaware to Philadelphia, and then proceeded to the head of Elk, where they left their boats and went by land to Baltimore, and after a few days joined the army at Williamsburg, whence they marched to Yorktown. On his arrival, Colonel Van Cortlandt was ordered out with a strong picket guard to relieve Colonel Schammil, who had invested the town, but this officer, unfortunately mistaking a British patrol of horse for our own men, had been surrounded, and was mortally wounded. The commander-in-chief and other officers came to the redoubt, and were fired on by the enemy, but without effect. General Washington then directed Colonel Van Cortlandt to keep his men as they were at present disposed out of sight of the battery, and at night to surround the town to the right with sentinels all the way to York River, whilst the French pickets would do the same to the left, and the next morning the enemy saw themselves surrounded by a line of vigilant troops, who threw up an intrenchment, and planted cannon, to which Washington himself applied the first match. The ball crashed through the town, and struck a house where some British officers were at dinner, killing the one at the head of the table. The enemy had two redoubts about 350 yards in advance of the line, and batteries which surrounded the town, and it was determined to storm them. General Lafayette's light infantry was sent to one, the French grenadiers, under the Baron de Viomenil, to the other. The light infantry, under Colonel Hamilton, Major N. Fish, and other officers, took the one near the river in a few minutes. When General Lafayette sent word to the French baron, he returned answer that his battery was not taken, but would be in five minutes, "which," says Colonel Van Cortlandt, "I believe he did." Both the above were brilliant exploits, and crown the assailants with everlasting honor, particularly as they extended mercy to every one who solicited it after entering the works, which was not the case when Bayton's horse were surprised. "After the redoubts were taken," continues the colonel, "we advanced our lines in their range, and the next morning I advanced the New York Brigade, which I then commanded, with drums and colors flying, and carried arms up to the redoubt which Baron Viomenil had taken; which insulting movement drew on us the resentment of our enemies, who fired an incessant shower of shells, without doing any injury, only killing a French grenadier in my front, and a Virginian retiring on my left. One of the shots, as I entered the entrenchment, cut its upper part, and almost covered me and the Baron Steuben, who was meeting me, when he directed me to stop my music, when the firing ceased. When I came to the redoubt, it was necessary to cut away a part to get a mortar to play on the enemy. One of Captain Vandenburgh's fatigue party was killed the first stroke he struck by a nine-pound ball, which carried off his thigh close to his body. On seeing this, a volunteer was called for, as the case was desperate, when a soldier, who had been disgraced, as he told me, without a cause, took the place and performed the work, although during its execution three balls were fired at him, all

of which came within six inches, and one almost covered his head with sand. His name was Peter Christian Vouch, and his brother is my neighbor at Peekskill. One night the enemy, I suppose to save appearances, made a sortie on a French battery by surprise, killed some, and spiked the guns, but were soon obliged to retire with some loss."

Cornwallis, as a last resort, attempted to cross the river at Gloster, with all the army, to make a forced march across the Rappahannock, but a storm of wind and rain providentially swelled the water, and forced them back, and he was at last obliged to submit, and sent a flag to Washington, asking for a suspension of hostilities to negotiate terms of surrender, which were accepted; and on the 19th of October, 1781, one of the proudest days in our calendar, the flower of the British army laid down their arms. The French and American armies were drawn up on either side of the road from Yorktown to Hampton—Washington and Rochambeau at their head. The gallant General Lincoln, who had surrendered to Cornwallis shortly before, was deputed by the commander-in-chief to receive the sword of the earl, which was presented by General O'Hara, Cornwallis himself feigning illness to escape from the mortification. In the full view of the two armies and an assembled multitude, twenty-eight British captains each presented the flags of their regiments, and then the army of 7,000 men were conducted to the field of deposit, and laid down their arms, and Lincoln had the proud satisfaction of superintending the whole ceremony. The prisoners were soon sent to the interior, and General Clinton, commander of the New York division, and General Dayton of the New Jersey troops, being both too unwell to return by land, Colonel Van Cortlandt was appointed to the command of both, and with 700 British and Hessian prisoners marched to Fredericksburg, and delivered them to the Virginia militia. Silver in those war times seems to have been as much a rarity in the Old Dominion as at present, for the colonel remarks: "I was asked at Hanover Court House five dollars for a bowl of apple toddy, but was satisfied by paying one silver dollar." After delivering up the prisoners, he continued his march through Alexandria, Georgetown, Bladensburg, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, to Trenton, where the New Jersey troops left, and the New York brigade marched to Pompton, and commenced huts for their winter accommodation, which, after all, appears to have been of a miserable sort. They were scant of clothing and provisions, and obliged to labor hard to keep their huts warm. The chaplain, Dr. John Ganno, not having any opportunity of preaching except in the open air, for which the men were poorly provided, went home and returned as soon as the winter broke up. The church in the low grounds was obtained for him to preach in, and on Saturday evening, the night before his first sermon, in looking at the brigade, the colonel remarked that it would be much more satisfactory if the men were enlisted for the war, many of them being six or nine months' men whom the colonel was anxious to retain. The politic dominie introduced his discourse on the Sabbath morning with the remark that it always gave him pleasure to preach to soldiers, especially when he had good tidings to communicate, and he would aver of a truth that our Lord and Saviour approved of all who engaged in his service for the whole warfare; no six or nine months' men in his service. "This," adds the colonel, "had a fine effect, for many enlisted shortly after to silence the pleasantry, I suppose, of their companions—a good hint for the successors of the reverend

chaplain." The spring of 1782 having fairly opened, the men left their huts and encamped on the flat fields, where they exercised and manœuvred. Baron Steuben made a visit of a few days to the camp. And before they left the huts, General and Mrs. Washington visited Colonel Van Cortlandt, and remained at his quarters from Saturday until Monday, when they were escorted to Newburgh; and in the summer following the command marched to Verplanck's Point, where they encamped, and were joined by New England and New Jersey troops. The French army, under Rochambeau, halted there on their way to Peekskill, when they were reviewed by the commander-in-chief and the French General—Major-General Steuben commanding. This was the first and only period in his six years' service that Colonel Van Cortlandt had been stationed in the neighborhood of his home, and able to receive and return the visits of his relations; but, with true soldier-like preference of his duty whilst speaking of his enjoyment of this privilege, he says: "This, in some measure, made amends for the inactivity of the campaign."

After an uneventful summer the army hutted at New Windsor, near the residence of General Clinton, and, though better provided for than before, yet were sadly destitute of clothing and provisions, and as yet unpaid for all their faithful service. There was a prospect of peace, and of their being returned penniless to their homes, and disaffection was at work in high quarters. The officers who had been promised by Congress half pay for life asked for what was due them, and a commutation of the pension. But no prospect of relief appeared, and a meeting of the officers was called by an anonymous letter, and an address to the troops was privately circulated. Washington was alluded to as their illustrious leader, and called upon in terms which might have tempted a less pure patriot to a dangerous assumption of authority. But he was above suspicion, and calling a meeting of the commanding officers, at which Colonel Van Cortlandt as chief of the New York Brigade attended, addressed them in warm terms, and pledged himself to the utmost exertions in their behalf, and condemned, in the most emphatic manner, the man who attempted to open the flood-gates of civil discord by calling upon the army to assert its claims by violence. The officers formed a unanimous resolve to support order and discipline, and at a subsequent meeting of all the officers this was confirmed, in the belief that Congress would ultimately reward the sufferings and services of the faithful soldiers. The army was shortly after disbanded, and the New York Brigade presented their colors and musical instruments to Governor George Clinton at his residence at Poughkeepsie, and then dispersed to their respective homes; and their commander, after seven years of hard service and untiring devotion to his country, returned to his home at the manor-house at Croton River, to which his father, Pierre Van Cortlandt, had returned some years before. Pierre Van Cortlandt had been elected the first Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New York under the new constitution of 1777, and continued in that office for eighteen successive years, when, in the year 1795, he declined a re-election, and retiring to the manor of Cortlandt, resided there until his death in 1814, at the ripe age of 93 years. Here the diary from which most of the foregoing memoir has been compiled closes. In 1783 Congress conferred on Colonel Philip Van Cortlandt the rank of brigadier-general by brevet for gallant conduct at Yorktown. Afterwards elected member of Congress for the district in which he resided, he served in that capacity

for sixteen years. He was also one of the Commissioners of Forfeitures, and one of the original members of the Society of the Cincinnati. In 1824, when Major-General Lafayette revisited this country, his old companion-in-arms accompanied him on his tour through the United States. On the death of his father in 1814, he succeeded to the manor-house and its estate, where he lived in the quiet of private life. He died unmarried on the 21st of November, 1831, at the age of 82 years, and was interred in the family burying-ground on a hill above the manor-house, near the very spot where, more than fifty years before, his father had nobly declared for the cause of liberty—leaving the country for which he fought great and united, and without having seen the rising clouds of that disunion so deprecated by his fellow-patriots, and spared the anguish of beholding that same battle-field where he so proudly witnessed the downfall of his country's foes again the scene of mortal strife, but baptized this time with the blood of brethren.