

Benedict Arnold--Naval Patriot

BY JOHN R. SPEARS

THE complete story of the battle of Lake Champlain, in the war of the Revolution—the first decisive battle fought by American war-ships, and the first in which an American squadron had part—begins at the capture of Fort Ticonderoga (May 10, 1775), by Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold. Arnold's home in New Haven stood where he could hear, day in and day out, the chip and click of axe and maul in a nearby ship-yard, and he had made a few voyages as supercargo, in vessels of his own freighting, to the West Indies. No sooner had the British garrison surrendered, "in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress," than Arnold turned, with a sailor's instinct, to the lake. A schooner named the *Liberty* (it had been built by Ira Allen in 1773) was taken from its Tory owner, Major Skeene, and embarking in this, Arnold sailed north, and at St. Johns captured a sloop (the *Enterprise*) and nine big flatboats, called bateaux. This sloop and four of the bateaux were used in the battle afloat in the following year.

The expeditions of Montgomery and Benedict Arnold to Montreal and Quebec followed in natural course after the control of Lake Champlain had been obtained. The death of Montgomery, before Quebec (December 31, 1775), left Arnold in command, and in spite of his depleted forces he closely invested the city throughout the winter. With the evacuation of Boston (March 17, 1776), the outlook for the Americans was, in a superficial view, exceedingly bright, but in actual fact the King might have said, as John Paul Jones said at a later day, "I have not yet begun to fight." He had hired the German troops—"20,000 of the finest infantry in Europe, with four good generals,"—and these were on their way to America before Boston was evacuated. Of the Germans, 8600 joined Howe

(at Halifax), who then sailed for New York Harbor. He landed on Staten Island, July 13, 1776, and there, when General Clinton had arrived from the South, he had a force of "31,625 rank and file, of whom 24,464 were disciplined soldiers, equal to any in Europe."

The remainder of the Hessians, with a sufficient number of British troops to bring the total re-enforcement up to 13,357, joined Carleton at Quebec.

The design of the British ministry was that the armies under Howe and Carleton should "co-operate; that they should both be on the Hudson River at the same time; that they should join about Albany, and *thereby cut off all communication between the Northern and Southern colonies.*"

If they succeeded in this, the hope of the colonies was gone.

The arrival of the re-enforcements at Quebec compelled the Americans to hasten away, and after a variety of pitiable experiences they arrived on Lake Champlain on July 3, 1776, where they numbered "5000 in all, and of these at least one-half were in hospitals."

In the month of July, 1776, when the British campaign for the occupation of the Hudson began, Washington, in New York, had 18,000 raw militia with which to oppose Howe's 24,464 "disciplined soldiers"; and at Crown Point there were but 2500 men able to bear arms with which to oppose Carleton's victorious 13,000.

On reaching St. Johns, at the extreme north end of Lake Champlain, the British commander at once began the work of building vessels with which to sweep the lake. From the great fleet of transports and war-ships that had brought the re-enforcements he obtained all the ship-carpenters and sailors and supplies he needed; from the army, all the human muscle he could wish for. Two schooners had been brought from England, and

the hull of a ship of 180 tons was found on the ways at Quebec. These three were transported up the outlet of Lake Champlain to the rapids, where they were taken apart and conveyed by land to St. Johns. There they were put together, rigged, and armed. A flotilla of twenty-seven gunboats (see Pausch, p. 82), and more than two hundred flat-bottomed row-boats were added, together with a scow of shoal draught that was rigged with square-sails and was fit to carry an enormous battery.

Let the reader consider the details of the opposing forces with patience, for they are necessary to a full appreciation of the first decisive naval battle fought by the Americans. The exact armament of the British forces is not to be found in the records, but a letter from Captain Douglas (of the British war-ship *Isis*) says, in his report to the Admiralty, that the 180-ton hull was rigged as a ship, named the *Inflexible*, and armed with eighteen 12-pounders. One schooner was named *Maria* (in honor of Carleton's wife), and armed with fourteen 6-pounders. The other was named *Carleton*, and armed with twelve 6-pounders. The great scow (named *Thunderer*) carried six 24-pounders, six 12-pounders, and two howitzers—presumably 12-pounders. A gondola (a scow managed with sails and oars) carried seven 9-pounders. The gunboats, according to Douglas, "carried each a brass field-piece, some twenty-fours to nines, some with howitzers." There were also four long-boats from the ships, "each with a carriage-gun." Lieutenant Digby (see *Journal*, p. 153) says they carried "24- or 12-pounders in their bow, and manned by the artillery." To man this fleet the British drew 697 picked sailors and officers from the British war-ships and transports. In the modern accounts of this battle the 697 British sailors are called the entire force of the British, but Pausch, who commanded one of the gunboats, says (p. 84 of *Journal*) that in addition to "10 sailors" he carried "10 cannoniers, 1 drummer, 1 sergeant, 1 boy." Digby, as noted, confirms this statement. There were more soldiers on the gunboats than sailors, and it is fair to assume that the other vessels were manned as well. A host of Indians, 600

to 1000 strong, came in their canoes to fight the Americans; and the great army of 13,000 men was behind all these to give at least moral support.

To Arnold was committed the task of defending the lake. Foreseeing that the British would be able to create a powerful fleet on the lake, and comprehending the peril if they were permitted to pass it, Arnold asked for 300 carpenters, with materials for building and equipping a frigate of thirty-six guns, besides a sufficient number of smaller vessels. But the ship-carpenters of the nation were then all busy building privateers on the sea-coast, and the difficulties in the way of transporting guns and materials from the sea, up through the wilderness, were so great that few can comprehend them now. Nevertheless some carpenters and materials were sent from the forts at Crown Point and Ticonderoga, and the forest supplied the rest. A ship-yard was established at the plantation of Major Skeene (near the south end of the lake), and there Arnold "gave life and spirit" to every stroke of axe and maul. By utilizing the vessels captured the year before, and by strenuous efforts in forest and ship-yard, he prepared by September the following fleet:

The row-galley *Congress*, armed with two 12-pounders, two 8-pounders, and four 6-pounders; the row-galley *Washington*, armed with one 18-pounder, one 12-pounder, two 9-pounders, and four 4-pounders; the row-galley *Trumbull*, armed with one 18-pounder, one 12-pounder, two 9-pounders, four 6-pounders; the row-galley *Lee*, armed with one 12-pounder, one 9-pounder, and four 4-pounders; eight scows, called gondolas, each of which carried one 12-pounder and two 6-pounders; the schooner *Royal Savage*, armed with four 6-pounders and eight 4-pounders; the schooner *Revenge*, armed with four 4-pounders and four 2-pounders; the sloop *Enterprise*, armed with twelve 4-pounders; the schooner *Liberty*, armed with four 4-pounders and four 2-pounders. To man this fleet of sixteen vessels, Arnold needed 800 men, and it may be assumed that he eventually obtained the full number, but on October 1 he wrote that he had but "500 men, half naked," and in another letter, begging for "100 seamen, no land lubbers," he

said: "We have a wretched motley crew in the fleet. The marines, the refuse of every regiment, and sailors, few of them ever wet with salt-water."

In the British fleet were 697 picked seamen and more than 700 "disciplined soldiers, equal to any in Europe," besides the Indians. The fighting force of Arnold (the *Liberty* was not in the battle) numbered fifteen vessels manned by no more than 800 men, of whom few more than 100 were seamen. And the guns of the British vessels threw twice the weight of shot thrown by the American guns.

With a force of less than half that of the enemy—with a forlorn hope—Arnold sailed north, and on September 3 formed a line in the narrow water twenty-five miles from St. Johns. From this position he was driven by batteries erected on shore, but in the mean time he had obtained a sufficient knowledge of the extent of the British forces, and on September 23 he anchored his fleet in line of battle behind (west of) Valcour Island, a tall tree-covered mass of rock from 120 to 180 feet high.

This was a most important move. The position taken was, for Arnold's fleet, the strongest on the lake. The water behind the island was so narrow that he could stretch his fleet across it—the British could not unfold either flank, as Nelson unfolded the end of the French line at Aboukir. If the British should divide their fleet to attack him from above and below, Arnold could hope to overcome one division before the other could pass around the island. And this hope was the stronger because the wind always blows from north'ard or south'ard on the lake—one division would have to work upwind to reach him.

In another view the position was, practically, in a bay. A great shoal was discovered in the north end of the channel, and the British would be unable to enter there in line of battle.

And there was another advantage in the position—as shall appear.

On the night of October 10, 1776, the British anchored in a line between Grand Island and Long (now North Hero) Island. At five o'clock the next morning—long before sunrise—they began to make sail. But it never occurred to either captain or sailor or soldier to send a scout

behind Valcour Island, and so, at about ten o'clock, they went booming to the south'ard beyond the island, wholly unaware that the Yankees were behind them, until an accident (not described) turned their eyes toward Arnold's hiding-place. The American fleet was practically lying in ambush.

At sight of the American line all helms were put apart, and with rattle of block and sheet, the pipe of bo'swain's whistles, and the shouts of men at the ropes, the great scow and the ship and the schooners were brought slowly to the wind, and headed, as well as might be, up into the snug harbor where Arnold lay, while the gunboats, now twenty in number, with their oars out, swung in between the ships and the island, and were pulled with a determined will to get the first shot.

Standing on the *Congress* galley, over which he had hoisted his flag because it was a boat that could be driven with oars wherever and whenever he pleased to go, Arnold watched the manœuvres of the British fleet. He saw that the great scow *Thunderer* was driving hopelessly to south'ard before the wind, for she had no centreboard, and was shoal of draught. The ship *Inflexible*, with her square-sails, was doing but little better. The schooners, with their American rigs, were beating up slowly, and the gunboats were coming in a huddle around the island. The large vessels were plainly too far away to support the gunboats, and Arnold sent the schooner *Royal Savage* to meet them, following her quickly with the *Congress* and two other galleys.

It was a splendid dash to take the enemy piecemeal. But the *Royal Savage* had a crew of landlubbers. They allowed her to drift within range of the far-away *Inflexible*, and then, after receiving three shots, they drove her ashore on a rock at the southerly end of Valcour while trying to beat back to the line.

Instantly the gunboats pulled for the stranded schooner. They soon drove her crew ashore; and the Indians, who were following in their bark canoes, now landed on the island in quest of scalps. For a time Arnold with his galleys fought the whole flotilla of British gunboats, "firing rapidly and effectually," as Pausch says, but he was so far out-

numbered that he slowly retreated upwind to his original crescent-shaped line of battle.

To this line came the British gunboats, first of all, to attack at musket-range. The *Carleton* followed. Anchoring, with a spring on her cable—broadside to—she opened fire, and “at half past twelve the engagement became general and very warm.”

The Indians, from hiding-places on the mainland, as well as on the island, fired across the narrow water at the American crews. Lucky shots from the British boats struck in Arnold's fleet, and two of his gondolas “began to careen over on one side.” But with unsurpassed courage and energy the Americans fought back. Even the crews of the careening gondolas kept their guns belching. Concentrating their fire on the *Carleton*, the Americans within an hour cut her up until she was unable either to fight or run away; and the British commodore was compelled to send two of the armed long-boats to tow her out of range. Meantime the magazine of a British gunboat was fired by a Yankee shot, and another boat stopped fighting to rescue the remaining crew from the sinking hulk.

In spite of the fire of Indians from the forest, in spite of the double force with the enemy afloat, the American fire became more deadly as the afternoon wore away, until the British found (as Digby's journal admits) “*that the boats' advantage was not to come nearer than 700 yards, as whenever they approached nearer they were greatly annoyed by Grape Shot.*”

Even when the great *Inflexible* arrived within range of the American boats, and opened on them with her heavy broadside, she was unable to drive them away. And as night came she too withdrew from range.

By choosing an advantageous position, and by unsurpassed determination and skill in the conflict, Arnold won the honors of the day—but not without serious loss. The *Congress*, his own flagship, was hulled twelve times, seven of the shot passing through at the water-line. The galley *Washington* lost her captain, executive officer, and sailing-master; but Colonel David Waterbury was on board,

and he kept the crew at the guns, though the galley was full of holes when the fight ended. The gondola *Philadelphia* sank within an hour after the firing ceased, and two other gondolas were in a sinking condition.

Looking from his shattered hulks to the British lines, Arnold saw by the fading light of day that to remain there with such a superior force between him and the American forts meant capture or death. For the *Inflexible*, the *Thunderer*, and the *Maria* were uninjured, and the number of British gunboats afloat was larger than the number of Arnold's fleet. Moreover, the transports bearing the army came up and landed 12,000 men, including artillery, on Valcour Island and the mainland, where they could assist the British fleet at earliest glimmer of daylight.

But as night came on, a fog began to rise over the lake, and the new moon went down behind the Adirondacks. Clouds overspread the sky, and a working wind was still blowing from the north'ard. At ten o'clock the American fleet, with sufficient sail set, headed away for the western end of the line of British gunboats, passed silently through between the two boats nearest the mainland, and at daylight the next morning (October 12) was under the lee of Schuyler's Island, ten miles south of the British.

Here they anchored, sank the two gondolas that were found to be beyond help, made such repairs to the others as were necessary to keep them afloat, and then at 2 P.M. labored toward the south—literally labored, because the wind had shifted from north to south.

Meantime the British had discovered with astonishment and rage that the Americans were gone. So exasperated was Carleton that he instantly started in pursuit, forgetting all about the soldiers he had landed. But the wind in the jibs of his square-rigged vessels soon cooled his ardor, and he thereupon returned to Valcour Island to anchor and send out scouts.

At daylight the next morning, Friday, October 13, the Americans were but fourteen miles from the British line, and the wind was still in their faces. But the British caught a fresh breeze from the northeast, the fog disappeared, and with

their great square-sails stretched till the bolt-ropes creaked, they came swooping after the toiling Americans, and off Split Rock overhauled them. They found the *Congress* galley, with Arnold on board, and the *Washington* galley, with Waterbury in command, waiting to cover the retreat of the others. Ranging up within musket-shot, the *Inflexible*, the *Maria*, and the *Carleton* opened fire, but in spite of the odds the *Congress* and the *Washington*, with four blunt gondolas helping at long range, turned on their huge antagonists.

No more desperate conflict than that which followed is known to the records. For when the enemy had fairly mobbed and captured the *Washington*, they concentrated their broadsides on the *Congress*. Nine 12-pounders on a ship of sea-going scantling, and thirteen 6-pounders on two schooners, hurled their shot into that one row-galley, and yet for two hours and a half Arnold held them at bay. And even when a continuation of the fight meant certain annihilation he would not surrender. With the four slow gondolas that had been unable to escape he pulled for the weather shore. The gondolas were there grounded, and while the *Congress* guarded them they were set on fire. When well aflame, and their crews safe on shore, Arnold drove the *Congress* to the beach, and then while his crew set fire to her splintered hull he ranged the crews of the gondolas "in such a manner on the bank as to prevent the approach of the enemy's small boats."

Arnold himself remained on board last of all; and it was not until the flames had climbed the tarred rigging, and had burned away the flags at the mast-heads, that the Americans turned their faces from the enemy. The American loss is set down at "eighty-odd"; that of the British at "not forty."

The naval Bunker Hill—the battle where glory crowned the American arms in spite of overwhelming defeat—was fought on Lake Champlain. And there the Americans gained more than glory. Carleton had come to the lake under orders to occupy the waters of the Hudson, as Howe had come to New York. On October 12 (while Arnold, under Schuyler's Island, was preparing to con-

tinue his fight) the triumphant British moved on from New York to Throgg's Neck. The storming of Chatterdon Hill (October 28) and the capture of Fort Washington (November 16) followed. Then Fort Lee was lost, and in the first week of December Washington, with but 3000 homesick soldiers, out of his original force of 18,000, fled from Cornwallis and crossed the Delaware. Howe had done his share of the work of occupying the Hudson. If Carleton had done as well, New England would have been cut off from the region southwest of the Hudson, and the British might have subdued the two sections at leisure.

But when Carleton's fleet set sail on Lake Champlain they struck a reef that was worse than a ledge of Adirondack granite. They drove across the reef, after three days of hard work, it is true—they destroyed ten of Arnold's original fleet of sixteen little vessels, and the others fled to Ticonderoga. They drove the Americans from Crown Point. They sailed south until within sight of the walls of Ticonderoga, and Carleton "had it in contemplation to attempt that place." But, as Dodsley's (London) *Register* for 1777 (p. 6) says, in its account of the battle, "the strength of the works, the difficulty of approach, the countenance of the enemy, with other cogent reasons, prevented this design from taking place."

The work of the American squadron had not been in vain. The dejected soldiers on the banks of the Delaware heard that the enemy had been repulsed at the north, and the news revived them. With the departure of Carleton, seven regiments of the garrison of Ticonderoga were released to join Washington, who, with them, recrossed the Delaware into New Jersey, where, with powerful blows, he retrieved the greater part of the disasters suffered theretofore.

Nor was this all. The postponement of the British invasion at the north, until the warm season of 1777, gave the encouraged Americans time enough to gather, along the upper waters of the Hudson, the forces that captured Burgoyne. How the success of Washington in New Jersey, and the capture of Burgoyne at Saratoga, affected the history of the nation need not be told here.

The Mocking of the Gods

BY AMÉLIE RIVES (*Princess Troubetszkoy*)

PART II

VI

EVEN in his terrible perplexity, Thurlow's chief concern was for the woman who had just left him. That she was insane, for the time being, seemed to him absolutely sure, and he did not blame her, even for a moment, in the course that she had adopted. It was so poignantly human, so pathetically and inevitably a woman's error—this especial woman's error. His flesh moved with pity when he thought of her, of her passionate deception, of the long years spent in this devotion to a loving lie—and with her exquisite, youthful body, her fiery heart, her voice that seemed given to chant canticles, how easy, how natural, must have been this deception. Almost she must have grown to believe it herself. . . . And then, suddenly, during an afternoon's idle ride, to meet some one, a mere commonplace mortal like any other, to meet this being and to realize what she had told him that she had realized from the first. To foresee the power that was to crumble into dust all her painfully wrought joy,—that was to turn youth into age, love into affection. . . . "What could she have had but murder in her heart?" he asked himself. "Poor, tortured soul! . . ." And then he winced for her sake, as he realized that even while he pitied her she must be conscious of that pity. Her warning in regard to himself he did not think of seriously, and yet there was something fateful about her, in her whole air, especially in her eyes.

"What harm could she do me?" he asked himself involuntarily, and shivered even as the thought crossed his mind.

"Well, there's nothing to be done at present," he added, a moment later, and began to walk slowly toward the house. "I must get away as soon as possible, that's all."

But it was not so easy to make his

escape as he had imagined. There yet remained two days of his promised visit, and Miss Mackenzie and Davidge pressed him to stay longer, plied him with questions, with entreaties. He could not have such important engagements; he had told them that he was taking a holiday; besides, there was so much to settle,—the time, the place. Thurlow had said that Davidge must certainly come to him in his New York office, where were all his instruments, his paraphernalia of an oculist, and where he could have his patient under his direct observation from first to last. Even Ruth's manner had changed vitally since that monologue by the old cherry-tree. She was very pleasant with him, spoke to him of her own accord, and had taken him about the place, to see the thoroughbred colts in which she was interested, the farm, all the various scenes of her active out-of-door life. In spite of all this he was ill at ease with her. He did not dislike her any more, it is true, but in spite of all the arguments of common-sense, a strange feeling of dread came over him when in her presence. The warning that she had given him, and which had then seemed to him so unreal and hysterical a thing, grew in his mind and haunted him. He caught himself frequently trying to find some sign of it in her quiet face, now more Sphinx-like than ever, though no longer hostile in its expression. A sense of foreboding numbed his faculties. Each hour seemed to lengthen, until he felt his release would never come.

And all this while he grew to love his friend more dearly, to find in him qualities of strength, endurance, "pluck," that he had never suspected in the old days. Then he had been drawn to him chiefly by that magnetism which such natures possess in so high a degree, by his enthusiasm, and the great artistic powers which seemed to Thurlow's matter-of-fact