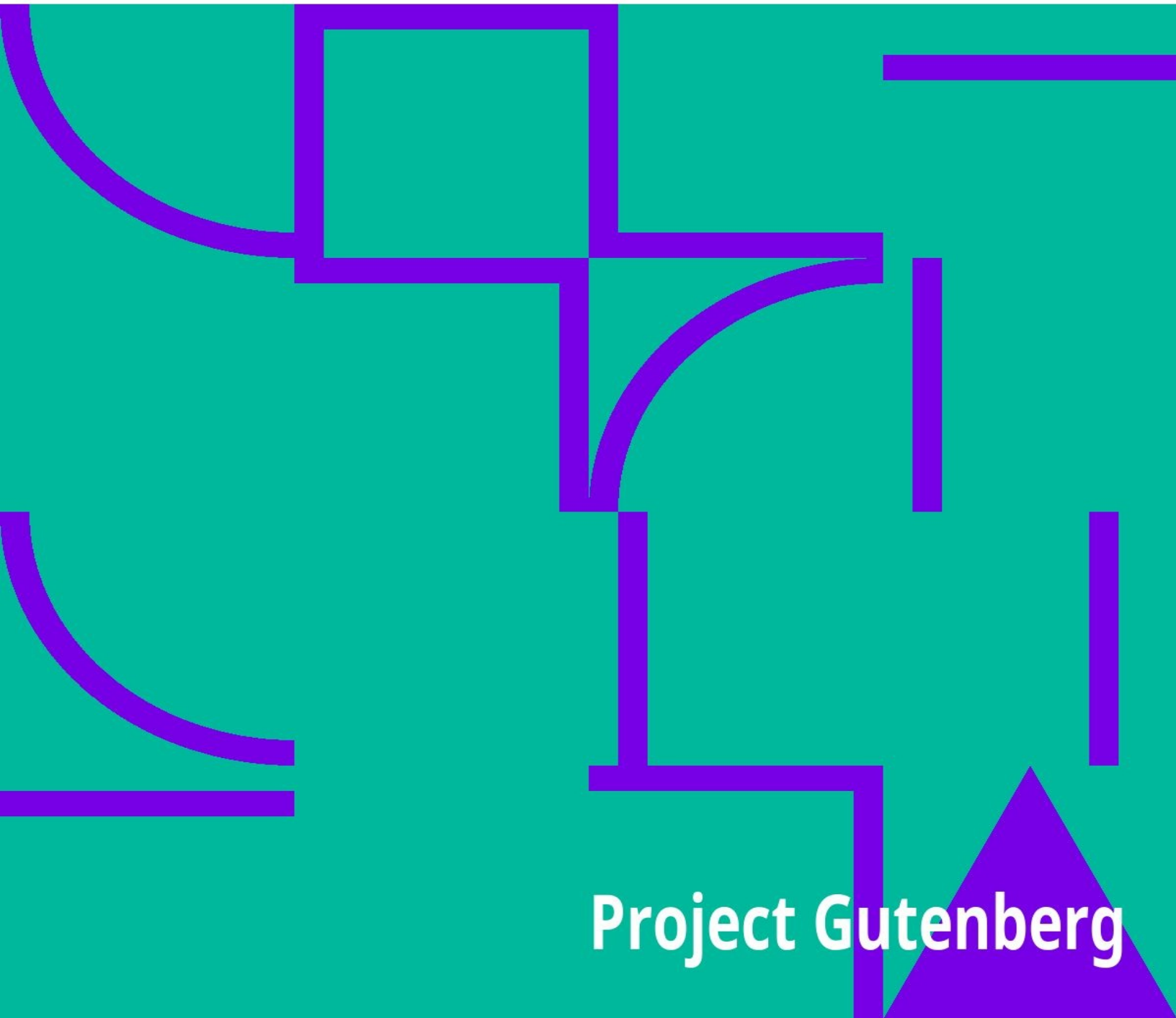
"Old Put" The Patriot

Frederick A. Ober



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"OLD PUT"

THE PATRIOT

BY

FREDERICK A. OBER

AUTHOR OF CRUSOE'S ISLAND, THE STORIED WEST INDIES, PUERTO RICO AND ITS RESOURCES, ETC.

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Old Put escaping

"Old Put" escaping from the British at Horseneck

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"OLD PUT," THE PATRIOT

CHAPTER I

BIRTHPLACE AND YOUTH

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This is the life story of one who was born on a farm, and died on a farm, yet who achieved a world-wide fame through his military exploits. It has been told many times, it will be told for centuries yet to come; for the world loves a man of high emprise, and such was Israel Putnam, the hero of this story.

He was born January 7, 1718, in Danvers, then known as Salem Village, Province of Massachusetts Bay, in New England. His father's Christian name was Joseph, his mother's Elizabeth, and Israel (as he was called at baptism, after his maternal grandfather, Israel Porter) was the great-grandson of his first American ancestor, John Putnam, who had come from England, where the original name of the family was Puttenham. He had settled at Salem more than eighty years before, and his son, Thomas, built, in 1648, the house in which Israel was born in 1718. On the death of Thomas it had become the property of Joseph, who first occupied it in 1690, after his marriage to Elizabeth Porter.

Here the young couple passed through the perilous "witchcraft times," during the worst period of which, in 1692 (it is a tradition in the family), Joseph Putnam kept a loaded musket at his bedside every night and his swiftest horse saddled in the stable, ready for a fight or a flight in case the witch-hunters should come to carry him off to jail. They had accused his sister, who saved her life only by fleeing to the wilderness and remaining in hiding until the insane furor was over. He and his wife survived that gloomy period, and in the ancestral homestead lived happily for more than thirty years, raising a "baker's dozen" of children, of whom Israel was the eleventh.

On both the maternal and paternal side Israel Putnam was descended from a line of sturdy, prosperous farmers. The grandfather whose name he bore had married a daughter of William Hathorne, who came from England and settled in Salem about the year 1630, and who was an ancestor of the famous romancist Nathaniel Hawthorne. John Hathorne, son of William, was a military man and a magistrate. He presided at the infamous witchcraft trials in Salem, and, like the near

relatives of Joseph Putnam, looked with severe disfavor upon any one who showed sympathy for the persecuted witches.

Joseph Putnam died in 1723, leaving his widow with eleven surviving children, nine older than Israel, who was then but five years of age, and one, little Mehitable, only three. Several of the older children were already married, and when, in 1727, Mrs. Putnam took a second husband, one Captain Thomas Perley, of Boxford, only the younger members of her family went with her to live in the new home. There Israel resided until he was about eighteen, and Boxford being only a few miles distant from his birthplace, in the same county (Essex), he made frequent visits to the old farm, to which he finally returned as part owner before he attained his majority.

Numerous anecdotes are still related of him in Danvers, all tending to illustrate the early development of those high qualities for which in after-life he became conspicuous. Courage, enterprise, activity, and perseverance, says his original biographer, were the first characteristics of his mind. His disposition was frank and generous, as his mind was fearless and independent. From his earliest years he craved, and was always in pursuit of, some daring adventure, yet he was the most sober and apparently contented youth in the village, loving hard work, even seeking to perform a man's task at daily labor, while yet a mere stripling. Brought up mainly on the farm, spending his days in severe labor and his nights in sweet slumber, he became the peer of all his companions in athletic feats involving strength and skill. He could "pitch the bar," run, leap, wrestle with the best of them, and more than held his own with the most doughty champion. But he never boasted of his strength, nor sought occasions to display his skill, being content with their mere possession.

His sense of fairness and self-respect, however, would not allow him to become the butt of other people's ridicule, and when the need arose for putting forth his energies in a good cause, he held nothing in reserve. Such an occasion occurred the first time he paid a visit to Boston, the metropolis of his State. He was roaming about in rustic fashion, when he attracted the attention of a youth twice his size, who began to "make fun" of him. Young Putnam bore the insult as long as he could, then he "challenged, engaged, and vanquished his unmannerly antagonist, to the great diversion of a crowd of spectators."

There were very few diversions for the youth of Putnam's time, so long ago; but the boys, like those of modern times, indulged in bird's-nesting now and then. Climbing to a tree top one day, in his endeavor to secure a nest, "Young Put" had

a fall, owing to a branch breaking in his hands. He was caught by a lower limb, however, and there he hung, suspended by his clothes betwixt heaven and earth. His cries attracted some companions, one of whom he commanded (as he had a gun) to fire a bullet at the limb and try to break it. This the boy did, after much coaxing on Putnam's part, and was so successful that his friend came tumbling to the ground. He was bruised and lamed, but no bones were broken; and the very next day the intrepid boy climbed up to the nest again, and this time secured it. That was the "way with 'Old Put,'" the man who in later years succeeded "Young Put" the youth. His motto was: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

He always tried, and with his utmost endeavor, to accomplish the task that faced him at the time. What is more, he generally succeeded; and that is the chief reason why he is considered worthy a biography. There are few men, perhaps, who did so many things worthy of emulation, and so few unworthy. Dangerously near the latter, however, was one act of his youth, when he caught a vicious bull in a pasture, and, having mounted astride the animal's back, with spurs on his heels, rode the furious creature around the field until it finally fell from exhaustion, after seeking refuge in a swamp.

Young Putnam's education, as may have been inferred already, was obtained mostly in the woods and open fields. While he possessed great mental endowments, as afterward displayed in his career, yet his early education was grossly neglected, in the school and college sense. Having mastered the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic, he was considered well equipped for his destined calling, which was to be that of a farmer. Throughout his whole life he suffered from this neglect of early instruction. His letters, particularly, though they always "displayed the goodness of his heart, and frequently the strength of his native genius, with a certain laconic mode of expression, and an unaffected epigrammatic turn," were "fearfully and wonderfully made," the despair of his correspondents and the ridicule of his enemies.

It is doubtful if he had any greater ambition than to become a good farmer, as good as was his father before him, and like him, attain to a competency. He was already fairly well to do the year he became of age, for his father, after providing generously for the other children, had bequeathed to him and his brother David the homestead, house and farm attached. His mother was to have a home there so long as she desired; but on her second marriage she relinquished her claim upon the homestead, and the two brothers shared it between them. Israel's portion was set off in 1738, and the next year he built a home in a remote corner of the farm, but within sight of the house and room in which he was born. For, after the

fashion of those primitive times, when early matrimony was encouraged, young Israel had been "courting" a lovely girl, the daughter of a neighbor, who lived about four miles distant from the home farm, near the boundary-line between Salem and Lynn. Hannah Pope was her name, and she also was descended from one of the first families of Salem Village. Being a sensible girl, she accepted Israel Putnam as soon as he proposed, and the 19th of July, 1739, they were married, when he was twenty-one years of age and she only eighteen. Taking his young wife to the little house he had built with his own hands on the farm, there Israel Putnam and Hannah, his wife, began their married life. The next year a son was born to them, the first of ten children who blessed their union, and he was called Israel.

The house in which the first Israel Putnam was born, an old colonial, gambrel-roofed structure, still stands where it was erected by his grandfather in 1648, near the foot of Hathorne Hill, in Danvers, on the turn-pike road half-way between Boston and Newburyport. It contains many relics of Putnam's time, but the most interesting portion of the house itself is the little back chamber, with its one window looking out over the farmyard, where the infant Israel first saw the light.

Of the house which he himself built, on a distant knoll of the home farm, nothing now remains but the cellar and foundation stones, near which is the well he dug, now choked with rubbish and overgrown with brambles.

CHAPTER II

"OLD WOLF PUTNAM"

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Judging from the stability of his position in Danvers, it would seem that young Farmer Putnam was established for life. He had land enough to satisfy any ordinary cultivator of that period, and a comfortable house in which dwelt with him wife and child, to cheer him by their presence. But the future patriot felt within him an ardent thirst for adventure. He longed for a wider field, and though to all appearances firmly rooted in the soil of Salem Village, he was already thinking of transplanting himself and family into that of another region. Hardly, in fact, had he settled in the home he had made than he began preparations for removal to what was then considered a comparatively wild section of New England.

In the old homestead at Danvers is still preserved the quit-claim deed signed by Israel Putnam, "of Salem in the County of Essex and Province of Massachusetts Bay in New England, husbandman," which records the transfer by him to his brother David of his share in the ancestral house and acres.

In the local history of the town of Brooklyn, Conn., occurs this passage: "In the year 1703, Richard Ames purchased 3,000 acres of land lying in the south part of Pomfret, where the village of Brooklyn now stands, which he divided into five lots and deeded to his sons. Directly north of this was situated a tract of land owned by Mr. John Blackwell, comprising 5,750 acres, which was willed to his son John, and afterward sold to Governor Belcher of Massachusetts, who divided it into farms and sold them to different individuals, among whom was General Israel Putnam. This tract went by the name of 'Mortlake.' A beautiful stream which rises in the western part of the tract, and received its name from the former proprietor, Blackwell, empties into the Quinnebaug."

These several transactions in real estate, taken together, will sufficiently explain to the reader, perhaps, the subsequent movements of Farmer Putnam. After disposing of property to his brother David, and receiving therefor the goodly sum of £1,900, Israel Putnam joined with his brother-in-law, Joseph Pope, in the

purchase of more than five hundred acres of land from Governor Belcher, for which they agreed to pay at the rate of five pounds per acre. They paid for it partly in "bills of credit on the Province of Massachusetts," and gave a mortgage for the remainder. And so fertile was this wild land, and so thrifty was the young pioneer farmer Israel Putnam, that within little more than two years he had liquidated the mortgage and received a quit-claim deed from the Governor, as well as purchased his brother-in-law's portion of the tract they had bought together.

The two pioneers may have made a special trip to the Connecticut tract before deciding to purchase; for it was not in the nature of them to "buy a pig in a poke," as it were. And such a journey of nearly a hundred miles, mainly through a wilderness, was no child's task in those days. In after-years General Israel Putnam made many a longer journey, through wilds swarming with hostile Indians, too, and thought nothing of it; but this was the first of any account that he took very far away from home.

What the young wife thought when the enthusiastic adventurer came back with his story was never recorded. Neither, for that matter, was the tale he told her, as well as his friends and neighbors, many of whom, doubtless, would fain have dissuaded him from making what they viewed as a rash and risky move. Details of Putnam's life at this period of his career are lacking; but there stand the records, with their statement of facts. They can not be gainsaid. The very fact that he, a prosperous farmer, even then well off as to this world's goods, should make the adventure—the first of his family in America to abandon the home acres and seek others in the wilderness—is sufficient to attest his energy and ambition.

Sometime in the latter part of the year 1740 the young husband of twenty-two, with a wife under twenty and a babe only a few months old, set out to make his fortune in the rough country adjacent to his native State. Many of his race and family have since become pioneers in various parts of the world, and this country owes them much for blazing out the way in which others might follow; but young Israel Putnam was the first of them—the pioneer of pioneers, in the great American movement.

A second time he set himself to the building of a house and the establishing of a home, and as he found much of the material ready at hand—stone for foundations and timber for the building—it was not long before the farmer and his family had another roof-tree of their own above their heads. This structure

has gone the way of the first, and long since disappeared, traces of the cellar and foundations only being visible; but the large dwelling-house which he later built, and in which he died, still stands at a little distance away. After clearing a portion of the land, and working the stones with which it was plentifully bestrewed into dividing walls, he planted an apple-orchard, sowed grain of various sorts, and increased as rapidly as possible his flocks and herds of live stock. His chief, perhaps his only, assistant in these earlier labors was a negro servant, who figures, though not greatly to his credit, in the narration of an adventure in which his master took part, about two years after his arrival in Connecticut. This, of course, is that famous encounter with the wolf, which has since become part and parcel not only of local tradition, but of American history. As many generations have been familiar with this story as related in story-books and primers, particularly during the early part of the nineteenth century, it will now be told in the language of a contemporary, Colonel David Humphrey, who was an aide-de-camp to General Putnam, and also to General Washington, during the Revolutionary War, and who wrote the first and best biography of our hero, which was published in his lifetime. "The first years on a new farm are not exempt from disasters and disappointments, which can only be remedied by stubborn and patient industry. Our farmer, sufficiently occupied in building an house and barn, felling woods, making fences, sowing grain, planting orchards, and taking care of his stock, had to encounter in turn the calamities occasioned by drought in summer, blast in harvest, loss of cattle in winter, and the desolation of his sheepfold by wolves. In one night he had seventy fine sheep and goats killed, besides many lambs and kids wounded. This havoc was committed by a she-wolf, which, with her annual whelps, had for several years infested the vicinity. The young were commonly destroyed by the vigilance of the hunters, but the old one was too sagacious to come within reach of gunshot. Upon being closely pursued she would generally fly to the western woods, and return the next winter with another litter of whelps. This wolf at length became such an intolerable nuisance that Farmer Putnam entered into a combination with five of his neighbors to hunt alternately until they could destroy her. Two by rotation were to be constantly in pursuit. It was known that, having lost the toes from one foot by a steel trap, she made one track shorter than the other, and by this vestige the pursuers, in a light snow, recognized and followed the trail of this pernicious animal. Having followed her to the Connecticut River and found she had turned back toward Pomfret, they immediately returned, and by ten o'clock the next morning their bloodhounds had driven her into a den, about three miles distant from the house of Mr. Putnam. The people soon collected, with dogs, guns, straw, fire, and sulphur, to attack the common enemy, and made several

unsuccessful efforts to force her from the den.

The Wolf Den at Pomfret, Connecticut

The Wolf Den at Pomfret, Connecticut

"Wearied with the fruitless attempts (which had brought the time to ten o'clock at night), Mr. Putnam tried once more to make his dog enter, but in vain. Then he proposed to his negro man to go down into the cavern and shoot the wolf; but he declined the hazardous service. Then it was that the master resolved himself to destroy the ferocious beast, lest she should escape through some unknown fissure of the rock. His neighbors strongly remonstrated against the perilous enterprise; but he, knowing that wild animals were intimidated by fire, and having provided several strips of birch-bark, the only combustible material he could obtain that would afford light in this deep and darksome cave, prepared for his descent. Having accordingly divested himself of his coat and waistcoat, and having a long rope fastened about his legs, by which he might be pulled back at a concerted signal, he entered head foremost, with the blazing torch in his hand. The aperture of the den, on the east side of a very high ledge of rocks, is about two feet square; from thence it descends obliquely fifteen feet, then running horizontally about ten more, it ascends gradually sixteen feet to its termination. The sides of this subterraneous cavity are composed of smooth and solid rocks, as also are the top and bottom, and the entrance in winter, being covered with ice, is exceedingly slippery. It is in no place high enough for a man to raise himself upright, nor in any part more than three feet in width.

"Having groped his passage to the horizontal part of the den, he found it dark and silent as the house of death. He, cautiously proceeding onward, came to the ascent, which he slowly mounted on his hands and knees until he discovered the glaring eyeballs of the wolf, who was crouching at the extremity of the cavern. Startled by the sight of fire, she gnashed her teeth and gave a sullen growl. Having made the necessary discovery (that the wolf was in the den), Putnam kicked at the rope, as a signal for pulling him out. The people at the mouth of the den, who had listened with painful anxiety, hearing the growling of the wolf, and supposing their friend to be in the most imminent danger, drew him forth with such celerity that his shirt was stripped over his head and his skin severely lacerated.

"After adjusting his clothes, and loading his gun with nine buckshot, holding a torch in one hand and the musket in the other, he descended the second time. He

drew nearer than before, and the wolf, assuming a still more fierce and terrible appearance, growling, rolling her eyes, snapping her teeth, and dropping her head between her legs, was evidently on the point of springing at him. At this critical instant he leveled his gun and fired at her head. Stunned with the shock and suffocated with the smoke, he immediately found himself drawn out of the cave. But, having refreshed himself, and permitted the smoke to dissipate, he went down the third time. Once more he came within sight of the wolf, who appearing very passive, he applied the torch to her nose, and perceiving her dead, he took hold of her ears, and then kicking the rope (still tied round his legs), the people above, with no small exultation, dragged them both out together."

This is the story, told by one who knew Putnam intimately and who had it from his own lips, while neighbors were still living who were "in at the death" and could have refuted any misstatement or exaggeration. The deed, in truth, was characteristic of the dauntless young farmer, whose courage and heroic character (as his eulogist justly remarks) "were ever attended by a serenity of soul, a clearness of conception, a degree of self-possession, and a superiority to all vicissitudes of fortune, entirely distinct from anything that can be produced by a ferment of the blood and flutter of spirits, which not unfrequently precipitate men to action when stimulated by intoxication or some other transient exhilaration."

That was "Wolf Put," or "Old Wolf Putnam," as he came to be called thenceforth. But at no time in his active and wonderful career was he an old man when he performed his deeds of valor. The wolf-hunt, in fact, was mainly a young men's and boys' affair, Putnam himself being only twenty-four at the time, and the wolf having been traced to her lair by young John Sharp, a boy of seventeen.

The slayer of the old she-wolf was the hero of the time; but he bore his laurels modestly, though exaggerated accounts of the affair were published all over the colonies, and even in England, where they were exploited in the public prints. By rising to the occasion, and doing the right thing at the right time, he acquired a reputation for valor and firmness that stood him in good stead in those coming conflicts, the Seven Years' War and the Revolution.

Unknown to him, however, and unsuspected, were the heights to which he subsequently rose. He devoted himself to his farm, becoming the best agriculturist in the region in which he lived, and also performed the duties of a good citizen, never shrinking from his share of civic burdens. The youth of to-

day could not do better than emulate the example of this illustrious American; and they might do worse than take part in the patriotic pilgrimages annually made to the scenes of his early life. The citizens of his adopted State have religiously preserved intact the second house he built in Brooklyn, then Pomfret; and the she-wolf's den may still be seen, in the side of a wooded hill. The entrance-way is at present too low and narrow to admit the passage of a boy, much less of a full-grown man; but that is said to have been caused by the falling in of the rocks, in the lapse of time since Putnam's day.

CHAPTER III

FIRST TASTE OF WAR

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Israel Putnam's adventure with the wolf gave him an unsought, and in some respects undesirable, notoriety; but that he did not court this notoriety is shown by the fact that for the next twelve or thirteen years he lived quietly on his farm, attending to his duties as a cultivator of the soil and a simple citizen. During these years he acquired an enviable reputation as one of the best farmers in all the region of which Pomfret was the center, and had it not been for the lamentable struggle between the French and the English for supremacy in North America, he might have continued as the humble and prosperous citizen-cultivator to the end of his days. The breaking out of the prolonged strife which is known in history as the French and Indian War, found Putnam in possession of what in those days was considered a competency. Having received a good start from the paternal inheritance, he had not hidden his talents in a napkin, but had put them out to good purpose. He erected a large and substantial dwelling about a fourth of a mile distant from the first he had built in Pomfret, and here he lived most happily, with his good wife Hannah, surrounded by a growing family of healthy children.

In the year 1755, when active operations began in this war between England and France, fought out on the soil of America, Israel Putnam was thirty-seven years old and in the prime of life. There was no immediate necessity for him to volunteer in defense of the frontier, where the hostile French were gathering, for it was far distant from his home, the forests around which were threatened by no roaming savages with tomahawks and muskets. But his patriotic instincts were aroused by the reports of massacres committed in other regions; he knew the tide must be met before it became irresistible and breasted in the North. Four great expeditions were planned by the English to frustrate the schemes of the enemy: against Fort Niagara, Crown Point on Lake Champlain, Fort Duquesne, and against the French in Nova Scotia.

It was to take part in the expedition with Crown Point as its objective that Israel Putnam abandoned his farm, early in the summer of 1755, just when it needed

him most, and started on his second long journey away from home. He reached the rendezvous at Albany, after a toilsome march through the forests that intervened between the Connecticut and the Hudson, and there found three thousand other "Provincials" gathered for the defense of the colonies. Most of them were sons of the soil, like Putnam, and like him were yet to receive their baptism of fire; but they were sturdy and valiant, though appearing rude and uncouth in the eyes of the British veterans.

The commander-in-chief of the British Colonial forces in North America at the beginning of the war was Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts, and the commander of the Crown Point expedition was General William Johnson, the famous and eccentric "sachem" of the Mohawks. Having lived for many years with or near the Indians, this Englishman had acquired a great influence over them, especially over the Mohawks, of whose tribe he had been elected an honorary sachem. He had learned their language, had even adopted their peculiar garb, and at times adorned his face with war-paint and performed with his savage friends the furious war-dance. His stanch ally was the ever faithful chief of the Mohawks, the valiant Hendrick, who rendered invaluable service to the English and was killed while battling for their cause.

As Putnam, the stalwart provincial soldier, was merely a private in the ranks when he made the acquaintance of the famous general and the Mohawk chief, he may not have attracted their attention; though he later won encomiums from the commander. He could not but have admired the General's sagacity in retaining the Mohawks as allies of the English Colonials, when most of the Indian tribes had arrayed themselves on the side of the French. At the time Johnson was assembling his army on the Hudson, in that very month of July, 1755, General Braddock, commander of the Duquesne expedition, met with most disastrous defeat, and almost his last words were regrets that he had not taken the advice of his aide-de-camp, a "young Virginian colonel named Washington," who had earnestly besought him to abandon the British tactics and adopt the American system of "bush-fighting."

"We shall better know how to deal with them another time," the defeated Braddock had said to Washington, just before he died. But General Johnson and the Provincial officers already knew how to deal with their wily foes. They had taken leaves from the unwritten book of Indian tactics; their men fought from behind trees and logs, as the savages fought, and in this manner turned the tables upon the French commanders.

"It was owing to the pride and ignorance of that great general that came from England," said an Indian chieftain, alluding to the terrible defeat of Braddock. "He looked upon the Indians as dogs, and would never take their advice, and that is the reason many of our warriors left him. We are ready again to take up the hatchet with you against the French; but let us unite our strength. You are numerous, and all the English governors along your seashore can raise men enough. But don't let those that come from over the great seas be concerned any more. They are unfit to fight in the woods. Let us go by ourselves—we that came out of this ground."

Colonel Washington knew of what the Indians were capable, for young as he was then, he had been through a dreadful experience and had received valuable lessons in their mode of warfare. "It is in their power," he declared, "to be of infinite use to us; and without the Indians we shall never be able to cope with these cruel foes of our country."

There is no doubt that the Indians turned the tide of the first battle in which Israel Putnam took part—that of Lake George, on the eighth of September, 1755. Having made all his preparations at Albany, General Johnson took up his march for Crown Point by way of the "carrying-place" (subsequently known as Fort Edward) and Lake George. After leaving some of his troops to complete the fort he had begun at the "carrying-place," the commander proceeded to the south end of Lake George, where he made camp. He had between five and six thousand New York and New England troops and his loyal Mohawks. Not long had he been in camp before his Indian scouts brought him intelligence of an approaching force of French and Indians.

About the time that General Johnson had begun his march northwardly, Baron Dieskau, with a force of 3,000 French troops, 800 Canadians and 700 Indians, had started southwardly from Montreal, also for Crown Point on Lake Champlain. He had intended to proceed against Oswego; but learning of the contemplated English expedition for the reduction of Crown Point, he changed the direction of his march.

Had he waited for the English general to carry out his original intention, the result might have been more favorable to the French, for the former would then have been the attacking party and have borne the brunt of the battle. As it was, the French commander nearly succeeded in drawing the thousand men that Johnson had sent out to meet him into an ambuscade, and among the slain was brave Colonel Williams, commander of the Provincials in this engagement, and

gallant Chief Hendrick, who had accompanied him with two hundred Mohawks.

The Provincials fought fiercely, but vainly, for they were outnumbered, and at first outgeneraled. They fell back upon the main body, the rear of which was protected by the lake, the flanks by densely-wooded swamps, and the front by a breastwork of trees, behind which were mounted several cannon.

On came the enemy, in pursuit of the retreating Provincials, who sought shelter behind the rude breastworks as rapidly as possible. They had lost heavily, they had been partially ambuscaded, some of their best officers were killed and some wounded; but they had no thought of surrender. Recovering from the first shock of surprise, they quickly adopted the Indian fashion of fighting from behind the trees and rocks, thus exposing themselves very little and inflicting upon the enemy the greatest possible punishment by their accurate marksmanship.

The gallant Dieskau was unable to control his Canadian and Indian allies, but advanced his French regulars against the breastworks without flinching. There, however, he committed the same mistake that had caused Braddock's bloody defeat, by ordering his men to advance in a body and fire by platoons. And again, though the Canadians and Indians fought bravely, after their manner, posted behind the trees, they here encountered what they feared so much, the fire of artillery.

It had been Dieskau's intention to march upon Fort Edward; but hearing that there were cannon mounted there, his allies had refused to go. So he changed his course and set upon Johnson at Lake George. Here, however, his forces, victoriously advancing after their successes of the morning, were met by the destructive fire of the few cannon which had been hastily mounted, and which mowed down the regulars and struck such terror into the savage allies that the latter fled in a panic, their whoops of triumph changed to yells of fear.

It was then the turn of the Provincials to take the offensive, which they did promptly, ably seconded by the Mohawks. They pursued the French a long distance through the woods, and only halted when spent from fatigue.

The French themselves had paused for rest on the very ground where the battle of the morning had been fought, and here, reenforced by soldiers sent by General Lyman from Fort Edward, the Americans set upon them a second time and finally vanquished them completely. They covered the ground with the slain and took many prisoners, among them being the French commander, who was found leaning against a stump, having been wounded in the second fight. He was alone,

save for a companion, who was shot down by his side. Seeing an American soldier approach, the Baron felt for his watch, hoping probably to secure good treatment by presenting him with it; but the soldier, mistaking the motion for an effort to draw a pistol, shot him through the hips, inflicting a wound from which he ultimately died. Johnson himself was shot through the thigh, early in the action, and the command devolved upon General Lyman, who conducted the battle to a successful issue, as narrated.

Thus was fought the battle of Lake George, September 8, 1755. The brilliant victory gained here was greater than is apparent at a superficial glance, for it checked the French advance upon the English colonies; it probably saved Albany and other towns from destruction; it was the means of driving the invaders back upon their defensive posts at Ticonderoga and Crown Point, where they were eventually attacked and overcome.

Contrary to the expressed opinions (and perhaps advice) of the Provincials, among whom was Putnam, General Johnson decided to advance no further in that campaign, brief as it had been, but proceeded to erect a fort on the site of his camp, alleging that this was necessary to protect his base of supplies and maintain communication with Albany. Had he followed up the victory and pursued the demoralized enemy to Ticonderoga and Crown Point, he might have saved the English many valuable lives and the humiliation of repeated defeats in their subsequent efforts to reduce those important fortifications.

The reduction of Crown Point was abandoned for that season; but notwithstanding this, and the fact that the brunt of the fight had been borne by General Phineas Lyman and his New England militia, the commander-in-chief was rewarded for the victory by a baronetcy and a grant of five thousand pounds!

That the results of this victory at Lake George were far-reaching, and not forgotten by posterity, was shown, for example, nearly a century and a half after it was won, by the erection of a monument upon the site of the battle-field. On the eighth of September, 1903, the governors of four States—New York, Connecticut, Vermont, and Massachusetts—gathered at the unveiling of a bronze memorial (erected by the Society of Colonial Wars), the heroic figures of which, nine feet in height, are General Johnson and Chief Hendrick. The inscriptions on the granite pedestal tell the story: "Defeat would have opened the road to Albany and the French.... Confidence inspired by the victory was of inestimable value to the American Army in the War of the Revolution."

It should be borne in mind that Israel Putnam was present at this battle, and rendered important service.

CHAPTER IV

A PARTIZAN FIGHTER

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The shore of the beautiful lake was strewn with the slain, its waters crimsoned by their blood, the French having lost nearly half their regular force, and the English more than two hundred men. Several days succeeding to the battle were passed in gathering the wounded and burying the dead, in which dismal duty Putnam was engaged, with the rest of the uninjured survivors.

As our hero kept no diary of his doings, we know only in a general way that he was in the thickest of the fight, that he went out with the devoted band under Colonel Williams, and was foremost at the finish under General Lyman. It has been stated by some of Putnam's biographers that he held the rank of captain in this, his first, battle; but a careful search of the colonial records makes it appear that he was merely a private. With his accustomed eagerness to be foremost in a good cause, he had hurried to the front without thought of rank or wages; and although the General Assembly of Connecticut, which convened in August, promptly made him out a commission as captain of a company, it did not reach him until after the fight.

He had outstripped his commission, had enlisted, had met the enemy, acting, as he always acted, on his own initiative; and it seemed very fit that he should be appointed to command a company of "partizans," as the picked troops were called who made forays, performed scouting duties, and led the advance of the main body.

He became associated with the redoubtable leader of the hardy company of back-woodsmen known as "Rogers' Rangers," and he held his own with the best of them. The duties of these rangers were particularly hazardous, for they were ever in the advance, as scouts or skirmishers, employing the Indians' tactics in bush-fighting, engaged as escorts for the wagon trains, as well as for the artillery, etc. They were thoroughly independent, in the fullest sense of the word, following their commander's general rule only, which was: "Every man's reason and judgment must be his guide, according to the particular situation and nature

of things, and that he may do this to advantage, he should keep in mind the maxim, never to be departed from by a commander, viz., to preserve a firmness and presence of mind on every occasion."

Had the foregoing rule been made expressly for our farmer-soldier, it could not more exactly have exemplified the qualities he pre-eminently possessed. He was a born "partizan," and entered at once into his dangerous duties with ardor and zest.

There exists a "Report of Captain Putnam, who was sent by Captain Rogers as a Spy to Ticonderoga," dated October 9, 1755, which illustrates both the bravery of the young officer, and the defects of his early education, to which allusion has been made. It is as follows:

"Then left Capt. Rogers upon a neck of Land upon the west side of Lake George and Set out towards Tyconderogue to see what Discoveries we Could make and after we had marchd about 7 or 8 miles we came upon a Large Mountain near the Heither end of the narrowes, and when we came there we Could make no Discovery at all, but after sometime we espyed three Barke Cannoes Drew upon the Shore upon a point of Land that Ran into the Lake, and then wee espyed two Indians Comeing out of the Bushes toward the Cannoes, after water, and after sometime wee espyed several french and Indians on the East side of the Lake ... and so Concluded to tarry there all knight and see what further Discoveries wee Could make by the fires in the knight, and just at the Dusk of the evening their came four Cannoes from the East and went to the west side of the Lake and landed on the point where the others were incamped, and Drew up their Cannoes on ye Shore and by this time wee began to Discover the fires on the point and on the east side of the Lake, but Could not Discover what number their was, because the Bushes were so thick by the Lake and about Day Brake they mustered their men to work and then wee Left the mountain and returned to Capt. Rogers on the point and when we Came within 60 or 70 Rods of the point we Espyed 13 Indians pass by within 10 Rods of us, towards the point where we left Capt. Rogers, and after they had passed by us we Came to the point where we left Capt. Rogers, and found all well this is the Chef of the Discovery and best account that I am able to give."

"ISRAEL PUTNAM."

Captain Putnam belonged to that class of soldiers, so large in the early wars of our country, that would "rather fight than eat," and made much less of wielding

the sword than the pen. It may well be believed that after receiving a few "Reports" like this herewith quoted, his superiors vastly preferred he should stick to the sword, since he was so much better at fighting than writing. He himself was doubtless of the same opinion, so he was kept constantly employed at the dangerous and arduous work of the ranger, and within a week of writing his first report he had distinguished himself by saving his commander's life.

The French had retired to Crown Point and Ticonderoga, but the forests between those points and Lake George were still swarming with hostile Indians, engaged, like the Rangers, in reconnoitering the enemy's posts and in cutting off stragglers. Captains Rogers and Putnam were ordered by General Johnson to make a reconnaissance of Crown Point, and taking a small party they penetrated the forests to within a short distance of the works, where they left their men concealed, and, alone, set out on their hazardous mission.

They lay all night within gunshot of the fort, and in the gray dawn of morning approached more closely in order to secure the information desired, when Captain Rogers, who was slightly in advance, was discovered and set upon by a big Frenchman, who seized his musket and gave the alarm. A companion sentinel hastened to the Frenchman's assistance, but Putnam also was at hand, and getting in ahead brought the guard to the ground by a well-aimed blow from the butt-end of his musket, and while the enemy lay quivering in his death-agonies the two companions hastened away. They rejoined their men and finally reached the camp in safety.

An occurrence like this seemed of small moment at the time, perhaps, and the ungrateful Rogers is said to have overlooked it entirely in his report to General Johnson; but the same month (October, 1755) the two again went out scouting, and another adventure followed which brought Putnam's heroism into strong relief.

Going down the lake in their bateaux, on the last day of the month, they landed at night at a point where they had discovered some camp-fires of the enemy, and in the morning three spies were sent out into the forest. These spies were Putnam, a man named Fletcher, and Lieutenant Robert Durkee, who was afterward tortured to death by the Indians. They accomplished the immediate object of their mission, which was to ascertain the location of some detached camps of Indians, and one of them, Captain Fletcher, returned to report. Putnam and Durkee kept on, in order to reconnoiter the enemy's main camp at the "Ovens," and in consequence nearly lost their lives.

Night overtook the two brave partizans before they had reached the vicinity of the enemy, and when they saw the camp-fires gleaming they incautiously approached, thinking that the French, like the English, would be found within the circle. But the French pursued an altogether different system, and probably the safer one, of building their camp-fires within and themselves sleeping without the lines, protected by the darkness of the night. Their sentinels were posted still further from the center of the main body, so when the two spies approached and, dropping to their hands and knees, crept cautiously toward the fires, they had not gone far in this manner before they were discovered and fired upon.

To their amazement, they then found themselves right in the midst of the enemy, hemmed in on every side. Lieutenant Durkee was slightly wounded in the thigh, but he and Putnam immediately rose to their feet and made the best of their way out into the darkness amid a shower of bullets, and pursued by the awakened enemy. Unable "to see his hand before his face," Putnam soon fell into a clay-pit, and Durkee, like the immortal "Jill" in the nursery rhyme, came tumbling after. Knowing that the enemy were in swift and close pursuit, Putnam raised his tomahawk to give the supposed hostile a deadly stroke, when Durkee fortunately spoke. Thankful that he had escaped murdering his companion, Putnam immediately leaped out of the pit, and followed by Durkee, groped his way to some ledges, where they lay down behind a large log for the remainder of the night. Before they lay down, the original narration goes on to state, "Captain Putnam said he had a little liquor in his canteen, which could never be more acceptable or necessary than on that occasion; but on examining the canteen, which hung under his arm, he found the enemy had pierced it with their bullets, and that there was not a drop of liquor left. The next morning he found fourteen bullet-holes in his blanket!"

His canteen was dry enough, but in falling into the clay-pit Putnam had wet his gun, so that he could not return the fire of the Frenchmen, even had he been so disposed. The tale as to the "fourteen bullet-holes in his blanket" has often been held up to ridicule; but it is probably true, for the blankets being rolled up, one ball alone might have cut through many folds in its flight, and another have perforated his canteen. At all events, he and his companion were in a most miserable plight, all night in danger of being discovered. In the morning (according to the official report by Captain Rogers) "they made the best retreat they were able. Hearing the enemy close to their heels, they made a tack and luckily escaped safe to our party."

"How he escaped a wound is passing strange," says one of Putnam's biographers [Mr. J.T. Headley]; "but he was one of those men who seem eternally seeking death without being able to find it. There are some persons in the world who appear to bear a charmed life, which no amount of daring or exposure can endanger. Foremost in the charge, and the last to retreat, they are never found with the dead. Fate seems to delight to place them in the most desperate straits, on purpose to make their deliverance appear the more miraculous. Putnam was one of those favored beings, and was not born to be killed in battle."

Another incident related of Captain Putnam shows his acute penetration and acquaintance with Indian ways and wiles. It was in his second campaign, when, after returning home for the winter, he had re-enlisted and was again amid the scenes of his former adventures. He was stationed at Fort Edward, the region immediately around which was infested with savages bent on securing as many scalps as possible with the least exposure. The sentinels on posts without the fort were in the greatest danger, and there was one outpost in particular which had lost so many of its sentries that at last no man could be found to accept a station there voluntarily. One after another they had disappeared, as completely as though the earth had opened and swallowed them. It was a post of such danger that the officers at Fort Edward, having called for volunteers repeatedly, all of whom had met the same mysterious fate, were compelled to resort to drafting the men for duty there. As a commissioned officer Putnam was exempt from the draft, but with his love of danger and from a desire to penetrate the mystery, he volunteered for the hazardous service for at least one night. His offer was accepted, although his friends warned him of the risk he ran. He was already informed as to the general instructions: on hearing the least noise to challenge promptly, "Who goes there?" three times, and then, if no answer were returned, to fire at whatever approached.

Mounting guard at his post as early as possible, Putnam took occasion to make a thorough examination of the nature of his environment, with a trained woodsman's eye noting every peculiarity of rock, stump, bush, tree, and leaf. Even then, as darkness fell and the scene became faintly illumined by the rising moon, his surroundings assumed an unfamiliar cast.

He stood at his post till past midnight before anything unusual happened, then his attention was attracted by what appeared to him a wild hog which, with stealthy footstep, gradually neared his position. There could be no danger in such a beast, any one less acute than he might have reasoned; but anyway, he issued the challenge, and then, no response having been made to his "Who goes there?"

he immediately fired at the animal. It was a groan, and not a grunt, that answered his well-directed shot, and going up to the object, then writhing in its death-struggles, he stripped off a bear-skin and revealed an immense Indian, who had in this disguise approached the unsuspicious sentinels previously stationed there, stabbed them, and carried them away.

CHAPTER V

THE ADVENTUROUS SOLDIER

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The campaign of 1755-'56, abounding in opportunities for personal adventure, in which Israel Putnam took great delight, showed the true mettle of the provincial soldier from Connecticut. At one time in the summer of 1756, five or six hundred French soldiers from Ticonderoga descended upon some British baggage wagons at Halfway Brook, a spot about midway between Fort Edward and Fort William Henry at Lake George, and overcoming the escort, succeeded in getting away with a large quantity of provisions. They retreated northward, in the direction of their stronghold, by the Narrows of Lake Champlain, and in order to head them off, if possible, Rogers and Putnam were ordered by their commander to take one hundred Rangers, with "two wall-pieces and two blunderbusses," and proceed by boat down Lake George to a point opposite a certain part of the Narrows, where they were to cross overland and try to intercept the enemy.

The orders were obeyed with such promptitude and exactness that the pursuers reached the place appointed half an hour before the Frenchmen, into whose boats, when they finally appeared, loaded down with their plunder, they poured several deadly volleys, killing many of the oarsmen and soldiers and throwing the party into confusion. Putnam had so placed his men in ambush, behind bushes and trees, that they were entirely concealed, while the enemy were exposed to their unexpected fire, which was terribly effective. Had not a strong wind sprung up at this time, few of the Frenchmen would have escaped; but several boatloads were swept into South Bay, beyond musket-shot, and in a shattered condition finally arrived at Ticonderoga.

As soon as it was made known that the Rangers were at the Narrows, and full twenty miles from their boats, which they had left under guard at Lake George, three hundred soldiers were sent post-haste in pursuit. It was now the turn of the Provincials to retreat, and indeed they had lost no time in setting out for their boats, as soon as the Frenchmen were out of sight, being well aware of their perilous position. It was a close race between them and their enemies, who,

having passed them at night, were discovered next day off Sabbath-Day Point, where they offered battle. They allowed the French and Indians to approach within pistol-shot without firing a gun, but at just the right moment they discharged their wall-pieces and blunderbusses, followed by a destructive fire from their muskets, so that the havoc and confusion were great. Completely routed, the enemy made for the shore and retreated without delay to Ticonderoga. Only one man was killed and two men were wounded on the side of the Rangers; but while the total losses of the French and Indians were unknown they must have been great, as one canoe containing twenty Indians lost fifteen of the number, and many were seen to fall overboard and drown.

In the preceding, the honors were shared between Rogers and Putnam; but soon after the affair on the lakes the latter figured as the hero of an exploit which was unique, if not altogether successful and creditable to all concerned. General Webb, the commander of the forces, considered it necessary to secure a French prisoner, for the sake of the intelligence he might gain from him of the enemy's movements, and Captain Putnam was deputed to accomplish the difficult task.

Taking with him five men, Putnam concealed himself and them near a trail which led to Ticonderoga, and they had not lain long in the high grass before a Frenchman and an Indian came along. The Indian was in advance, so Putnam allowed him to pass, but when the Frenchman arrived opposite his place of concealment he sprang out, and after running quite a distance overtook and seized him by the shoulder. It happened that the Frenchman was large and muscular, and Captain Putnam, though himself a marvel of strength and agility, was not quite his equal, in fact, he soon found he had "caught a Tartar." His men had not supported him, while the Indian was hastening to his opponent's assistance, so he loosed his hold and snapped his musket at the man's breast. It missed fire, as the rude firearms of that time were often liable to do, and so Putnam turned and ran for his life, hotly pursued by the irate Frenchman, followed by the Indian.

There was a grim humor in the situation, for, since his men would not go to the Frenchman, Captain Putnam was taking the Frenchman to them! They had to assist him now, whether they wanted to or not, he thought; but as they sprang up from the grass where they were hidden, the wary Indian caught sight of them, gave the alarm to his companion, and both darted off into the forest and escaped. Putnam was mortified as well as enraged; but after denouncing his men as cowards and unfit for special service, he sent them back to camp and finally accomplished his object unassisted.

In such adventures as these Captain Putnam found vent for his energy and activity. He was rarely at rest, either by command of his superior officer or of his own volition, being engaged in scouting in the forest and along the shores of the lakes. As both regulars and Provincials were withdrawn from the north country during the severest of the winter months, it is likely that the soldier-farmer paid a short visit to his home; but if so, he was soon back again, on active duty employed, as early in the spring of 1757 he is reported at Fort Edward.

The author of this biography has seen a most interesting letter, written in June, 1757, by Lieutenant Samuel Porter, of Captain Putnam's company, in which there are several references to our hero, as follows:

"I received your letter May 20, at Fort Edward, from Capt. Putnam's hand.... I have sent you six letters before this. In the last I told you that Capt. Putnam had took out a number of his men and also a number of another company and made up a company of Rangers.... The next day after I wrote to you there was a number of our Connecticut men out at work with a guard, but the Enemy came and fired upon them and captivated four of them.... Capt. Putnam was then out for several days and when he came in he brought a Frenchman which he took near the Narrows."

Always active, alert, and good-humored, Captain Putnam was the idol of his men, and easily the most noted of the Provincials. Such was his nature, however, that he paid no attention to what men said of him, but always marched in the road that led to duty. Much like him in his devotion to duty and principle was another of his name, who now appears in this narrative, having come to Fort Edward in a Massachusetts regiment, in which he was a private. This was Rufus Putnam, who achieved a reputation in later years hardly second to that of Israel; in many respects he surpassed him. These two have been called cousins; but, to state their exact relationship, Israel's father and Rufus's grandfather were brothers, or half-brothers. Here is what Rufus Putnam says, in his Memorandum Book of Family Concerns, respecting his American ancestry: ...

"I am the youngest son of Elisha Putnam, who was the third son of Edward, grandson of John Putnam, who settled in Salem in 1634.... I was born the 9th of April, 1738, at Sutton, Massachusetts."

By this it will be seen that Rufus and Israel Putnam were descended from the same English ancestor, John Putnam; and further, it may be observed, they had many high qualities in common. What concerns us especially, in this connection, is the fact that Rufus Putnam had acquired the habit of keeping a diary, or journal, and he faithfully recorded all the happenings at Fort Edward, after his arrival. He could not but make mention of the most prominent personage there, his distinguished kinsman; though the latter was too busily engaged in fighting and marching to concern himself as to diaries and chronicles.

Soon after arriving at Fort Edward, young Rufus Putnam was sent out scouting with twenty-two men, and encountering some Indians, thirteen of his comrades were killed. "This was the first sight I had of Indians butchering," he writes, "and it was not agreeable to the feelings of a young Soldier, and I think there are few if any who can view such Scenes with indifference."

Few, indeed. But, while realizing to the full the horrors of savage warfare, Israel Putnam's kinsman stuck to his task and did his duty gallantly. His first experience must have been a severe trial, for he says:

"Capt. Putnam then ordered three of us to follow the trale (of the Indians) a mile or more further, and there lie close until quite dark, to observe if any came back; for, said he, 'if they do not embark in there boats to-night they will send a party back to See if they are pursued.' We went back according to order but made no discovery, and here I would remark that Capt. Putnam's precaution Struck my mind very forceably, as a maxim always to be observed whether you are pursuing or pursued by an enemy, especially in the woods. It was the first Idea of Generalship I recollect to have treasured up."

These two remarkable men had a very similar experience in their youth, for Rufus, like Israel, was deprived of his father by death at an early age, the former at seven, and the latter at eight, and each went to live with his stepfather after his mother had married a second time.

Israel Putnam had been given a major's commission by the Connecticut Legislature, in 1757, and almost every year succeeding he was promoted, until finally he was at the head of the forces of the State. In common with his fellow Provincials, he suffered from the incompetency of the British commanders sent over from England. Crown Point was the objective for assault during several years, and still was not reached until the hearts of all concerned grew heavy with hope deferred. One of the most glaringly inefficient of Britain's generals in America was Lord Loudoun, at this time commander-in-chief of all the forces. Against him was pitted the acute and discerning Montcalm, in command of the French, who, by the destruction of important forts, and check-*mating Loudoun at Louisburg, soon put the latter on the defensive. Instead, then, of carrying the war into Canada, the British Colonials were compelled to rest on their arms while Montcalm himself, taking advantage of the depletion of the forces caused by Loudoun's futile expedition against Louisburg, marched down from Montreal and made a demonstration against the forts to the south of Lake Champlain.

Equally inefficient with Loudoun, the commander-in-chief, and in addition cowardly as well (it would appear from the records of the time), was General Webb, who commanded in the northern department, and who, though he probably had intimation of the French army's approach, allowed himself to be caught in a trap and lost thousands of his men. He was warned by Putnam, who scouted to some purpose in the forest along the lake shore, discovering the

approaching hostiles; but he heeded not the warning, and the result was a massacre.

CHAPTER VI

FIGHTING ON THE FRONTIER

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Up to midsummer of 1757, the British had accomplished nothing of account; the French, also, had little to show for all the marching and counter-marching, fortifying, and skirmishing with their foes. But a decisive blow was to be struck, and by Montcalm, who, having been informed by his spies of the condition of affairs at the lakes, sent an overwhelming force against Fort William Henry, at the south end of Lake George. It happened that a few days before the French army arrived at the lake, Major Putnam, with two hundred men, escorted his commander, General Webb, from Fort Edward to Fort William Henry, his object being to examine into the efficiency of the latter fortification. The fort itself was a poor construction, but it was commandingly situated on ground gently rising from the shore of the lake, and its approaches were defended by felled forest trees forming an immense abattis deemed impenetrable.

With his customary caution, Major Putnam suggested to General Webb that he should be sent down the lake to ascertain if the enemy were approaching, certain inexplicable signs having aroused his suspicions. His commander reluctantly consented, and Putnam took with him eighteen volunteers and proceeded down the lake, but had not gone far before he discovered a company of Frenchmen on an island. These men started out in pursuit of Putnam in his whale-boats, and the latter retreated; but not before he had, with the aid of a telescope, perceived a "large army in motion." He reported to General Webb to this effect, and to his astonishment that cowardly commander ordered him to make no mention of the approach of the French army, though he agreed with Major Putnam that it was destined for the reduction of the fort on the lake. He, moreover, directed him to pledge his men to keep the matter secret from the devoted garrison at Fort William Henry, and to make ready, without loss of time, to return with him to headquarters at Fort Edward.

"But, your Excellency," exclaimed the amazed and indignant Putnam, "I hope you do not intend to neglect so fair an opportunity of giving battle, should the enemy presume to land!"

"What do you think we should do here?" replied the pusillanimous commander; and no other answer would he give to the sub-ordinate who had rashly ventured to expostulate with him. The next day, accordingly, Putnam escorted Webb back to Fort Edward, whence the latter sent letters to the Governor of New York, at Albany, urging him to send the militia to his aid; and also despatched reenforcements to Fort William Henry under Colonel Monroe, who was ordered to assume command of the garrison, until then ignorant of their peril.

There were then about three thousand men at Fort William Henry, with as many more held in reserve at Fort Edward, half a day's march only away. Against the lake fort, however, Montcalm brought an army of eight or nine thousand men, including not only a corps of Canadians, but a "larger number of Indians in a body than had ever before been collected." The French and Indians outnumbered the hapless garrison three to one; but during the week in which they appeared before the fort at Lake George (the first week in August, 1757), Sir William Johnson reached Fort Edward with his Indians and militia from Albany, thus augmenting the total British force considerably. He demanded to be allowed to proceed to Fort William Henry, and was permitted to start out, taking with him, besides his own force, Major Putnam and his company of Rangers. Three miles from the fort, however, this rescuing force was ordered to return, and thus such men as Johnson and Putnam were compelled to remain at Fort Edward and listen to "the report of cannon from Fort William Henry, two or three shots sometimes within a minute or two of one another." Those fateful cannon-shots continued all day long, and day after day, meanwhile, messengers were arriving from Colonel Monroe asking for assistance in most urgent terms. For six days the siege continued, with thousands of soldiers lying inactive at Fort Edward while their brothers-in-arms were in peril of their lives at Fort William Henry, only fourteen miles away. On the morning of the eighth of August the cannon firing ceased, just as the last express from Colonel Monroe arrived stating that he must give up the fort unless at once relieved.

The ammunition of the beleaguered garrison was almost exhausted, many of their cannon were split, some of the soldiers were sick with smallpox, and their losses in killed and wounded amounted to more than three hundred men. The end was inevitable, and it came after General Webb had sent a letter to Colonel Monroe advising him to surrender. This letter was intercepted by Montcalm, who thus knew the exact situation and acted accordingly. He sent the letter to Colonel Monroe, with an urgent demand for surrender, promising him most liberal terms, and the despairing officer, who had gallantly defended the fort to

the last, gave in and threw himself upon the mercy of his foe.

The Marquis de Montcalm may have intended to keep his stipulations, which were that the garrison should be protected by an escort of French troops to Fort Edward, and their sick and wounded cared for. Relying upon these terms, they marched out of the fort without arms or baggage, but were no sooner clear of the gates than they were set upon by more than two thousand Indians, excited by the liquor they had discovered and drunk, and frenzied at the prospect of the escape of their foes. Then ensued a sickening scene of slaughter. Then was committed the massacre, which, had Major Putnam's advice been followed, might have been prevented. More than fifteen hundred, men, women, and children, were indiscriminately butchered, despite the promises of the "noble" Marquis de Montcalm, and the Indians reveled in a carnival of blood.

It having been reported that the victorious Montcalm intended to march against Fort Edward next, Major Putnam was despatched with his Rangers to "watch the motions of the enemy," and reached the lake shore soon after their departure. The fort was entirely demolished, he reported to Webb, next day; "the barracks and all buildings were heaps of ruins, the fires still burning, the smoke and stench from which were offensive and suffocating. Innumerable fragments, human skulls, and bones were still broiling, half consumed, in the smoldering flames. Dead bodies, mangled with knives and tomahawks, including those of more than one hundred women, were everywhere to be seen, affording a spectacle too horrible for description."

And this awful occurrence might have been obviated, if, in the first place, Major Putnam's precautions had been adopted and a firm stand made in the face of the enemy; or if, in the second place, the reenforcements so often requested by the commander of the garrison had been sent. Montcalm himself told Major Putnam, when he was a prisoner in Canada, the next year, that when Sir William Johnson with the militia and Rangers set out from Fort Edward one of his runners reported as to their number, "If you can count the leaves on the trees, you can count them."

Believing, then, that a mighty force was advancing against him, Montcalm was on the point of abandoning the siege, when General Webb's order to return saved the situation for the French. Of a truth, the conduct of General Webb, in command of the forces at Fort Edward and Fort William Henry, deserves the execration of the world. Fuming inwardly against their unjustifiable detention, yet so well disciplined as to accept their commander's orders with impassive

faces, the soldiers all, Provincials as well as regulars, were compelled to inaction, and thus became in a sense accessories to the blood-thirsty savages who had murdered their friends.

We have no record of any oath that Putnam may have taken, but doubtless one was registered in Heaven, that his comrades should be avenged, for his acts accord with this assumption. He was even more active than before in annoying the enemy and in taking prisoners, both French and Indian; but there is no stain of cruelty affixed to any of his deeds. He fought honorably, without thought of himself, without regard for what Fame might say of him, or the future hold in store. His courage was of the sort that shuts its eyes to the consequences and goes straight ahead, in the path of duty and rectitude.

Soon after the massacre at Fort William Henry, General Webb was relieved of his command and succeeded by General Lyman, an old soldier under whom Putnam had already served. Even old soldiers make mistakes, as will now be shown. Having despatched one hundred and fifty men into the forests adjacent to Fort Edward, to cut timber for strengthening the fortification, General Lyman sent along a company of regulars to protect them against possible attacks by Indians. This was a prudent measure; but the commander had not counted upon the wary nature of the foe. He should have sent out the Rangers, who knew the Indians and their ways and would have provided protection, without a doubt. But there chanced to be a Ranger on duty as a sentinel, and early one morning, before the sun was up, his attention was attracted to a flight of wonderful birds silently winging their way across the sky. Suddenly, one of those "birds" came with great force against the limb of a tree right over his head, where it stuck, and then the sentry saw that those winged messengers were Indian arrows! He lost no time in giving the alarm and the working party began retreating toward the fort. They were promptly attacked by a large body of Indians, who had hoped to kill the sentry without any noise, when the workmen would have been cut off, without a doubt.

The regulars bravely stood their ground and poured a destructive fire into the savage ranks; but the foe was persistent and soon obtained the upper hand. It happened that, as usual, brave Putnam was not far distant from the sound of battle, which he no sooner heard than he hastened in its direction. As he and his men were posted on an island, he and they waded through the water to dry land, and in pressing to the scene of conflict passed near the fort, on the parapet of which stood General Lyman, who, imagining the attack came from the main body of the enemy, had called in his outposts and closed the gates. As Major

Putnam and his men dashed past on the double-quick, intent only upon rescuing their friends from the savages, the General ordered them to return, believing that they were needlessly exposing their lives in a vain attempt against an overwhelming force.

For the first time in his military career (but not the last) Putnam refused to obey the orders of his superior officer. Indignant at the mere thought of abandoning his companions-at-arms at such a juncture, he muttered something under his breath (which he afterward said was an apology; but those who knew "Old Put" best thought otherwise) and pushed on, without turning to right or left. And his obstinacy saved the day, for, uniting with the regulars, the Rangers "rushed" the savages from their position and chased them through the forest so long as daylight lasted. Their victory was complete, and when they returned to the fort the gates were no longer closed against them, nor was a reprimand forthcoming from the General, the disobedience of whose orders made Major Putnam more popular than ever.

That Major Putnam's bravery was of the sort requiring no artificial stimulus, and proceeded solely from the promptings of a nature superlative in every sense, was shown in the winter of 1757, when the barracks at Fort Edward were consumed by a fire which threatened and almost reached the powder magazine. Seeing the blaze from his aerie on the island, Putnam attacked the fire as he always attacked the enemy, with impetuosity. He at once took the forefront of danger, nearest to the powder magazine, and, mounted on a ladder, threw upon the raging flames the buckets of water which the soldiers brought him from the river. Enshrouded in smoke, and so near the sheets of flame that a pair of thick mittens was burned from his hands, Putnam heroically toiled to subdue the fire, which was rapidly eating its way toward the magazine, containing three hundred barrels of powder.

His commander at first begged him to descend, but as he was obstinate, he provided him with another pair of mittens which had been dipped in water, and, charmed at his pertinacity and bravery, exclaimed, "Well, if we must be blown up we will all go together!" He then gave orders to the men to redouble their efforts.

The sequel was that Putnam, though at times enveloped in smoke and cinders, maintained his position, even when there was but a charred strip of timber between him and the powder, finally extinguishing the fire and saving the fort. One hour and a-half he had fought the flames. "His legs, arms and face were blistered, and when he pulled off his second pair of mittens, the skin from his

hands and fingers followed them." He was a month in hospital, recovering from his terrible burns; but before the winter was over he was off scouting with his beloved Rangers in the vicinity of Ticonderoga.

CHAPTER VII

STRATEGY AND WOODCRAFT

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The year 1758 was the most eventful in Putnam's life hitherto, notwithstanding the numerous adventures in which he had already been engaged, and which were enough to satisfy the craving of the most ambitious individual. The great event of that year, in which he took part, was the attack made by General Abercrombie on Fort Ticonderoga; and the most dire happening, to him personally, was being made a prisoner by the Indians.

Before proceeding to narrate these occurrences, however, let us take notice of two stirring incidents in his career, which further illustrate his cool daring and his readiness of resource in the face of danger. In the first instance, he was sent by his superior officer to a place known as Wood Creek, in order to make such observations as were possible, and also to intercept any parties of the enemy that might chance to pass that way. With the intuition of a born strategist, he posted his force on the bank of the creek where it jutted boldly into the water, and there constructed a parapet of stone about thirty feet in length, and masked it with young pine-*trees in such a manner that they appeared to be a part of the natural forest growth.

The provisions of the party running short, and a big buck opportunely appearing, Putnam departed from a rule he himself had always insisted upon—of never firing a gun when waiting for an enemy or in the enemy's country, and shot him. The result was as he might have anticipated. He and his men got the deer and replenished their stores; but the wily leader of the Indian hostiles, Marin, heard the report, and came with his men in search of the cause of it. He came at night, so cautiously and silently that some of the canoes which held his men, about five hundred in number, were abreast the fort before the sentinels discovered them.

The creek at this point was scarcely a hundred feet in width, the banks about fifteen or twenty feet in height. A full moon was shining in the heavens, illumining spaces of water here and there, so that the oncoming Indians were plainly visible to the men behind the parapet, there awaiting, with fast-beating

hearts, the signal to fire. At a critical moment, one of the nervous soldiers accidentally struck his firelock against a stone, and the sound being heard by the foe, in an instant came the watchword for silence and caution—"Owish." The canoes in the van halted, and the others coming up, they were soon huddled together right in front of the breastwork. This was the moment awaited by Putnam, who gave the signal for his men to fire by setting the example with his own musket.

The plunging fire, directed into the midst of the canoes, committed terrible execution. It was returned by the enemy; but being caught at a disadvantage, and unable to perceive their foes, concealed as they were behind the breastwork, their fire was ineffective. During the whole engagement, which is said to have lasted through the greater part of the night, only two of the Provincials were wounded, none being killed outright.

There were but sixty men in Putnam's party, while the Indians were estimated at not less than five hundred, half of which number were either killed or wounded, it was thought, before daylight came. Perceiving, from the intermittent fire, that it was a small party which had ambuscaded him, Marin, the Indian scout and leader, attempted a landing below the Americans, in order to cut off their retreat. But Major Putnam had anticipated that move, and after sending a detachment to repel the landing party, ordered his men to "swing their packs" and retire up the creek, which they did in good order, leaving their wounded men behind. This act was the one inexplicable occurrence of the affair, for it was not creditable to Major Putnam, nor in accord with his reputation for humanity and tender regard for his men. But the safety of the greater number was considered, in preference to the security of the two wounded men, one of whom, a Provincial of undaunted courage, was set upon and hacked to pieces, after he had killed three of the approaching enemy, as he lay on the ground unable to escape. The other, a friendly Mohawk, was taken prisoner, and Major Putnam afterward saw him in Canada.

On the way back to Fort Edward, Putnam and his men were fired upon by a scouting party of Provincials, who mistook them for Frenchmen; but they were quickly undeceived when the doughty major ordered his men, "in a stentorophonick tone," to advance and give a good account of themselves. Putnam's "stentorophonick" voice—as his original biographer styles it—was well known to all the army, having been heard many times rising above the din of battle, and always in the forefront of the fighting. So the commanding officer of the scouting party recognized it at once and cried out that those approaching

were friends. The volley had killed one man only, and "Old Wolf Putnam," enraged, indignant, and yet sarcastic, said to the opposing officer, "Friends or enemies, you all deserve to be hanged for not killing more, when you had so fair a shot!" He had in mind, of course, the numbers he and his men had slain, that night preceding, when six or seven times their own force had fallen before their unerring aim.

Having suffered so considerably at Putnam's hands, the French and Indians, as may be imagined, were constantly on the watch to take their arch enemy at a disadvantage. Not many weeks after the unsuccessful attack upon Ticonderoga—to which allusion will presently be made—it appeared as though the savages were about to accomplish their purpose, for they surprised him, together with a small body of his men, on the left bank of the Hudson, with the river between them and the fort. The party of Indians was too strong to be successfully resisted, it was impossible to cross the river without being shot, while below lay a quarter-mile stretch of rapids through which a boat had never been sent without disaster. But, with his customary promptitude, Putnam ordered his men into their single boat, himself taking the helm, and pushed off just as the savages came within sight of the shore. The disappointed and infuriated Indians sent a shower of balls after the boatmen, but none took effect; though the fugitives seemed doomed to certain death by drowning in the foaming rapids of the river. Calmly taking the helm, Putnam steered the boat through the roaring rapids, avoiding the half-hidden rocks and protruding ledges, and, while the Indians looked on in amazement, in a few seconds brought his charge into smooth water at the foot of the falls. Throughout all this turmoil and danger, he maintained his self-possession, his customary placidity of countenance even; and it is said that after that the Indians looked upon him as more than human and under the special protection of the Great Spirit.

It was the misfortune of the Provincials to become the sport of fate in the shape of inefficient commanders from England, who led them, not only to defeat, but to death by wholesale, in their endeavors to carry out plans insufficiently matured and schemes which would not have received the sanction of military experts at all. One of the most disastrous of defeats was encountered at Ticonderoga, against which General Abercrombie led a force of fifteen thousand men, consisting of six thousand regulars and nine thousand Provincials. Crown Point and Ticonderoga were still the British objectives, along with other posts of greater or less strength, such as Louisburg, Frontenac, and Fort Duquesne. All these last were taken before Crown Point and Ticonderoga yielded; but it was

fated that Ticonderoga, which had been seized and fortified by the French in 1755, and which, together with Crown Point, commanded the direct route from the St. Lawrence to the Hudson, should first cost the lives of many men.

On the morning of July 5, 1758, a magnificent flotilla set forth from the southern end of Lake George, consisting of 135 whale-boats and 900 bateaux, laden with soldiers, cannon, and military stores of every description. As it sailed through the Narrows it made a line six miles in length, and was indeed a most imposing spectacle. Sabbath-Day Point was reached about five in the afternoon, and here the soldiers debarked for rest and refreshment, but sailed on again about midnight, reaching the northern end of the lake next morning at dawn. Soon after landing, late in the day, a portion of the army became lost in the forest and while entangled in the wilderness of trees encountered a French force of observation which had been sent to watch their movements at Lake George. This force, likewise lost in the woods, was cut to pieces by the Rangers, only fifty escaping, while nearly three hundred were either killed, wounded, or taken prisoners.

This was the sole success of the expedition, and this cost the lives of many men, including young Lord Howe, who was a great favorite in the army with both regulars and Colonials. He had insisted on forging ahead with Putnam, who, as usual, was in front with his Rangers, and against his urgent remonstrances went with him into the vortex of the fire, where he was killed. The soldiers considered their success on the first day as a foretaste of victory to follow on the morrow; but while Abercrombie delayed his advance for various reasons, Montcalm and his men did herculean work by felling a forest of trees and constructing an impenetrable abatis in front of the fort.

It was this terrible entanglement, composed of thousands of trees with pointed and jagged limbs turned outward, that really prevented the British and Provincials from gaining even the outer works of Ticonderoga, behind which lay not more than thirty-six hundred men under Montcalm. Abercrombie's engineer having reported that the works were unfinished, and might be easily captured if promptly attacked, the British general gave the order for assault, though his cannon had not arrived, and indeed were not used at all.

Not satisfied with one futile assault, in which his men were cut down by hundreds, torn by grape-shot and mangled by cross-fires of musketry, Abercrombie ordered another and another, until the heroic and desperate fighting men were entirely exhausted. Never was there a greater display of courage and senseless devotion to a mistaken sense of duty, than on that day when the fifteen

thousand British and Provincial soldiers tried vainly to dislodge one-third their number of Frenchmen from their position at Ticonderoga. And it was all on account of the incapacity of a British commander, whom the home Government had sent out with authority, not only over his own regulars, but Colonial officers whose abilities were vastly in excess of his own. But it was not for these Colonials to question; only to "do and die," and they did all in their power, and died by hundreds, merely that an incompetent commander's whims should be gratified.

When at last the inept Abercrombie had sacrificed the lives under his command to the number of two thousand or more, and became convinced that he could not take Ticonderoga that way, he was seized with panic and ordered a retreat. As the Rangers under Putnam were the first in the assault, so they were the last to retire, being obliged to protect the retreat of the main army, and remained till dusk on the edge of the forest, where they maintained a continuous fire, to prevent pursuit. With but one-third as many soldiers as Abercrombie brought to the attack, Montcalm did not feel like pursuing the retreating foe, but contented himself with the great victory—a victory won not so much by the valor of his men as by the incompetency of his chief opponent.

Had the advice of Putnam, Rogers, and others of the Provincials been sought and accepted, much of this loss of life might have been averted, for though themselves fighting with great courage, doggedly and against all hope, they were averse to a direct assault without the cannon, with which a breach might have been opened into the fort. But the cannon reposed at the lake-side, whither retreated the defeated soldiers, with such haste that they were enabled to embark that very night, leaving their dead and many of their wounded in the forest where they lay. A few days before, after the first engagement, Major Rogers, of the Rangers, having been sent to bring off the dead and wounded of the enemy, had cruelly despatched the latter, to the horror not only of his confrère, Major Putnam, but of the British officers who became cognizant of the fact.

CHAPTER VIII

A PRISONER AND IN PERIL

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The good fortune with which Major Putnam had been favored during three years of fighting a wily and treacherous foe, suddenly deserted him when, in the month of August, 1758, he found himself confronted by an Indian warrior of herculean frame, during a skirmish near Fort St. Anne. He and Major Rogers had been sent out by Abercrombie to ascertain the whereabouts of a war party which was committing depredations between Fort Edward and the lakes. The timid general was very much afraid of an attack in force by the victorious Montcalm, and constantly on the watch.

One morning, as the Rangers were proceeding through a dense thicket, with Putnam's Provincials in front, they ran into an ambush which the wary Marin, the French partizan fighter, had prepared, by posting his men in a semicircular position across the trail. Suddenly the air was rent with yells and reports of firearms, and several Provincials fell in their tracks. Putnam, taken unawares, yet as always cool and collected, gave orders to return the fire, and sent word back for support, which in the confusion incident to the sudden attack was not promptly forthcoming. Forging ahead, he was confronted by an Indian chieftain, a giant in size, against whose breast he at once placed the muzzle of his fusee, which—as those primitive flintlocks were likely to do in an emergency—missed fire. The savage then had him at his mercy, and brandishing his tomahawk above his head compelled him to surrender, when he tied him to a tree, and then left him to mingle in the fight again. As the Rangers rallied to battle it happened that the tree to which Putnam was bound came directly between the fires of both parties, and as the bullets flew thickly around our hero's position was not by any means an enviable one. Some of the balls passed through the sleeves and skirt of his coat, and in this perilous position he remained for more than an hour, unable either to move a limb or even his head.

No attention was paid to him, except that now and then a savage would approach, and seeing him there helpless and a conspicuous mark would throw a tomahawk at his head, to see how near he could come to this living target

without inflicting a fatal wound. An equally savage Frenchman also approached, and aiming his fusee at his breast, would have put him out of his misery had it not missed fire. This enraged the scoundrel so that he gave Putnam a blow on the jaw with the butt-end of his musket which nearly finished him, and then left him alone.

The battle waged unevenly for a while, but was finally decided in favor of the Provincials, and the French and Indians hastily gathered their prisoners together and fled northward toward Ticonderoga. Putnam's captor stripped him of his coat and waistcoat, socks and shoes, then after binding his wrists together he loaded him with as many packs as he could pile upon his shoulders, and giving him in charge of another Indian, left him to attend to the wounded.

Poor Putnam was soon in a deplorable condition, with hands swollen terribly from the tightness of the ligature, and his feet gashed and bleeding, as he trudged along the trail beneath his enormous burden. He begged the savages to knock him on the head and end his sufferings; but he was soon to experience even more horrible sensations, for, arriving in advance of the main party at the place where they were to camp for the night, the small body of Indians that had him in charge concluded to burn him at the stake! He was suffering terribly from the blow on his jaw, from his swollen hands and mutilated feet, and also from a tomahawk gash in his cheek, so that he cared little what became of him, provided the end came quickly. To be burned alive, however, was a fate that brought a shudder to the frame of even stout-hearted Israel Putnam, and he looked on in horror while his captors stripped him naked, bound him to a tree and piled the dry brush they had gathered for fuel around him in a circle. All the while, as they labored at their fiendish task, they chanted a funeral dirge, which was almost as depressing to their captive as their sinister preparations for his immediate immolation.

"Major Putnam soon began to feel the scorching heat," says his biographer, Colonel Humphreys, who had these details from the chief actor's own lips. "His hands were so tied that he could move his body, and he often shifted sides as the fire approached. This sight, at the very idea of which all but savages must shudder, afforded the highest diversion to his inhuman tormentors, who demonstrated the delirium of their joy by yells, dances, and gesticulations. He saw clearly that his final hour was inevitably come. He summoned all his resolution, and composed his mind, as far as the circumstances would admit, to bid an eternal farewell to all he held most dear.... His thought was ultimately fixed on a happier state of existence, ... the bitterness of death, even of that death which is accompanied with the keenest agonies, was in a manner past, ... when a

French officer rushed through the crowd, opened a way by scattering the burning brands, and unbound the victim."

The officer was no other than the redoubtable partizan, Marin, who exerted a wonderful influence over his savage company. He at once sent for the Indian who had captured Major Putnam, who did what he could to make amends for the dreadful treatment the latter had received; but that night, in order to prevent his prisoner from escaping, he stretched his limbs out in the shape of a cross and bound them to four saplings, then placed poles and bushes across his body as it lay on the ground with several Indians at either side, who kept watch the night through.

Arrived at Fort Ticonderoga, Major Putnam had an interview with the Marquis de Montcalm, who ordered him sent to Montreal, whither he was taken without delay, and where he met a brother American, Colonel Peter Schuyler, of New Jersey, who, possessing considerable influence, compelled the Frenchman to treat their prisoner more humanely. The capture of Louisburg, Frontenac and other posts, by the English that year gave them numerous prisoners, which they were not slow to exchange for those in the hands of the French. Thus it came about that the period of Major Putnam's captivity was quite short, for he was in Montreal and Quebec in the last days of August, his exchange was accomplished in October, and in November he was on his way to his home in Connecticut.

If the French had known who it was they held a prisoner in the person of Major Putnam, doubtless they would have been slow to permit his exchange; but Colonel Schuyler kept this information to himself, and when told by the governor that he might select whatever officer he liked to be included in the cartel, he chose his friend.

"There is an *old man* here," he said, "who is a Provincial Major, and who wishes to be at home with his wife and children; he can do no good here or anywhere else; I believe your Excellency had better keep some of the young men, who have no wife or children to care for, and let the old fellow go home with me."

This subterfuge availed, and Putnam went along with his friend; but whether the latter was justified in alluding to him as an "old man" is doubtful, as he was then only forty years of age. He had, however, won the sobriquets of "Old Wolf Putnam" and of "Old Put," long before, and doubtless was accustomed to be regarded as elderly, despite his jolly countenance and ever-cheerful disposition.

His kind and affectionate nature was displayed at its best on the journey home,

which was long and wearisome, when he took charge of a lady, Mrs. Howe, whose husband had been killed and scalped three years previously. She had been in captivity ever since, and had endured untold outrages from her captors. Her seven children were dispersed, but five of them were recovered, and accompanied her back to her home in New Hampshire. Colonel Schuyler had rescued her from captivity, and Major Putnam constituted himself her protector during the long and toilsome journey, leading her little ones, assisting the sorrowful mother over the rough places, and sharing his meals with the unfortunate family.

What a welcome the hero received on his home-coming, from his loving, constant wife and children! They had heard of his vicissitudes, had almost given him up for dead; but at last he was with them again, and the dismal past was buried. The joy of the family at meeting again was clouded by sorrow, however, for death had entered the family circle since the father and husband's departure. Israel, the eldest son, was there, and the daughters; but the second son was absent, never to return.

On an old tombstone in the graveyard at Brooklyn, Connecticut, is this inscription:

"In Memory of Mr. Daniel Putnam, son of Col^{o}. Israel Putnam & Mrs. Hannah his wife, who died Aug. 8th, 1758, Aged 17 Years."

Also of David Putnam, Son of y^{e} above Col^{o}. Israel & Mrs. Hannah Putnam, who died Nov. 21, 1761, aged 1 month."

The first death, of Daniel, his pet and pride, occurred, it is said, on the very day (August 8, 1758), at the close of which Major Putnam was in direst peril, tied to a tree in the forest, environed by fire and within a circle of whooping, yelling savages. The demise of David, whom he never saw, took place while the father was away on the Amherst expedition, or just before his return from that campaign. Sturdy Israel, the first-born son, had taken charge of the farm while his father was off on his various campaigns—or at least had done his best to do so, and the family had not wanted for provisions during the enforced absences of the head of the family. As he was now a robust young man of nearly twenty, and possessed all the home-loving traits of his father, Israel was considered perfectly competent to carry on the farm at least another season, and in the spring of 1759 his father, now advanced to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, went away again to the wars.

Israel Putnam seemed never to know when he had enough of fighting; or else his sense of duty to the king and his country was paramount to all other considerations else. At all events, one of his bravery and force could not be omitted from the great expedition that General Amherst (who had been sent by Pitt to supersede Abercrombie) was then organizing. In July, 1759, we find him with his command at Lake George, where the second expedition against Ticonderoga set forth, following the route taken by Abercrombie, over the lake to Ticonderoga, which was reached on the 22d. On the 23d, the French officer in command of the fortress suddenly departed down Lake Champlain with nearly all his men; but Amherst did not know it, and kept on with his preparations for bombardment, having his batteries in position before he was made aware, by French deserters, that the place had been abandoned. Soon the powder magazine blew up, having been left by the French with a lighted slow-match attached for the purpose, the barracks caught fire, and Ticonderoga, which had held out so well against British and Provincial assaults, was at last laid low. It was reconstructed, as we know, and served both British and Patriots in the Revolutionary War; but is now in ruins, picturesque and imposing in their decay.

Crown Point was also evacuated by the French, and thus at last the main object of so many months' toil in the wilderness with such woful waste of life and vast expenditure of treasure, was accomplished. While Putnam and his comrades were engaged in restoring the fortifications of Crown Point, they heard the news of British victories on every hand: of the fall of Fort Niagara; and of the storming and capture of Quebec, when, on that fateful thirteenth of September, 1759, Wolfe and Montcalm found death and fame, the former at the hour of victory, the latter in defeat.

Israel Putnam met nearly all the great British commanders, with the possible exception of Wolfe, and had assisted with all his might at the upbuilding of English power in America, so it was not strange that when, later, the Revolution opened, he was looked upon by them more as a friend than an enemy. The next year, when Amherst moved upon Montreal, then the chief, almost sole possession of the French in Canada, Colonel Putnam went along, as a matter of course, and, it is gravely related by his first biographer, he assisted the general at a critical moment and in a very novel way. Two armed vessels of the enemy were likely to cause trouble to the British on the St. Lawrence, and Amherst was anxious to put them out of the way before they could sink his boats. Putnam proffered his services, declaring he could take the vessels in short order.

"How?" asked the General, somewhat amused as well as surprised.

"With beetles and wedges, and a boat-load of men," answered "Put." And, the story goes, he rowed out to the vessels, in the dead of night, drove wooden wedges in behind their rudders, and left them helpless, for when the wind came up they would not answer the helm and were driven ashore, where their crews were easily taken by the English.

CHAPTER IX

A CAMPAIGN IN CUBA

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It can not be denied that Israel Putnam was already quite a traveler; but it must be added that he had so far traveled mainly within a circumscribed area. Over and over again this faithful soldier had plodded the trails and military roads, and pushed his way through the swamps, morasses, forests, of the wilderness region of New York, which by the end of 1761 he should have known almost as well as the woodland pastures of his own farm. But he was destined to extend his travels and make a foreign voyage, still in the service of the King of England, whom he had served so long and so well.

He was present at the capitulation of Montreal, one September day, 1760, and had the pleasure of meeting the Indian chief who had taken him prisoner two years previously. He lived near Montreal, at the Indian village of Caughnawaga, where he received his former captive with pride, and was highly delighted to see his old acquaintance, "whom he entertained in his own well-built stone house with great friendship and hospitality; while his guest did not discover less satisfaction in an opportunity of shaking the brave savage by the hand and proffering him protection in this reverse of his military fortunes."

Returning home at the end of the 1760 campaign, Putnam remained on his farm all winter, and the next spring set out again for what proved an uneventful season, with much hard work on fortifications and entrenchments, but no fighting of account. For, so far as the mainland of North America was concerned, the long struggle between France and England was nearly at an end. France had been shorn of her possessions in Canada, and she was losing her islands in the West Indies, where, early in 1762, beautiful Martinique (to become famous as the birthplace of the Empress Josephine, and a rich land of sugar and spices) was captured by the British.

In fact, the theater of war was transferred to the more southern regions of the Caribbean Sea, and the New Englanders took a long breath and congratulated themselves that at last they were at liberty to pursue their callings unmolested.

But in this they were somewhat premature, as England was still engaged in fighting, and, no matter where her battles were fought, she seemed to expect the loyal American colonists to furnish soldiers for her wars. Connecticut, Putnam's home State, was again called upon for the same number of able-bodied men she had furnished year by year, and promptly proffered her bone and sinew to fight the wars of King George the Third.

A thousand men, besides fifteen hundred from New York and New Jersey, embarked at the port of New York, in the month of June, 1762, bound for Havana in Cuba, where British regulars were dying by hundreds of pestilence, and sorely needed those colonial reenforcements. On this, his first sea voyage, Colonel Putnam had a rough experience all the way down, and off the north coast of Cuba the transport containing himself and five hundred of his men was wrecked on a coral ledge. "Old Put" was calm and collected, never more so, though unused to life at sea, and preserved strict discipline among his men, thus aiding the mariners in their endeavors to get out rafts and boats, on and in which the entire company finally reached the shore. To his perils by fire, twice incurred, brave Putnam could now add that by flood, thus giving the spice of variety to his various adventures.

"As soon as all were landed," wrote the biographer who knew him best, "Putnam fortified his camp, that he might not be exposed to insult from inhabitants of the neighboring districts.... Here the party remained unmolested several days, until the storm had so much abated as to permit the convoy to take them off. They soon joined the troops before Havana, who, having been several weeks in that unhealthy climate, had already begun to grow extremely sickly. The opportune arrival of the Provincial reenforcement, in perfect health, contributed not a little to forward the works and hasten the reduction of that important place. But the Provincials suffered so miserably by sickness afterward, that very few ever returned to their native land again."

This is all that Colonel Putnam's contemporary, Humphreys, has to say of the most eventful episode of his hero's career, but it seems to the present writer (who has personally investigated the British and Colonial invasion of Cuba "on the spot") that the subject is worthy of more extended notice. The English expedition against Havana was occasioned by the King of Spain, Charles III, having entered into what was known as the "family compact" with Louis XV of France, by which the Bourbons were to support each other against British rapacity and aggrandizement, as they styled it.

England had long looked covetously upon Havana, which the Spaniards themselves called the "Key of the New World," situated at the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico and (in the hands of a strong power) then controlling the seaboard of territory at present comprised in the South Atlantic States of our Union. So she hastened to seize the capital of Cuba, the "Pearl of the Antilles," and early in June, 1762, the surprised and frightened inhabitants were informed that a fleet of sixty ships-of-war had landed more than 20,000 men at the little port of Cogimar, a few miles to the east of picturesque and formidable Morro Castle.

Quickly, then, the Captain-General assembled the "Junta of Defense," composed of men most eminent in military affairs in Havana, and placed before them the situation.[1] They resolved upon a spirited defense, even though their soldiers were insufficiently armed and they had no defensive works save the Morro, then about a hundred years old, and its companion fortress called the Punta, between which two forts lay the deep and narrow entrance to the harbor. This harbor was blocked by some big war-ships, and a chain was stretched across the mouth, but the English did not even essay an entrance, having landed their troops to the east, and first marching upon the Morro from Cogimar and the town of Guanabacao, which they took quite easily, and then sweeping over the Cabañas hills, where the Spaniards later built the vast fortifications which they should have constructed sooner for the defense of their capital city.

[1] From *Nociones de Historia de Cuba*, by Dr. Vidal Morales; Havana, 1904.

The Provincials arrived the last of July, and landed to the west of Havana, where stands a small fort known as the Torreon of Chorrera, which was defended with much valor, but compelled to surrender. Afterward, however, they were transported to the Cabañas hills, and there, on the site of the fortifications (above which, in 1904, the American flag last waved in token of possession in Cuba), Israel Putnam and his Provincials joined the British troops. And they were welcome, beyond a doubt, for nearly half the British army was incapacitated through fevers, and many men had died.

Fort near Havana where the Colonials landed.

Fort near Havana where the Colonials landed.

The arrival of the sturdy Colonials gave the besiegers of the Morro new strength, and fresh courage, and within a few days they were called upon to assist at carrying the castle by storm. The English had been a long time sapping toward the fortress walls, and a breach having been opened near the bastion, the combined assailants poured through in an invincible flood. The Duke of Albermarle, who commanded the British forces, had informed the comandante of the castle that he had mined the bastion and demanded a capitulation. But the heroic commander, Don Luis de Velasco, spurned the proffer, and as a consequence the castle was stormed, and he was included among the five hundred slain on that occasion. A tablet to his memory may be seen affixed against the seaward wall of the Morro, and from the parapet may be traced the British and Provincial line of approach.

The bastion they breached was afterward repaired; but nothing could repair the terrible losses sustained by both armies through sickness caused by exposure and bad water. More than one-third of the Colonials died of disease; but nothing seemed to trouble sturdy Old Put, who was everywhere among his men, with comfort and consolation, carrying water to the wounded, supporting the dying. The chaplain of the Connecticut troops one day recorded in his diary: "Col. Putman and Lt. Parks went off into ye country to buy fresh provisions." Two days later he noted the death of Putnam's companion in this trip into the country; and that was in October, only a few days before orders were given for the Colonials to embark for New York.

Havana capitulated soon after its only real defense, Morro Castle, was taken, and

the English entered into possession. But imagine the feelings of the surviving soldiers who had gone so far and been exposed to so great peril, when they learned, less than a year later, that the city and fortress that had cost so dear had been given up, in exchange for Florida and other Spanish territory east of the Mississippi.

In Havana, where he was one day roaming about unarmed, Colonel Putnam met with an adventure which nearly cost him his life and made him the involuntary owner of a negro slave. Seeing a Spaniard beating a black man with a bamboo cane, he darted in with his old time impetuosity, and seizing the stick, wrenched it away from its owner, who, joined by other exasperated Cubans, turned upon the American and compelled him to flee to a vessel for safety. Here he was followed by the negro, who so successfully appealed to the soldier's tender sensibilities that he allowed him to accompany him home to Connecticut. There he served him faithfully, and when his master died he bequeathed to "Old Dick"—as he was called—the "Havana cane," of which the colored Cuban exile was inordinately proud.

Israel Putnam was now a man of substance, more than ever looked up to by his neighbors and honored by the community in which he dwelt. Taking up his duties of citizenship where he had left them on being summoned to war, he threw off the military habit as he might an old garment now no longer of service, and became again the contented, humble farmer. In 1763, about the time the treaty of peace between England and France was signed, he was elected "selectman" of the town in which he lived, and the ensuing spring appointed to receive the heads of such crows as should be killed in the township, for which a bounty was offered of sixpence each! Such humble offices as these he by no means despised, always lending a hand to whatever appeared in the guise of duty.

It became his duty, he thought, to go to war again, in the year 1764, when the Indians, neglected by both French and English, who had now no further need of their services, found themselves in danger of being ground between the upper and the nether millstones. They looked with apprehension upon the forts the English were erecting on every hand, and finally rose in rebellion, under the leadership of Pontiac, chief of the Ottawas. He organized a widespread conspiracy among the Indian tribes, believing he could eventually exterminate "those dogs dressed in red," as he called the English. The rising was appointed for the 7th of May, 1763, and no less than eight English garrisons were massacred, a five-months' siege ensuing at Detroit, where Pontiac himself

commanded the Indians. The attacks were intermitted in the winter, but as they were sure to be renewed in the spring, a call was sent out for colonial troops. Appointed to command the Connecticut troops raised for this service, Putnam took a prominent part in suppressing the uprising, going out in the Bradstreet expedition. At Fort Ontario he met many old friends, including Sir William Johnson and his band, also the Indian chief who had captured him at Fort Ann in 1758, and who was now fighting on the side of the English with as much zeal as he had previously served the French.

On his return from this wearisome campaign, Colonel Putnam again settled down to the chosen occupation of his youth and the solace of his latter years, on the farm. Having given ten of the best years of his life to soldiering, he felt that he was entitled now to the rewards of peace. But alas! within five months of his arrival home he lost two of his dear ones by death: his daughter Elizabeth, only seventeen years of age, who died in the winter of 1764-'65, and his beloved wife, Hannah, who passed away in the April following. Of the ten children born to Israel and Hannah Putnam in the twenty-six years of their happy married life, seven were living at the time of the mother's death, the youngest only three months old, and bearing the name of Peter Schuyler, in honor of the New Jersey colonel who had befriended his father when a captive in Canada.

CHAPTER X

TAVERN-KEEPER AND ORACLE

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No one could call in question Israel Putnam's loyalty, yet the year following his last campaign in behalf of King George, he might have been found opposing the Government and riding from town to town, for the purpose of inciting men to make armed resistance to the iniquitous "Stamp Act," which had been passed and made a law early in 1765. While James Otis, Samuel Adams, and Patrick Henry were eloquently declaiming against it, Putnam was for putting words into action, and as one of the "Sons of Liberty" was active in urging his countrymen to make a stand for freedom.

Though prevented by an accident from taking part in the proceedings by which the "stamp-master" for Connecticut was compelled to resign his position and disavow the office to which he was appointed, yet Putnam was foremost in bringing this condition of affairs about. It seems that one Mr. Ingersoll was appointed stamp-master by the Crown, and, on being requested to resign from such an obnoxious office by the Sons of Liberty, he returned an evasive answer. Consequently, a body of them mounted their horses and went out to meet him, as he was on his way to Hartford. Finding him on the road, they caused him to dismount and, in the presence of the company, now swelled to several hundred, to read his resignation as a royal appointee, and to shout for "liberty and property," three times, as loud as he could.

The spirit of the people, now thoroughly aroused, was very accurately expressed by Colonel Putnam, who, deputed by the Sons of Liberty to wait on the Governor of his State and inform him of the public sentiment respecting the Stamp Act, made him understand that there would be no temporizing whatever in the matter.

"But what should I do," asked the perplexed Governor, "if the stamped paper should be sent me by the King's command?"

"Lock it up until we shall visit you again," replied Putnam, boldly.

"And what will you do then?"

"We shall expect you to give us the key of the room in which it is deposited, and if you think fit, in order to screen yourself, you may forewarn us not to enter that room upon our peril."

"And then what will you do?"

"Send the paper safely back again."

"But if I should refuse you admission?"

"In that case, your house will be leveled to the ground in five minutes!"

The Governor, who desired to be loyal, and was inclined to receive the paper, was not called upon to act, the determined attitude of the Sons of Liberty, preventing any from being sent into the State. Elected a representative in 1766, Putnam was prepared to do all in his power to frustrate the intent of the Act; but, in common with his fellow citizens, was made happy by the news of its repeal. As this was then the only bone of contention between the Colonials and the King, the former hastened to send the latter a loyal address of thanks, assuring him of their continued devotion, etc., etc.

It would seem that farming, in colonial days, was almost as hazardous an employment as fighting in the wilds, for Putnam was the victim of two different accidents, by one of which he lost the first joint of his right thumb, and by the other he received a compound fracture of his right thigh. The latter being imperfectly attended to, rendered that leg an inch shorter than the other, "which occasioned him ever after to limp in his walk." Notwithstanding these injuries, he faithfully attended to his duties as representative at Hartford. In June, 1767, two years and two months after the death of his wife, Hannah, he was married to Mrs. Deborah Lothrop, widow of John Gardiner, of Gardiner's Island, New York.

As his second wife had a fine property on Brooklyn Green, in the center of the town, and as the entertainment of his numerous admirers (who came from all over the country to see him) was becoming burdensome, Farmer Putnam concluded to convert the newly acquired mansion into an inn. So he moved himself and most of his belongings (including his stock of war relics and anecdotes) from the farmhouse to the "Green," nearly two miles distant, and there set up as "mine host" Putnam, putting out a sign of the Wolfe—not of the beast he had slain in early life, but the gallant general of that name who fell at

Quebec. This veritable sign may now be seen in Hartford, at the rooms of the Connecticut Historical Society, where also are several other precious relics of Putnam and his time, including some autograph letters by the hero himself.

Some one, long ago, wrote of this sign, which was affixed to one of the great trees that stood in front of the tavern on the Green, "It represents General Wolfe in full uniform, his eye fixed in an expression of fiery earnestness upon some distant object, and his right arm extended in emphatic gesture, as if charging on the foe or directing some important movement of his army. The sign seems to have fared hardly in one respect, being plentifully sprinkled with shot-holes!"

A contemporary wrote of him, about this time: "Col. Putnam served with the Connecticut troops under Amherst in the last war. By his courage and conduct he secured to himself a good share of reputation. When peace commenced he returned to the civil line of life. Of late he has occupied a tavern with a farm annexed to it."

As the landlord of a country tavern, the genial and loquacious colonel with a past peculiarly his own, possessing the rotund figure, the frame and habit of the traditional Boniface, seemed at last to have fallen into his proper groove, where he fitted exactly. Now nearly fifty years of age, with a record of ten years' fighting any one might well be proud of, a reputation not confined within the boundaries of his own country, and with some of his children already married and settled around him, he had good reason to consider himself a fixture at Brooklyn Green.

He had joined the Congregational Church, soon after the death of his first wife, in 1765, and took a leading part in building the structure that stands to-day near the site of the first meeting-house, which was erected in 1734. It was in the year 1771 that the new church was erected, opposite the house that Putnam turned into a tavern, and the old tree that bore the sign of Wolfe. Church and trees remain to-day, separated only by the public road; but the tavern itself no longer exists, the building having been torn down some time ago.

In 1772, it was voted by the parish that "Colonel Putnam take care of ye new meeting-house and ring ye bell," for which service he was to receive three pounds a year. Thus the duties of sexton and bell-ringer were assumed by this many-sided man; but he had not performed them long before he was called to go on a strange voyage in quest of lands in West Florida, which were reported to have been granted to the survivors of the French-and-Indian wars. The claims of

the survivors were just enough; but their quest was fruitless, for they were not given the lands. However, a band of "military adventurers" set out, under the leadership of General Phineas Lyman, who had been in command of Connecticut's troops all through the wars, and Landlord Putnam was one of them.

Urged, perhaps, by his admirers to preserve some chronicle of his doings this time (having been so neglectful in this respect in the past) our hero actually began a journal, writing on the blank leaves of the "orderly book" which he used in his Havana campaign. This book, doubly interesting to the present generation, is still preserved by a lineal descendant of Putnam, and attests to the fact that the soldier of many wars was not equal to the intellectual effort of writing even a legible diary of his doings. He soon gave it up, in fact; but the few entries he made are exceedingly quaint and simple, as for example:

"friday ye forst of jenauary, 1773—this Day no work don—went to Church.... satorday ye 2—this day taking in goods for ye voige—good weathor. thorsday ye 7—this was a varey good Day and had almost all completed. Satorday ye 9 of Jenauary—had all things on bord and ready for sailing But the wind was so much to ye south it would not Do."

At last the "military adventurers" got away. On the 30th of January they touched in at Mole San Nicolas, island of Haiti, and a week later made port at Montego Bay, Jamaica, where, according to the veracious diarist, "we waited on ye mannegor of the plantation who treted us very hamseley—walked with ous—shewed ous all ye Works and the mills to grind ye *Cain* and as we went thare was a dog atacked ye manegor and in ye fight I tumbelled into won of the vats that was full of Liquer to make rum of—shifted all my Cloths and went on borde."

They finally arrived at Pensacola, where, learning to their sorrow that no lands had been granted them, they set out on a short exploring trip of the Mississippi, by the way of New Orleans, which ended north of Natchez, to which spot General Lyman later returned and founded a settlement, where he passed his last days. The gallant adventurers returned to Pensacola, thence sailed to New York, where they arrived the first week in August, 1773.

It was Colonel Putnam's intention to invest in lands on the Mississippi, it is believed, but the events that shaped toward and brought about the Revolution were yearly getting more exciting, intense, and his soldier instinct was aroused.

He keenly watched the trend of events, he discussed in his tavern the exciting news of the day with visitors from all parts of the country, and his convictions were becoming stronger and stronger that something dire and dreadful was to happen.

The Boston massacre of the 5th of March, 1770, fired our hero almost to a frenzy, and while there may have been men more eloquent in their denunciations of the British soldiery, like Otis and Adams, there was none more emphatic and in earnest. Between the massacre and the Boston "Tea Party" in 1773, Putnam made his journey to the Mississippi; but he was home, and as usual alert and anxious, when the latter event occurred.

From that moment he was most attentive to what was going on in Boston, which was then the "danger spot" of the Colonies. He gave his time freely to the anticipatory work of organizing his fellow citizens into military companies and drilling them into proficiency, and he was made chairman of the "Committee of Correspondence" for Brooklyn. As such he bore to Boston, when the infamous "Port Bill" was passed, the condolences and sympathy of his fellow citizens, in a letter eloquently phrased, and—what was more satisfactory and substantial—the gift of a flock of sheep.

"We send you," the committee wrote, "one hundred and twenty-five sheep as a present from the inhabitants of Brooklyn, hoping thereby you will stand more firm (if possible) in the glorious cause in which you are embarked." And Israel Putnam, always the man for the emergency, always ready to mount and away at a moment's notice, rode all the way to Boston, driving that flock of sheep before him! When arrived there he was not received as the farmer, the tavern-keeper, the drover, but as the famous military man, hero of many battles, an American of renown. He was the guest of Dr. Joseph Warren, the patriot who was killed at Bunker Hill; but people of all classes and conditions united to do honor to "the celebrated Colonel Putnam," one of the "greatest military characters of the age," and "so well known throughout North America that no words are necessary to inform the public any further concerning him than that his generosity led him to Boston, to cherish his oppressed brethren and support them by every means in his power." The newspapers alluded to him as "the old hero, Putnam"; and yet he was only fifty-four at the time, at the period of life in which a man should be able to do his best work. "He looks fresh and hearty," wrote one of his friends to another, "and on an emergency would be as likely to do good business as ever."

And why not? Putnam himself might have asked this question, for he had by no

means reached his "grand climacteric," and was still ready, willing—and able, as well—to fight the enemies of his country. He was zealous in behalf of his fellow patriots, but during this visit to Boston he found almost as many friends on the British side as on the Colonial, including Governor Gage, with whom he had fought their common enemies, the Indians. When one of them banteringly asked them whether he was going to stand by the flag or the country he answered seriously, but with perfect good nature: "I shall always be found on the side of my country!"

"Now, Putnam," another asked him, "don't you seriously believe that a well appointed British army of say five thousand veterans could march through the whole continent of America?"

"No doubt," he promptly replied, "if they behaved civilly, and paid well for what they wanted; but," he added, after a moment's pause, "if they should attempt it in a hostile manner (though the men of America were out of the question) the women would knock them all on the head with their ladles and broomsticks!"

CHAPTER XI

ON THE SIDE OF HIS COUNTRY

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Ready and willing was Putnam—of that there is no doubt. Too willing, some of his enemies declared, when in September, 1774, news coming from Boston that American blood had been shed, without waiting to verify the report, he started out to alarm the country. This proved a false alarm, and he was strongly censured by those who had not kept a close watch on happenings in Boston; but he defended himself so sturdily that his critics were silenced. Two things were proved by this false alarm: that the people were ready to be aroused on the slightest provocation, for they filled the highways and flocked by thousands in the direction of Boston; again, that the British intended to stay where they were, for they extended their fortifications. Both sides were warned, and the lines of demarcation began to be visible where before they had seemed hardly to be distinguished, between loyalists and patriots. It was now either for England or for America, even the common people felt, while the leaders, like Israel Putnam, saw in the closer approach of warlike preparations only the fulfilment of their predictions.

The very next month, October, 1774, the militia of Putnam's State were ordered to provide themselves with an increased supply of powder, bullets and flints for their muskets. More vigorously than ever now he applied himself to the training of the sturdy militia; hoping for continued peace, perhaps, but preparing for nothing less than war. When war broke finally, with the first blood shed at Lexington, it found the minutemen of New England better prepared than their enemies believed, and when the news of this epoch-making event reached Israel Putnam, this great exemplar of the minutemen proved a model worthy their emulation.

The messenger with the doleful tidings found him plowing in the field back of his house at Brooklyn Green. His son Daniel was with him driving the oxen, and when the patriot had gathered the full meaning of the news he left the boy to unyoke the team, and himself hastened to his barn, where he saddled and mounted his best horse and started out to arouse the country again, as he had

done seven months before. He had no doubts this time as to the truth of the rumor, for it had come direct and contained its own confirmation on its face.

The British, eight hundred strong, had left Boston for Concord, where they hoped to find some military stores. Encountering a small body of militia at Lexington, Major Pitcairn, in command of the British soldiers, called out to them to throw down their arms and disperse; but as they did not do so he ordered his men to fire, killing eight of the sturdy Americans, who even then did not run away, but joined themselves to other minutemen now assembling, and again came in contact with their foes at Concord Bridge. Just how many were slain the first message did not accurately report; but it was enough that blood had been shed, and it mattered not whether that blood was from ten men or a thousand.

The die was cast, the moment for armed resistance had arrived, and Israel Putnam tarried not for details, but sped straight for the home of Governor Trumbull, at Lebanon (the same who was afterward known as "Brother Jonathan"), and receiving from him mandatory permission to proceed to the scene of strife, hastened back to Brooklyn, arriving at his tavern home late in the afternoon. He had already been in the saddle for hours, as the news reached him between eight and nine in the morning, but before sunset the tireless warrior was again on horseback and galloping for Cambridge and Concord. He probably had received refreshment, food and drink at intervals, but he had not stopped to change his working clothes for better, and went off on both long rides in the farmer's frock which he wore when plowing in the field behind his house.

Though the Putnam mansion at Brooklyn Green is no longer in existence, the great trees that stood in front of it in his time still cast their grateful shade upon its site, and the walled field, sloping toward a verdant meadow, may be seen by the visitor, much as it lay to the sun on that lovely morning in April, 1775, when the farmer-patriot was peacefully running his furrows.

The distance to Cambridge was nearly ninety miles, yet Putnam covered it in an all-night's ride, going pretty much over the same ground he had traversed when, a young man of twenty-two, he had taken his wife and child to their new home in Connecticut. Thirty-five years had elapsed since the young pioneer had made his first venture in the world, ten of which he had passed in fighting for the King against whose soldiers he was soon to lead his fellow countrymen in war. Trained to fight the battles of Britain, yet those ten years of experience in warfare with the Indians were to prepare him for a wider, vaster field. He must now have felt this, his patriot friends must have believed it, for their eyes were

turned expectantly toward Israel Putnam, as soon as the first blood was shed at Lexington and Concord.

See that sturdy figure, hurrying on horseback over the rough roads, through the darkness of the night, toward the goal of duty! The British had marched out of Boston at night, on the eighteenth of April, their purpose and their route foretold by Paul Revere (who, by the way, was in the campaign at Lake George, if not a comrade of Israel Putnam at that time). At or near daybreak of the nineteenth, at Lexington, the shots were fired "heard round the world"; at noon the British were in retreat from Concord, where they had been routed by the minutemen, and by night, exhausted, disgraced, defeated, they had reached Charlestown, under the escort of Lord Percy and his 1,200 reenforcements, where they were protected from the enraged militia by the guns of the fleet.

With such celerity traveled the news, that Putnam heard it on the morning of the twentieth; and with such celerity traveled Putnam, that he was at Cambridge *on the morning of the twenty-first*, and that same day at Concord, wonderful as may seem the feat performed by gallant horse and rider.

In the custody of the Connecticut Historical Society, at Hartford, the original of the following letter may be found, which attests to Putnam's arrival at Concord on the twenty-first, and to the use he made of his time:

CONCORD, April 21, 1775.

COL. WILLIAMS, SIR

I have waited on the com'tee of the Provisional Congress and it is there Determination to have a standing Armey of twenty-two thousand Men from the New England colonys of wh'h it is soposed the coloney of Conecticut must raise Six Thousand and beg they would be on Parade at Cambridge as Speedy as may be with conveniency together with Provisions and Sufficiency of amonition for there own use, the Battle hear is much as represented at Pomfrett—Except that there is more killed and a Number taken Prisoners—The accounts are at Present so confused that it is Impossible to assertain the number exact. Shall inform you of the Prossedings from Time to Time as we have New occurencys.

mean Time I am Sir yr very Humble Servt

ISRAEL PUTNAM.

N.B. The Throop of Horse is not Expected to come on till further notice.

Sir. Being in hast and cannot write Disire a copy of this to be transmitted to Governor Trumble.

A true copy, EBENEZER WILLIAMS.

Pomfret, April 22, 1775.

In the Lexington-Concord fight, the first engagement between British and native Americans, the former lost two hundred and seventy-three, and the latter about one hundred, in killed and wounded, twenty-three towns being represented among the wounded and slain. "It was not a great fight in itself, but it was great, and even grand, in its consequences. On that day a nation was born. Then the American learned for the first time how to stand and fight for their own liberties."

The rallying minutemen flocked to the scene of the encounter, springing to arms without a thought of consequences, rising to the defense of their homes as one man, and within a week there were sixteen thousand men investing the demoralized enemy at Boston. Their alacrity in assembling at the common rendezvous has been a matter of wonder ever since, for nearly all marched on foot, without the assistance of horses or steam. The writer of these lines had an ancestor who was foremost among those minutemen hurrying to the defense of liberty, and who, it is a tradition in his family, ran nearly all the way from Beverly, twenty miles distant, with his flint-lock on his shoulder. Hence, as all were equally prompt in leaping at the enemy's throat, Putnam's remarkable feat was not at the time considered extraordinary.

In a few days our hero was at home again, having been called to Hartford by the legislators, who were desirous of consulting with their most experienced warrior, and bestowed upon him the rank and title of brigadier-general. All these events took place within the space of a week's time, and before another week had passed Brigadier-General Putnam was in headquarters at Cambridge, occupying a house which stood within the present grounds of Harvard University. General Artemus Ward, of Massachusetts, was commander-in-chief of the forces, having been commissioned by the Provincial Congress; but Putnam was the greater favorite with the soldiers, in whose vocabulary (to paraphrase a saying common at the time) "the British were the Philistines, and Putnam, the American Samson, a chosen instrument to defeat the foe."

It is a matter of record that General Ward relied upon the advice of his old friend, with whom he had fought, under Abercrombie, at Ticonderoga, and kept him

always within call at headquarters. Had he followed his advice more closely, however, it would have been better for their sacred cause, as was shown in the crucial test at the battle of Bunker Hill, when Putnam's repeated requests for reenforcements were at first denied, then so hesitatingly granted that they proved of small avail.

To Putnam, then, and not to Ward, the officers and men of the assembled militia looked for advice and encouragement. They were quite naturally doubtful as to the result of their hasty action, and as most of them had never been under fire they were timid and even down-hearted. But Putnam was continually engaged in arousing both their patriotism and their hopes. When General Warren asked him (wrote Putnam's son Daniel, many years later) "if 10,000 British troops should march out of Boston, what number, in his opinion, would be competent to meet them, the answer was, 'Let me pick my officers, and I would not fear to meet them with half that number—not in a pitched battle, to stop them at once, for no troops are better than the British—but I would fight on the retreat, and every wall we passed should be lined with the dead!'"

"Our men," the General said on another occasion, "would always follow wherever their officers led—I know this to have been the case with mine, and have also seen it in other instances." And as Putnam's record had long since proved that he always led, and asked no man to approach nearer the foe than he himself was willing to go, the soldiers were enthusiastic for "Old Wolf Put," the fighter, though lukewarm in their feelings toward the commander.

They did not admire the methods Putnam employed to keep them out of mischief —these raw and undisciplined militia, accustomed to do as they liked and to take orders from no man—for he kept them actively employed all the time. "It is better to dig a ditch every morning, and fill it up at evening, than to have the men idle," said Old Put, and though the men grumbled the results soon showed that he was right.

What they also needed more than anything else was confidence, and, in order to inspire that, he paraded some two thousand of them through Charlestown over the hills soon to become world-famous, and right in sight of the enemy. He did this several times, and on one occasion took with him his son Daniel, who wrote of it afterward: "I felt proud to be numbered among what I then thought to be a mighty host destined for some great enterprise."

Daniel was then only fifteen years of age, yet he performed a man's work,

proving himself worthy of his parentage, and was his father's aide-de-camp and companion. During the progress of the battle at Bunker Hill he acted as the guard and defender of a British refugee's wife and family, and stoutly did his duty, boy that he was.

Perhaps the highest tribute paid to Putnam's prowess was the offer of his old-time friend and comrade, General Gage, the British commander-in-chief, to pay him a large sum of money, and secure him a major-generalcy in the British army, if he would desert the "rebel" cause and come over to that of the King. Putnam spurned this offer, of course, as did sturdy Colonel Stark, another comrade of the Indian wars, and several others. He was all the more active, if possible, in seeking out the enemy's weak points and in attempts to reduce his supplies.

An opportunity offered, some time in the last week of May, both to annoy the enemy and gain substantial recompense for a somewhat hazardous adventure. Several hundred sheep and cattle were in pasture on Hog and Noddles islands (the latter now East Boston), and as it was feared that the British might secure them before the Colonials did, a small force was sent to drive them to the mainland. It was sent by Putnam, whose great and burning desire for a "brush" with the enemy was now about to be gratified, and as a party of marines on guard over the live-stock fired on the Americans, Putnam hastened to their rescue with a larger force.

A British sloop and schooner then joined in the fight; but the Colonials turned their single cannon upon the craft, and soon disabled the larger vessel, which drifted ashore and, after the crew had been either shot or driven away, was set on fire. In this engagement ten or fifteen British were killed and wounded, but no Provincial lost his life, though two or three of Putnam's men were wounded. They fought with great spirit, wading in water from knee to waist deep, and not only brought off all the live-stock in safety, but also took away the guns, rigging and sails of the schooner, as well as some clothes and money left by the sailors in their flight. This brisk engagement gave the raw soldiers just the confidence they needed, and they returned in high spirits to their camp.

"I wish we could have something of this kind to do every day," remarked Putnam to Ward and Warren, as he reached his headquarters, where they were waiting for him to appear. "It would teach our men how little danger there is from cannon-balls; for though they have sent a great many at us, nobody has been much hurt by them." He was wet from head to foot, and covered with mud to his waist; but he did not mind that at all, and was as hilarious as a boy just let out from school.

The British were greatly chagrined at this second defeat, the first engagement after the Concord-Lexington fight, but at an exchange of prisoners, conducted, on the one hand, under Putnam and Warren, and on the other under Majors Small and Moncrief, the sixth of June, no ill feeling was shown. Putnam and Small (whose life the former was instrumental in saving at Bunker Hill, and who were old companions-at-arms), embraced, and one eye-witness said, kissed each other, in the excess of their joy at meeting; yet less than two weeks later they were opposed in a fight to the death.

CHAPTER XII

AT THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL

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General Putnam was greatly elated over the exchange of prisoners, recognizing, with the prescience of a statesman, that General Gage had conceded a point of importance as to the status of his opponents. "He may *call* us rebels now, if he will," he said to his son, "but why then doesn't he hang his prisoners instead of exchanging them? By this act he has virtually placed us on an equality, and acknowledged our *right* of resistance." That was one point gained by the general; another was, the consent of the Committee of Safety to his plan of operations against the British in Boston.

General Ward and Dr. Warren were in favor of moderation, and opposed to the scheme advanced by Putnam, of forcing the enemy to either fight or retire. They urged that they had no battering cannon and but little powder, there being but sixty-seven barrels in the whole army, and no mills to make any more when that was gone. And again, they feared for the steadiness of the men, once they found themselves opposed by the best of Britain's soldiers. But Putnam was persistent, not in advocating the bombarding of Boston, or of a large expenditure of powder and ball in trying to force the British from their position; but in fortifying the heights of Dorchester and Charlestown, which completely commanded the city.

He knew the British mode of attack and defense, knew their tactics through long observation in the ranks; and yet for him and his compatriots those same British professed to feel naught but contempt. They had always ignored the Provincials' claims to advancement on equal terms with their own officers; they thought their soldiers in the Indian wars were boorish and uncouth, merely because they paid little attention to dress or discipline; yet here was one of those least regardful of appearances (though an advocate of discipline) who knew them and their tactics through and through. And he also knew the men of his command better than any officers of inferior rank knew them. His one cry was, "fight, fight; bring our men into contact with the enemy, in order that they shall gain confidence and learn that they are really their equals, and more than that. Fight and entrench, entrench and fight; run away when it comes to a pinch, fight while you run; but fight!"

"But will our men stand before an enemy?" queried the timid ones. "Yes, they will," declared Putnam with a laugh. "Our troops are not all afraid of their heads, though very much concerned for their *legs*, and if you cover these they'll fight forever!" In other words, put them behind entrenchments, and he would pit them against the finest fighters that could be brought against them. The result at Bunker Hill was a vindication of his belief.

As Putnam had all along declared, it was in the nature of an impossibility for sixteen thousand armed men to besiege ten thousand other armed men without something happening partaking of violence. The war was "on," there was no doubt of that, why then hesitate at warlike measures? Still the commander-in-chief hesitated and paltered, while Putnam fumed, but labored hard.

What Putnam had advocated as the highest strategy, the seizing of some height commanding the British position, was forced upon the irresolute commander-in-chief by the British themselves. Shortly after General Gage's four thousand soldiers had been reenforced by six thousand more, under Howe, Clinton, and Burgoyne, the Americans learned that the enemy intended to take and fortify the heights of Charlestown or Dorchester themselves. As it was then the sixteenth of June, and their move was to be made on the eighteenth, there was no time to lose if they were to be forestalled; so orders were issued by the Committee of Safety, sanctioned by a council of war, for taking possession of Bunker Hill in Charlestown.

A detail of a thousand men was made from three Massachusetts regiments, to which, in order to placate General Putnam, two hundred Connecticut soldiers were added under his friend, Captain Knowlton. This small body of militia, with a few field pieces as artillery, was to sally forth to rouse the British lion in his lair. The detachment was placed under Colonel William Prescott, of Massachusetts, General Putnam "having the general superintendence of the expedition," and about nine o'clock at night, after having been paraded on Cambridge Common, and listened to prayer by the president of Harvard College, this devoted band set forth on its mysterious mission.

Striding ahead of his men, all of whom had perfect confidence in their beloved officer, Colonel Prescott led the way, accompanied by two sergeants carrying lanterns. Not until they had reached the foot of Bunker Hill, where they found entrenching tools awaiting them which had been sent ahead in wagons, did the rank and file know the object of their march in the night; yet they faltered not, nor displayed a disposition to retreat. Their leaders knew, of course; but even

they were in doubt, when once arrived at Charlestown, which of its eminences to select. Their orders explicitly indicated Bunker Hill as the one to fortify, but, "though this was the most commanding and most defensible position, it was too far from the enemy to annoy their army and shipping." Situated nearer the British general position was another elevation, Breed's Hill; but this was only sixty-two feet in height, as compared with Bunker Hill's one hundred and ten. This was finally selected, but only after a long consultation, which lasted until near midnight, when the veteran military engineer, Colonel Gridley (who had been awaiting the decision in great anxiety, owing to the loss of valuable time), at once proceeded to lay out the works.

On the summit of Breed's Hill the skilled engineer quickly ran the lines of that world-famous redoubt in which our immortal freemen inflicted a technical defeat upon Britain's bravest soldiers. It was planned and constructed with a redan facing Charlestown which protected the south side of the hill, and was only about eight rods square, continued by a breastwork on its eastern side, from which it was separated by a sallyport protected in front by a "blind," with a passage-way opening rearward as a provision for retreat. The men were given picks and shovels, and at once bent to their task with feverish energy. Scant four hours they had before them, when daylight would reveal them and their position to the enemy, for June's longest days and shortest nights were near, with daylight at four in the morning. They all labored for their lives, both officers and men, and toiled without cessation to the end. The night was dark, but the stars shone bright, and by their light Colonel Prescott and another officer, Major Brooks, stole down to the shore to observe the enemy, where they were reassured by the "All's well" from the British sentries on board the ships off shore.

All was not well—for them—most assuredly; but it was not until the morning mists rolled away from the rounded summits of the hills in front that they found it out. Then they might well gaze in wrath and wonder, beholding that work as if of enchantment going on before them, on that hill-top within short cannon-shot of their shipping. But they did not spend much time in rubbing their eyes and in vain speculation, being well assured at a glance that the "rascally American militia" had stolen a march upon them in the night and brought all their plans to naught.

A brisk cannonade was opened from the war-ships upon the weary, toiling men in the entrenchment; but they still worked on, incited to their utmost by the gallant Prescott, who himself is said to have lent a hand with pick and shovel. General Putnam's predictions as to their coolness under fire were more than

verified, and had he been there then he would have been surprised at their indifference to the cannonading now going on so furiously. One man only was killed in this preliminary firing, and he had strayed outside the breastwork.

"Man killed, what shall we do with him?" asked a subaltern of Prescott.

"Bury him," was the laconic answer; and buried he was, in the ditch, while the work on the redoubt went on.

General Putnam was not on the hill when the cannon-fire began, having gone back to camp to change his tired horse for a fresher one; for his gait, says the historian, was always fast and furious. At the first report, however, he pricked up his ears and sent to Commander Ward for another horse; but before his orderly returned, he had procured still another and was already on his way to Charlestown. He had tried to procure for his men not only reenforcements but refreshments, for they had taken with them only one day's rations. In this he was disappointed, General Ward refusing to send over any more men, at that time, believing the British would take advantage of his weakened force to make a direct attack upon the main army at Cambridge. But when, having arrived at the hill, Putnam conversed with Prescott and noted the necessitous condition of the men, he again mounted and in hot haste rode back to Cambridge, with an urgent plea to the commander for assistance. This time it was not refused, and again gallant Putnam rode across Charlestown Neck, at the risk of his life, to take part in the coming conflict.

Meanwhile, there was a great commotion in the British camps, and from their place of vantage on Breed's Hill the patriots could see the gathering soldiers marching for the shore. General Gage had quickly called a council, which instantly decided that the patriots must be dislodged at whatever cost. As the prescient Putnam had foretold, the occupation of a hill so near their lines made their position untenable. They must move out or fight, and not even Putnam believed they would retreat from their snug quarters in Boston town. He knew well what was coming, and was not at all surprised to see, gathering beneath the blazing morning sun of the torrid day that had succeeded to a sultry night, the thousands of redcoats, armed and equipped for battle.

After informing the anxious soldiers on the hill of the promised succor to arrive, Putnam rode along the lines and, casting his eye over the situation, perceived that it would be a grave strategic omission to neglect to entrench the hill in the rear, which was the original object of their advance. As the main redoubt was

then practically completed, and the men were resting from their toil, he ordered the entrenching tools to be taken to Bunker Hill, and another work begun which might serve as a "rallying place" in case they were compelled to retreat—as undoubtedly they would be. This entrenchment was begun but never finished, owing to the lack of time. Had it been completed, and had the men been able to avail of its defenses, there might have been a different tale to tell of the final finish at Bunker Hill. But noon had now arrived, the British frigates and floating batteries were by this time not only raining shot like hail upon and around the redoubt, but sending a scathing fire across the Neck, under cover of which barge-loads of soldiers were landing on the peninsula preparatory to an advance.

Noon came, but not the reenforcements which had been promised by General Ward, so General Putnam "seized the opportunity of hastening to Cambridge, whence he returned without delay. He had to pass a galling enfilading fire of round, bar, and chain shot, which thundered across the Neck from a frigate in the Charles River, and two floating batteries hauled close to the shore," wrote one who had conversed with eye-witnesses of this scene. The neck, or narrow passage-way between the Charles and Mystic Rivers, was only about one hundred and thirty yards across and exposed to that terrible cannonade; yet over it flew the reckless rider, coat off, in shirt-sleeves, an old white hat on his head; back and forth he rode, fearless and unscathed. The great painter Trumbull, who produced the celebrated picture of the Battle of Bunker Hill, which has excited the admiration of thousands, represented General Putnam conspicuously placed in that scene, but arrayed in an immaculate uniform, with ruffles and frills, and such like accessories which "Old Put" would have spurned.

Still, the *man* was there, if not the uniform. His appointment as major-general was dated two days after that memorable 17th of June; but he was then, as brigadier-general, the ranking officer present, until brave Warren appeared upon the scene. The latter was discovered by Putnam just as he was wheeling about after meeting and posting the gallant Colonel Stark and his New Hampshire reenforcements behind the rail fence and grass breastwork, where they gave such a good account of themselves that day. Turning about, he saw the slender figure of the newly-made major-general before him, a sword at his side, but a musket on his shoulder.

"What, Warren, you here?" he is said to have exclaimed. "I am sorry to see you ... but I'm ready to submit myself to your orders."

"No, no, I came only as a volunteer," replied Warren. "Tell me where I can be

most useful."

Pointing to the redoubt, Putnam said, "You will be protected there."

"I am not seeking a place of safety," rejoined Warren with warmth; "tell me where the onset will be most furious."

"There," answered Putnam. "That will be the enemy's object. Prescott is there and will do his duty; if that can be defended, the day will be ours."

The shouts of the soldiers announced to Putnam the arrival of Warren in their midst, and not long after another cheer proclaimed the arrival of an old friend and comrade of his, Colonel Seth Pomeroy, a veteran of the Indian wars, who, twenty years before, had succeeded to the command of Colonel Ephraim Williams's regiment at the battle of Lake George. He had been aroused by the tidings from the seat of war, and though, like Putnam, he lived nearly or quite a hundred miles away, he had hastened to be in the thick of the fight. He had borrowed a horse from General Ward, but, with characteristic Yankee caution, had left it the other side of the Neck, in charge of a sentry, and had walked over, amid the hail of shot from the frigates and batteries.

Pomeroy and Putnam would have made a good pair to represent Valor and Intrepidity, were statues desired for those noble qualities. When Putnam saw him he cried out: "You here, Pomeroy? By God! a cannon-shot would waken you out of your grave!" He was in his seventieth year, having been born in 1706, and twelve years Putnam's senior.

So they gathered, the young and the old, the learned doctor and the practical mechanic, for the defense of Freedom—a magnet that drew both Pomeroy and Warren to that since-famous redoubt on the summit of Breed's Hill. They offered their services to Colonel Prescott, and he gladly accepted them, demurring as to Warren, and tendering him the command, which was his by right of rank. But the patriot simply said, as before, that he had come to fight as a volunteer, and at once mingled with the men within the redoubt.

The movements of the British were slow, and mid-afternoon had arrived before the agonizing suspense was over and they began their advance up the hill. The eager Americans were hardly to be kept behind their earthworks, much less restrained from firing at the advancing foe, as the solid ranks came marching up the acclivity, ominously silent, with deadly intent. But Putnam was with them, riding slowly up and down the lines.

"Don't waste your powder, boys," he shouted. "Wait for orders, then fire low, take aim at their waistbands. Aim at the handsome coats, pick off the commanders!" They did as commanded, only a few anticipating orders, and at the fatal command, "Fire!" the ranks in front of them melted away like snow before the sun.

It was the same at the breastwork as at the redoubt, and at the second or third volley the remaining redcoats broke and fled promiscuously down the hill. It was not in the nature of even the bravest men to march to certain destruction, and General Howe had difficulty in re-forming his defeated troops for a second assault; but on they came, the intrepid Howe in advance and on foot, until within even a shorter distance of redoubt, breastwork, and rail fence, when a sheet of flame burst forth that carried all before it to destruction.

The scene outspread from the hill was perfectly appalling, and, to add to the terrors of thunderous artillery, from frigates, floating batteries and field-pieces, clouds of smoke came pouring out from Charlestown, which had been set on fire, enveloping the contestants, at first, in semi-obscurity. It was the intention of the British, in setting fire to Charlestown, to veil their movements as they marched up the hill; but this was frustrated by the rising wind, which carried the smoke aloft and away.

In the second advance, as in the first, the soldiers were led by General Howe, who seemed, like Putnam, to bear a charmed life, at this time having all his staff officers killed or wounded but one. For the Provincials had strictly obeyed Putnam's orders, to pick off the men in handsome coats. He himself was touched to the heart.

"Oh, my God, what carnage!" he cried, as he saw his former friends and comrades fall before the withering blast. Seeing several of his men aiming their pieces at the only officer remaining unhurt, he darted forward and struck up their muskets, exclaiming: "For God's sake, lads, don't fire at that man! I love him as I do my brother." It was Major Small, a former companion of the Indian wars, who owed his life to Putnam's intervention, and who afterward tried to requite the favor—though vainly—when brave Warren fell, by entreating him to surrender.

The sword with which Old Put struck up the muskets of his men was always visible in the thickest of the fight, waving in air, descending with resounding whacks—the flat of it—upon recreant soldiers' shoulders; held threateningly

against the breast of cowardly artillerymen, when, their cartridges proving inadequate, they were about abandoning their guns.

The little field-pieces were too puny to do much harm, but they counted for something, Putnam said, as he tore a cartridge in pieces and, ladling the powder and canister into the gun, aimed and discharged it into the advancing ranks of the foe, with effect. But all was of no avail. The Americans had good cause to believe the enemy had had enough; but Putnam knew the foe and cautioned them against overconfidence. True to his predictions, they reformed for a third charge upon the hill, led, as before, by the gallant Howe, and this time, as the Provincials had nearly exhausted their supply of ammunition, they were forced to extremities.

Yet nearer than before, the British were allowed to approach, and, with their artillery enfilading the redoubt and the breastwork with deadly effect, the brave Provincials waited till they were within twenty yards before they fired their last rounds into the foe. Then they clubbed their muskets, dashed stones into the faces of the foe, fighting hand to hand, as the British poured over the earthworks in a stream. Seeing his forlorn position, Prescott ordered a retreat, and his men sullenly obeyed, fighting to the last, stubbornly contesting every foot.

Down below, on the slope near the Neck, was the infuriated Putnam, doing his utmost to urge forward the belated reenforcements. When he saw the onpouring mass of men in retreat he was wild with rage. "Halt, you infernal cowards!" he yelled. "Halt here and make a stand. We can stop them yet!" But he was overborne by the resistless stream, and with an impious imprecation on his lips he dismounted, near a field-piece, "and seemed resolved to brave the foe alone." One man only, a sergeant, took his stand beside him, but he was soon shot down, and brave Old Put was left without support. "The enemy's bayonets were just upon him when he retired," probably the last unwounded warrior to retreat from Bunker Hill!

CHAPTER XIII

HOLDING THE ENEMY AT BAY

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The battle had been fought, and had resulted even better than the then enraged Putnam himself could have anticipated, for although technically defeated, the Provincials had achieved a real victory, the fruits of which were to be enjoyed by generations then unborn. For they had conquered themselves as well as the enemy, whom they had met with calm confidence; and had they been better supplied with ammunition, that enemy would never have seen the inside of the redoubt and the breastworks.

British bayonets defeated them finally, as opposed to clubbed muskets and stones cast by despairing men, whose very last thought was of retreat. Many and many a man besides Prescott and Putnam, Stark and Pomeroy, Knowlton and McClary, raged like wolves that day at its ending, to find themselves compelled to accept a retreat as the alternative of capture or death. Like lions making for their lairs in the hills, Prescott and Putnam gave way at last before the overwhelming forces of the enemy; and, after passing through the storm of cannon-balls still hurtling across the Neck, they had leisure to count up their losses; for the British were too exhausted, too much in awe of their prowess, even, to pursue.

It was a very good showing for green troops, that which told the respective losses of British and Americans: more than a thousand of the former, as against less than five hundred of the latter. Each side lost, in killed and wounded, about one-third the total number of its men, for the British brought about four thousand five hundred troops into the field; while the Americans in active conflict, including such reenforcements as reached the hill, scarcely exceeded fifteen hundred.

A very good showing, a "great victory"—yet purchased at fearful cost to both sides. A host of British officers, many of them bearing names distinguished for valor and honorable lineage, went down before the volleys of the Provincials, while the latter had also a sorrowful tale to tell. Warren had fallen, one of the last

to leave the redoubt; old Pomeroy had his musket shattered, but drew off in good order, taking it along with him for repairs; McClary was killed by a cannon-ball, while boasting that the shot was not cast that would end his life; and so the story went.

One of the strangest happenings was the end of Major Pitcairn, who had ordered the first shots fired at Lexington, and who, one of the first over the redoubt, was killed by a negro soldier named Salem, falling into the arms of his son. It came about, some time after, that the pistols he had carried at Lexington (which were taken from his holsters when his horse was shot under him, and he lay on the ground feigning himself dead) were presented to General Putnam. He carried them through all his subsequent campaigns, and at present they may be found in the custody of the Library at Lexington.

One field-piece only was saved out of six guns taken by the Provincials into battle, and it was near the last one left in the field that the enraged Putnam took his stand, between his retreating men and the advancing foe, until "his countrymen were in momentary expectation of seeing this compeer of the immortal Warren fall."

That was Putnam: one of the first in the field, the last to leave it. We have seen (as all his biographers and many historians have agreed in stating) that he took a most active part throughout, exposing himself continually to the shots of the enemy, guiding, directing, leading; and that no man's commands were so eagerly received and so promptly obeyed as his. And yet there are cavilers who have raised the question as to whether he or Prescott commanded at the battle of Bunker Hill—as though it mattered much. Both were sons of Massachusetts, and Putnam an adoptive son of Connecticut, fighting on Massachusetts soil.

It is certain that neither he nor Prescott gave a thought to this matter, especially at the time the balls flew thickest.[2] They may have had differences of opinion, as, for instance, when Putnam attempted to take away some of Prescott's men from the redoubt to throw up earthworks on Bunker Hill. Subsequent events proved that Putnam's scheme of defense was the right one, and only lack of time and men prevented its being carried out.

[2] "Putnam," says Irving, in his Life of Washington, "also was a leading spirit throughout the affair; one of the first to prompt and the last to maintain it. He appears to have been active and efficient at every point, sometimes fortifying, sometimes hurrying up reenforcements; inspiriting the men by his presence while they were able to maintain their ground, and fighting gallantly at the outpost to cover their retreat."

As soon as once assured that the defeat of the Provincials was overwhelming, Putnam lost no time in entrenching at Prospect Hill, the first spot at which he could halt his fleeing troops. Here he stayed, working like a beaver and digging like a badger, and this strategic position, which he had seized and selected almost intuitively, he continued to occupy until appointed to the command of the center division of the army at Cambridge, where, on July 2, 1775, he for the first time met General Washington, who had come with his appointment as Commander-in-Chief recently received from the Continental Congress.

Not long after formally taking command of the army, beneath the historic elm at Cambridge, Washington made a tour of the fortifications and was astonished at the progress Putnam had made at Prospect Hill, as well as at the military skill he had shown in taking and fortifying it. Two days later he presented him with his commission as a *Major-General* in the Continental Army, which had been unanimously bestowed by Congress on the 19th of June, two days after the battle of Bunker Hill, and which he received on the 4th of July. Putnam's commission was the only one then presented in person by Washington, though three others had been appointed major-generals under him: Lee, Ward, and Schuyler. A great deal of jealousy and heart-burning resulted from the appointments, one of the brigadiers, General Spencer, over whom Putnam had been advanced, threatening to resign.

In these days began the friendship which existed between the Commander-in-Chief and Major-General Putnam during the remainder of their lives. Putnam's honesty, industry, frankness, and integrity interested General Washington, who was delighted with this bluff old soldier who wore his laurels so modestly. "You'll find," wrote a contemporary to a friend, "that Generals Washington and Lee are vastly fonder and think higher of Putnam than any man in the army; and he truly is the hero of the day!"

On the 6th of July, 1775, the Continental Congress sent out its formal Statement, which was read at headquarters in Cambridge on the 15th, and to Putnam's division, then at Prospect Hill, on the 18th. At the same time the new standard recently sent from Connecticut was unfurled, to the acclaim of a mighty "*Amen!*" and the thunder of cannon from the fort. The commotion aroused the British in

their dearly-bought stronghold over at Charlestown. In the language of the Essex Gazette, proclaiming this event: "The Philistines on Bunker Hill heard the shouts of the *Israelites*, and being very fearful, paraded themselves in battle array."

Putnam's bold stand at Prospect Hill, so promptly taken and so stoutly maintained, kept the enemy within the territory they had purchased with the blood of their best soldiers, and they never advanced any farther into the country they coveted. The lines of investment around Boston were drawn closer and made more nearly impregnable, yet weeks and months went by without any material change in the relative positions of British and Provincials, save that Putnam still kept on digging, and creeping nearer and nearer to the foe. By fortifying Cobble Hill, an elevation that more completely commanded the Charles than his main fortress at Prospect Hill, Putnam was enabled to open fire upon the British men-of-war and floating batteries, and soon silenced and drove them away. Not satisfied with this achievement, a few days later his men were at work upon an entrenchment within half a mile and under the fire of a British man-of-war, a squad of these intrepid soldiers being commanded by his eldest son, Israel.

The British were now alarmed, and doubtless believed, in the language of a writer commenting on these events, that "every fort which was defended by General Putnam might be considered as impregnable, if daring courage and intrepidity could always resist superior force."

Still, while the British feared to advance upon the Americans, the latter, though eager to drive them out of their stronghold, were unable to do so from lack of artillery and ammunition. This lack was to some extent supplied by the capture of some ordnance ships by our gallant privateers, though as late as January, 1776, one of the Provincial colonels wrote to another: "The bay is open; everything thaws here except Old Put. He is still as hard as ever, crying out for *powder—powder*—ye gods, give us powder!"

Cannon-balls, several hundred of them, he had secured (if we may credit a story told at the time) by conspicuously posting some of his men on an elevation in front of a sandy hill in sight of a British war-ship, from which by this ingenious ruse he drew a rain of shot, which supplied his needs for the time being, as they were afterward easily dug out of the sand!

Among the captures by the privateers was a 13-inch brass mortar weighing nearly three thousand pounds, which was taken to Cambridge, where (according

to the same veracious narrator of the "powder cry," the witty Provincial colonel), it was the occasion of a great jubilation. "To crown the glorious scene," he says, "there intervened one truly ludicrous, which was Old Put mounted on the large mortar, which was fixed in its bed for the occasion, with a bottle of rum in his hand, standing parson to christen, while godfather Mifflin, the quartermaster-general, gave it the name of Congress!"

Old Put never lost a chance for fun and frolic, though he was as stern a disciplinarian as Washington himself, who, however, must have been greatly shocked at this horse-play in which his favorite General took part. But the rank and file were delighted; and it was the possession of just such qualities, of hilarious good-humor combined with sturdy common-sense, that made Old Put a universal favorite. For dignity he cared nothing at all; for discipline he was a "stickler"; and, as the men hated the one as much as they disliked the other, yet loved and admired their rough-and-ready General intensely, Putnam proved the coherent factor in the combination that held the army together. At another "truly ludicrous" scene, somewhat later, in which Putnam was one of the participants, the dignified Commander-in-Chief is said to have laughed until his sides ached. Looking from a window of his chamber in the Craigie mansion, one morning, Washington perceived Putnam approaching on horseback, with a very stout lady mounted behind his saddle, and riding as if for dear life. The woman was an accessory of a British spy, whom Putnam had arrested, and had brought to his commander to be disciplined. It was a long while before Washington could recover his countenance sufficiently to proceed with the business.

At last, after months of waiting, the arrival of General Knox with fifty-five cannon and a quantity of ammunition, which, with magnificent daring, he had collected and brought from the forts on the frontier, put the Provincials in possession of the means they needed for compelling the British to retire. Following a council of war, Dorchester Heights were occupied on the 4th of March, the attention of the enemy being first diverted from the real object by a two-days' cannon-fire upon the other side of the city, and after a futile attempt by General Howe to assault the works erected by the Americans, on the 17th the British hastily took to their ships.

Had this intended assault by the British taken place, Washington was ready to make a direct attack upon Boston with the troops in two divisions, under the command of General Putnam. At the last council of war, it is narrated, when General Washington had requested Putnam to give more attention to the matter in hand, he replied: "Oh, my dear General, plan the battle to suit yourself, and I

will fight it!"

CHAPTER XIV

IN COMMAND AT NEW YORK

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The British had been forced out of Boston; they had embarked aboard their fleet; but for more than a week they lingered in the outer harbor, as if uncertain whither to go. While Washington was in doubt as to their next movement, he shrewdly guessed that the city of New York, being so advantageously situated, especially commanding communication with Canada by the valley of the Hudson River, would be their ultimate, if not immediate objective. He had already despatched thither General Lee, who was planning defenses for the harbor; but as he desired Lee to command in the South, he looked around for another man to take his place. Troops were on the way, also, under Generals Heath and Sullivan, to be followed by many more, and there was every indication that soon a large army would be concentrated in and around New York.

Who to trust with this important command was a serious question for the Commander-in-Chief, but he finally pitched upon Putnam, in whom he seemed to have confidence, though with some misgivings which foreshadowed the accuracy of his final estimate of the man. In a letter treating of a similar situation, two months previously, Washington had written to Congress: "General Putnam is a most valuable man and a fine executive officer; but I do not know how he would conduct in a separate department."

But he resolved to entrust him with the command, and on the 29th of March, only twelve days after the British had left, gave him his orders, which concluded with this expression of confidence: "Your long service and experience will, better than my particular directions at this distance, point out to you the works most proper to be raised; and your perseverance, activity, and zeal will lead you, without my recommending it, to exert every nerve to disappoint the enemy's designs."

With his customary expedition, General Putnam lost no time in getting to New York, arriving there on the 4th of April, whither he was followed by Washington

nine days later. The Commander-in-Chief found, when he arrived, little to criticize and much to commend in what Putnam had done, for he had already stopped the Tories from furnishing supplies to the British fleet, had commenced to fortify Governor's Island and Red Hook, increased the efficiency of the works on Brooklyn Heights, barricaded the streets of New York with mahogany logs from the West Indies, and organized a "navy" of schooners and whale-boats, to cruise in the North and East rivers.

As Washington was absent much of the time in consultation with Congress at Philadelphia, Putnam was practically in supreme command; yet his arduous and important duties did not prevent him from attending a dinner on the first anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill. In a letter written by an American officer describing this event, it is more than intimated that he was ever ready to accommodate when called upon for a song or a speech on such an occasion, for he says: "Our good General Putnam got sick and went to his quarters before dinner was over, and we missed him a marvel, as there is not a chap in the camp who can lead him in the 'Maggie Lauder's song.'"

When in New York, Putnam's headquarters were on Bowling Green, where he later had with him members of his family, including his wife, who had also visited him at Cambridge, and had dispensed a generous hospitality at the Inman mansion; while Mrs. Washington (with whom both Putnam and his wife were in high favor) was at the Craigie house. His son Israel was a member of his military family, which also included Major Humphreys (who afterward wrote his biography) and Major Aaron Burr, his military secretary. His justifiable severity in proclaiming martial law, and in punishing Tories found guilty of harboring or assisting the enemy, incurred the ill-will of New York's inhabitants, and militated against his fortunes when later he fell into disrepute.

Plots against his life were formed, among them most conspicuous for its scheme of wholesale assassinations being that in which one of Washington's own guards was concerned, and for complicity in which this same man, Thomas Hickey, paid the penalty with his life, being executed on the 27th of June. Two days later a large British fleet was reported off Sandy Hook, and by the 1st of July there were more than a hundred of the enemy's war-ships and transports in the bay. The presence of this immense fleet did not prevent the proper reception of the immortal *Declaration of Independence,* proclaimed by the Continental Congress at Philadelphia on the 4th of July, 1776, and which was read to the troops, amid loud acclaim from officers and common soldiers, on the 9th.

Israel Putnam.

Israel Putnam.

From a painting by Trumbull.

The arrival of the vast fleet, the subsequent landing of an army of nearly twenty-five thousand men, and the warlike preparations which the British were feverishly making looking to the capture of the city, did not alarm Old Put, with his total force of scarcely seventeen thousand. He went on as calmly and as determinedly as though himself commander of the larger army, for the hero of Bunker Hill never anticipated defeat. He always fought to the last, after making every needful preparation for whatever event, and at New York, although the chances were all against him, he did his utmost to bring about success. He had fortified Governor's Island and Red Hook in order to prevent the enemy's ships of war from ascending the Hudson; he now sank several old hulks in the channel for the same purpose; but, notwithstanding, two war-vessels succeeded in getting up the North River, which they afterward descended, without injury to themselves.

It having been recommended by Congress that "fire-rafts be prepared and sent among the enemy's shipping," Putnam acted in accordance with the suggestion by fitting out fourteen fire-ships for the purpose, though nothing was accomplished with them. Still persistent in his endeavors to drive off the enemy, he adopted the invention of David Bushnell, a native of his own State, which the inventor called the "great American Turtle," and which, in fact, was a submarine torpedo, probably the first one thus used in warfare. It was to be guided by one man, and that man was to have been Bushnell himself; but, unfortunately, he fell sick, and the "turtle" boat with its infernal machine was entrusted to a Connecticut sergeant named "Bije" Shipman, who promised to row the "submarine"—diminutive prototype of all those which have committed such destruction since—down the bay and attach the torpedo to the bottom of the British admiral's ship. He reached the ship without being observed—strange to say—and attempted to attach the torpedo; but the attaching screw struck against an iron plate and caused great delay. Coming up to get a breath of fresh air, "Bije" was seen and fired upon by a sentinel, and at once rowed away as fast as his oars could carry him. The torpedo, the explosion of which was regulated by clockwork operating on a gun-lock, actually exploded about half an hour after, sending up a great geyser of water, which frightened the British admiral so that

he gave orders to up anchor and seek another mooring-place.

The Yankee navigator of the submarine declared that when he struck the iron plate he got "narvous," and couldn't affix the screw properly; but that if he had had a fresh "cud of terbacker," he would have been all right and the admiral's ship would have gone "a-kiting" into the air. The attempt was not repeated, for some reason or other, probably because the British got wary and kept farther away from shore. The next year, however, inventor Bushnell succeeded in blowing up a British schooner with his torpedo; but neither he nor quaint "Bije" Shipman ever received the credit that was their due, the latter being one of the forgotten heroes of the Revolution.

About this time the Putnam family entertained as guest the pretty daughter of a British officer, Major James Moncrieffe, the same one to whom, at the siege of Boston, "Old Put" had sent a present of provisions, even though they were opposed as enemies. This young lady was received by the family with affection, presented to General and Mrs. Washington, and afterward provided with a pass through the lines and sent to her father, accompanied by a letter of which (as she wittily said to a friend) "the bad orthography was amply compensated for by the magnanimity of the man who wrote it." Here is the letter: "Ginrale Putnam's compliments to Major Moncrieffe, has made him a present of a fine daughter, if he don't lick [like] her he must send her back again, and he will provide her with a good twig [Whig] husband."

General Putnam's humor, like his generosity, was never-failing; but, as "Josh Billings" once remarked of himself, "he was a bad speller" to the end of his life. But he could spell *f-i-g-h-t* as well as anybody; and what is more, he could forgive his enemies, not only after the fight was over, but while it was going on —as witness his generous actions on many occasions.

Though kept busy as a bee from morning to night, yet General Putnam found life in New York irksome, and was glad enough when ordered by Washington over to Long Island, to command at Brooklyn Heights and to supersede Sullivan, who had superseded Greene, then sick with fever, who had planned and erected the fortifications on the island. It was perhaps this "lightning change" of commanders that was responsible for the bitter defeat of the Americans in that encounter known as the "Battle of Long Island." By the third week of August, when this battle took place, the British were near New York with more than three hundred ships and thirty thousand troops, including those of Clinton, Cornwallis, and Howe. The last named was in command, and on the 22d of August he landed

twenty thousand troops, including five thousand hireling Hessians, at Gravesend Bay, with the intention of flanking the Americans out of their positions at Flatbush and the Heights and then advancing across the island to East River and New York.

It was not until two days later that (in the words of a soldier writing to his wife at that time) "General Putnam was made happy by obtaining leave to go over—the brave old man was quite miserable at being kept here," in New York. Only three days after his arrival the battle was fought, which (in brief) was brought about by the British surprising an outpost at one of the three passes to the American rear, on the night of the 26th of August and thus turning the patriots' position. With more than three times the numerical strength of the Americans, the British were successful, and the former lost more than a thousand men, most of them made prisoners, including Generals Sullivan and Stirling.

Washington hurried over reenforcements, until there were nearly ten thousand men at the Heights; but Putnam soon found it impossible to conduct its defense against twenty thousand of the enemy, with ten thousand more in reserve, and, with Washington's sanction and cooperation, he withdrew his men from their perilous position by a night retreat across the river, which was a triumph of military sagacity and achievement. The more than nine thousand men, with their ammunition, arms, provisions, etc., were safely over the river before the British became aware of what was going on. Then it was too late, and notwithstanding that the Americans had been outflanked and defeated by the most skilful strategy, the British lost the chief fruits of their victory by procrastination.

The loss of Long Island meant, of course, the evacuation of New York, since the city could now be commanded by the enemy's guns on the Heights. This movement was decided upon by Washington and his generals at a council of war; the garrison was withdrawn from Governor's Island, and after the surplus ammunition and military stores had been forwarded to a point of safety, the troops leisurely followed after toward the north. Putnam, Heath, and Spencer were placed in command of the three grand divisions into which the army was divided preparatory for retreat and stationed along the East River, Putnam, as usual, having the most perilous situation, at the lower end of the city. To him was committed the removal of the troops and military stores, so that he had no more time at command than formerly.

Yet the British did not move upon the city with precipitation. Commander-in-Chief Howe had learned his lesson by heart at Bunker Hill, and was no longer in

haste to attack his brave opponents unless with overwhelming numbers, whether entrenched or otherwise. He had resolved upon a series of flank movements, for the purpose of cutting off the American retreat northward, and on the 15th of September put the first in execution. Washington was at his new headquarters, the Jumel mansion, at Harlem Heights, and Old Put was busy hurrying off the last of the detachments down in the city, when both heard the booming of cannon at Kip's Bay. They met at Murray Hill, and together galloped toward the sound of firing, but before they reached East River were met by their own troops fleeing before the British advance.

CHAPTER XV

WASHINGTON'S CHIEF RELIANCE

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It was at the retreat of the Americans before the British, who had landed at Kip's Bay, that the unique spectacle was afforded of both Washington and Putnam acting in unison, both in a towering rage, and both attempting with all their might to turn their cowardly soldiers face-about to stand against the foe. But all their efforts were in vain, though Washington, in his endeavors to stem the tide of retreat, came near being made prisoner, and would have been, probably, if one of the soldiers had not taken his horse by the bridle and turned him in another direction.

In the actual retreat to Harlem Heights that then followed, brave Putnam took the post of danger again, and, while nearly everybody else was heading northward, he himself went the other way in search of his detachment, which, fortunately, his aide-de-camp, Major Burr, had taken the liberty of setting on the move. He and his men were the last to gain the Heights, barely escaping the British as they tried to hem them in, and reaching the rendezvous long after dark.

It was a current rumor in camp, later, that his escape was not altogether due to celerity of movement, nimble as he was, but to the clever ruse of a fair Quakeress, Mrs. Murray (mother of Lindley Murray, the renowned grammarian), who, being known to the British officers, invited them in, as they filed past her door, to refresh themselves with cake and wine. Being fatigued with their labors, and considering the Americans as good as captured by their clever flanking movement, they accepted the invitation gladly and remained enjoying her hospitality about two hours, or just long enough for Putnam and his men to slip out of the trap and scamper along the North River roads to the rendezvous.

Their joy at their escape when (as Major Humphreys, who was with them, said) they had been given up for lost by their friends, was tempered next day by the death of Colonel Knowlton, who had been sent out with his rangers to reconnoiter the enemy. In the ensuing engagement, known as the Battle of Harlem Heights, the gallant Knowlton was killed, besides about one hundred and

seventy of his men. Knowlton, who had taken a prominent part in the battle of Bunker Hill, was an old friend and comrade of Putnam in the Indian wars, as well as at Havana, and the latter felt his loss most keenly.

There was no time for vain regrets, since the enemy were pushing after the Americans, giving them no pause for a while. When at last there was a cessation in their endeavors at direct assault, Washington was more uneasy than before, and did not rest until he had discovered what it meant. In short, General Howe was about trying the second in his remarkable series of flanking movements, by which he hoped to get in the rear of the Americans, and, with his overwhelming force, "bottle them up" and compel a general engagement. But, with a force far inferior to the British, Washington not only succeeded in avoiding a pitched battle (for which he was wholly unprepared), but finally extricated his army from the net which his enemy had spread on two sides and was now attempting to sweep around to cut off his retreat.

Sending several war-vessels up the North River, or Hudson (which had no trouble in breaking through the barrier stretched across it), General Howe embarked the main body of his troops in flatboats for Westchester, landing at a point about nine miles above the Heights of Harlem. The enemy's object was then apparent, and Washington set about defeating it by one of the most complicated and ingenious military movements on record.

Leaving General Greene in command of Fort Washington, on the Hudson, not far from Kingsbridge and the Heights, Washington hastened northward toward White Plains, seizing upon every naturally strong position by the way, and establishing a chain of entrenchments on the hill-crests that commanded all the roads leading from the North River to the Sound. The last week in October the opposing forces came in collision at Chatterton Hill, where was fought the so-called Battle of White Plains, at which, wrote Rufus Putnam, who had planned the defensive works, "the wall and stone fence behind which our troops were posted proved as fatal to the British as the rail-fence with grass hung on it did at Charlestown, June 17, 1775."

General Putnam was ordered to reenforce General McDougall, who was in command at the hill; but before he arrived the British had flanked the Americans and driven them from their position. Putnam's men covered their retreat by firing at the British and Hessians from behind fences and trees, Indian and Ranger fashion, and that night Washington practically began his famous retrograde movement to Fort Washington and Manhattan Island. "By folding one brigade

behind another," in rear of those ridges he had fortified, he "brought off all his artillery, stores, and sick, in the face of a superior foe." He took position, first, at North Castle Heights, which he deemed impregnable; but after a few days the British left for the Hudson, with the purpose (as was afterward ascertained, and at the time divined by Washington) of attacking forts Washington and Lee and invading New Jersey. In anticipation of this move Putnam was detached with about four thousand men and ordered into New Jersey. Crossing the Hudson, he penetrated inland as far as Hackensack, near which place he encamped and awaited developments.

General Lee was left at North Castle Heights with seven thousand men to watch the movements of the foe, while Washington followed after Putnam to Hackensack. He was shortly recalled to the Hudson by a despatch informing him that the British were before Fort Washington in overwhelming force, and had demanded a surrender. Brave Colonel Magaw, in command of the garrison, refused a reply until he had consulted his superior officers, and as General Greene, in charge of both forts, was of the opinion that they could be held, the result was the storming of the fort and the loss of more than two thousand men.

The assault of the British, who had threatened to put the garrison to the sword, was witnessed by Washington, Greene, and Putnam from the west bank of the Hudson. Their distress may be imagined at beholding the slaughter that ensued, and there must have been some searching self-questioning by the Commander-in-Chief as to the wisdom of his policy, by which his divided forces became such an easy prey to the foe.

Lee could hardly be induced to leave his secure retreat, from which he departed only after repeated requests from Washington, whose great reliance at this time was sturdy Israel Putnam. He assisted at the evacuation of Fort Lee (now rendered useless by the loss of its sister fort across the river), and piloted the commander and his friends to his camp at Hackensack.

British troops under Lord Cornwallis had landed above Fort Lee at the base of the Palisades, and were now coming down to attempt to cut off the Americans before they could extricate themselves from the marshes lying between the Hudson and the Hackensack rivers. The latter left so precipitately that their fires were burning, with camp kettles over them, and tents still standing, when the British reached Fort Lee.

Parallel with the Hackensack River runs the Passaic, and across country between

the two Washington was compelled to hasten, lest he be hemmed in again by the pursuing enemy. It was now late in November, the weather was cold, and gloomy were these "dark days of the Revolution," when the militia left the army by hundreds, their terms of enlistment having expired, and no others took their places. While the little army of less than four thousand men was constantly depleted, it seemed as if its foes increased, in that country of loyalists and British sympathizers. It was with only the "skeleton of an army" that Washington, on the eighth of December, crossed the Delaware at Trenton, less than three thousand troops remaining by him then. Cornwallis and his soldiers were not far behind, during a portion of that gloomy retreat, a few days measuring the distance between the rival armies; but they did not catch up with the Americans that time.

The very day after his arrival at Trenton Washington ordered Putnam to Philadelphia, where he was placed in absolute command, and where he displayed the same energy and integrity of purpose that had always animated him hitherto. He had been a sustaining force to the Commander-in-Chief on that march across New Jersey, and of the few generals who had stood by him, no one had endured with less complaint or performed with more alacrity than Old Put. He was one upon whom to rely in the proposed scheme of fortifying the city, and his long experience at entrenching made him peculiarly fit for the work.

His sturdy nature, good sense, and ready wit made him at once a favorite with the Continental Congress and the Committee of Safety; though the former, acting on his advice, soon left the city for the greater security of Baltimore. Putnam soon placed the city under martial law, drafted all the citizens, except the Quakers, into the military service, and put the place in the best posture for defense of which it was capable. "There were foes within the city as well as foes without," for the Tory element was strong in Philadelphia, and it was because of it that Putnam was unable to cooperate with Washington when he dealt the enemy the first of those telling blows at Trenton and Princeton. He dared not withdraw his men from the city, even for a short absence, in order to create a diversion while his Commander-in-Chief made the direct attack. Had he done so, and also the other generals to whom were entrusted the details of this affair, the Hessians might have been entirely cut off in their retreat from Trenton and practically destroyed. As it was, Putnam held to his command in Philadelphia, and soon had the pleasure of entertaining some of the Hessian captives, for whom he was obliged to provide quarters while passing through the city.

It must have fretted him vastly to be kept in Philadelphia while Washington was pursuing the very tactics he himself would have used against the enemy. After

his first success Washington ordered Putnam out to Crosswicks, a small place southeast of Trenton, "a very advantageous post" for him to hold while his superior was planning his descent upon Princeton. On the 5th of January, after Washington had launched his thunderbolt at Princeton (of his intention to do which Putnam had been informed by a letter from his adjutant, written at midnight preceding that eventful third of January, 1777), he wrote at length to his trusty friend and General: "It is thought advisable for you to march the troops under your command to Crosswicks, and keep a strict watch upon the enemy in that quarter. If the enemy continue at Brunswick you must act with great circumspection, lest you meet with a surprise. As we have made two successful attacks upon the enemy by the way of surprise, they will be pointed with resentment, and if there is any possibility of retaliating they will attempt it. *You will give out your strength to be twice as great as it is.* Forward on all the baggage and scattered troops belonging to this division of the army as soon as may be."

In accordance with Washington's suggestion as to the augmenting of the number of his men, Putnam availed himself of the request of a wounded British officer, who was his prisoner, that a friend in Cornwallis's army might be sent for to make his will, to practise a ruse. It was in Princeton, whither he had been ordered from Crosswicks. As he had but a few hundred men, in order to prevent his weakness from being known to the military visitor he was brought in after dark, all the windows in the college buildings and private houses were lighted up, "and the handful of troops paraded about to such effect during the night that the visitor, on his return to the British camp, reported the force under the old general to be at least five thousand strong!" In this manner the shrewd but kind-hearted Putnam complied with his prisoner's request, and at the same time turned it to his own and his soldiers' advantage.

Having failed in his attempt to "bag that old fox" (Washington), Lord Cornwallis had scurried back to protect his baggage and communications at New Brunswick, while Washington ensconced himself in the rugged country about Morristown, and Putnam was left to protect the lowlands and harass the enemy. So effectually did he perform the latter that his aggregate of prisoners taken during the winter exceeded the number captured by Washington at Trenton, and his captures of wagons laden with provisions for the enemy were highly important.

CHAPTER XVI

DEFENDING THE HUDSON HIGHLANDS

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Snugly and safely entrenched in the Morristown hill-country, Washington left to Putnam the post he so dearly loved, that of real danger, within fifteen miles of New Brunswick, where the enemy lay in strength. At Princeton, thirty miles from headquarters, Putnam remained until May, when he was detached and sent into the Hudson Highlands. The British had lost fewer men at Trenton and Princeton than the Americans had lost at Fort Washington, yet the former were singularly dispirited. With the Commander-in-Chief withdrawn to the hills, the road to Philadelphia lay open to the enemy, and only Old Put opposing them, like a lion in the path; but for some reason they did not avail themselves of the situation.

Putnam's division formed the right wing of the American army in cantonment that winter, with the center at Morristown and the left wing on the Hudson. At the opening of the spring campaign of 1777 Washington was uncertain whether the British would leave their winter quarters in New York for New England, the Hudson Highlands, or for Philadelphia. He was inclined to believe that Philadelphia would be the first and chief objective, and wished to hold himself in readiness for marching thither at a moment's warning; but again there were rumors of an invasion from Canada by way of the lakes and the Hudson, so this region must be protected.

Existing forts must be strengthened, others erected, a boom stretched across the Hudson to impede the passage of British ships, and obstacles of all kinds placed in the path of the British, should they advance northward. Needing a reliable man in this emergency, Washington sent Putnam to Peekskill, on the Hudson, preceded by a letter to General McDougall, then in command there, which was, to say the least, not very flattering to the gallant soldier who had been his right-hand man in the various retreats through the Jerseys. "You are acquainted with the old gentleman's temper," he wrote; "he is active, disinterested, and open to conviction," etc.

Washington would have been more fortunate if all his officers had been as "active, disinterested, and open to conviction" as Old Put—for instance, Lee, Arnold, Gates, and others—but he had allowed his prejudices to warp his former opinion of Putnam's sterling qualities.

Hardly had Putnam begun his work on the Hudson before there was a mighty movement in the port of New York, and, fearing there might be an attempt upon Philadelphia, Washington drew upon the old soldier's command until he had scarcely a thousand men at call. Then followed the commander's magnificent strategy at Middlebrook, whereby he finally defeated the British plans and brought about the complete evacuation of New Jersey, after which Putnam was strengthened in his position; only to be weakened again, the process being repeated until he felt called upon to protest.

Putnam was later accused by Hamilton, Washington's aide-de-camp, of making a "hobby-horse" out of his desire to march upon New York, and of riding it on all occasions; but it was no less a hobby-horse with him than the defense of Philadelphia was with his Commander-in-Chief, who many times imperiled the safety of other sections by withdrawing troops in hot haste and flying to the succor of a city which was captured and occupied by the British notwithstanding.

Washington rode his hobby-horse full-tilt at the unfortunate Putnam and threw him to the ground. With one hand, as it were, he wrote him to keep an eye on the movements of the enemy and be fully prepared to meet them; but with the other he signed an order for the weakening of his force. The consequences came when Burgoyne, having descended from Canada and invaded northern New York, Putnam found himself between two fires, that of the former and that of Sir Henry Clinton, who finally set out on the long-meditated trip up the Hudson in order to cooperate with the southward-marching army.

Putnam had learned of the successive moves on the military chess-board as Burgoyne progressed in his triumphal march. First, of the fall of Ticonderoga, in June; then of Fort Edward; finally, of the glorious victory achieved by his former comrade in the Indian wars and at Bunker Hill, the redoubtable General Stark, at Bennington. He was called upon to furnish reenforcements not only to Washington, unfortunate in his defense of Philadelphia, but to Schuyler and Gates in the north.

The post of danger, as usual, Old Put occupied in the Highlands, and he was

delighted; only repining that whenever he was nearly ready to do something, away went his troops on some wild-goose mission, of which he knew neither the end or aim.

Washington surmised that Howe's scheme of sailing southward with an army aboard his ships was for the purpose of luring him away from the real point of attack, which was to be in the Highlands, so he wrote Putnam to be on the alert and to send spies down to New York to ascertain Clinton's plans. "If he has the number of men with him that is reported, it is probably with the intention to attack you from below, while Burgoyne comes down upon you from above." Thus wrote Washington in August, but still the depletion of the perplexed Putnam's command went steadily on. When he protested he was recommended to hurry up the militia from Connecticut, or some other New England State, and thus supply the place of the seasoned troops he had trained, with raw recruits.

"The old general, whose boast it was that he never slept but with one eye, was already on the alert. A circumstance had given him proof positive that Sir Henry was in New York, and had aroused his military ire," writes Washington Irving. This paragraph refers to one of Clinton's spies, who was captured while gathering information in Putnam's camp at Peekskill. When Clinton heard of it he sent a war-vessel up the Hudson with a flag of truce, claiming the man as one of his officers. This was Old Put's reply:

HEADQUARTERS, *7th August, 1777*.

Edmund Palmer, an officer in the enemy's service, was taken as a spy lurking within our lines. He has been tried as a spy, condemned as a spy, and shall be executed as a spy; and the flag is ordered to depart immediately.

I have the honor to be, etc., etc.,

ISRAEL PUTNAM.

P.S.—Afternoon. He is hanged!

The last week in September, Washington drew upon the patient commander in the Highlands for more soldiers, so that he had only eleven hundred men left with which to meet and withstand the British invasion of his territory, which began on the 5th of October. Putnam was fully cognizant of the situation, for he wrote to Governor Clinton, his coadjutor in the defense of the Highlands, on the

29th of September: "I have received intelligence on which I can fully depend that the enemy received a reenforcement at New York last Thursday of about 3,000 British and foreign troops; that General Clinton has called in guides who belong about Croton River; has ordered hard bread to be baked; that the troops are called from Paulus Hook to Kingsbridge; and the whole are now under marching orders. I think it highly probable that the designs of the enemy are against the posts of the Highlands, or of some parts of the counties of Westchester or Duchess. P.S.—The ships are drawn up in the river, and I believe nothing prevents them paying us an immediate visit but a contrary wind!"

Within a week the enemy were in force on the river near Putnam's position, and within ten days they had completely outmaneuvered both Putnam and Clinton, and had taken forts Montgomery and Clinton, their chief defenses, with great loss to the Americans. Clinton had made a feint on Tarrytown and Peekskill, and after this diversion, under cover of the river mist, landed troops on the west shore of the Hudson, and marched rapidly through ravines and dense woods to the rear of the two forts, which were carried by the bayonet, the defenders being taken by surprise.

The British had twice the number of men that Putnam commanded in this attack, and also the advantage of ships of war in the river, but it is thought that results would have been different from what they were had a despatch for reenforcements from Governor Clinton reached him. It was sent by a messenger who proved a traitor and carried it within the enemy's lines. As it was, however, the British have the credit of consummate strategy on this occasion, and poorly as he was equipped, Old Put was greatly mortified over the defeat. He had good occasion for writing to Washington, as he wrote on the 8th of October: "I have repeatedly informed your Excellency of the enemy's design against this post, but from some motive or other you always differed from me in opinion. As this conjecture of mine has for once proved right, I can not omit informing you that my real and sincere opinion is that they mean to join General Burgoyne with the utmost despatch."

Further proof of British intentions was afforded by the capture of a spy, who, on being arrested, was seen to swallow a silver bullet which, being recovered, was found to contain a message written on very thin paper and dated October 8th—the day before. This message read: "Here we are, and nothing between us and Gates. I sincerely hope this little success of ours will facilitate your operations." It was from Sir Henry Clinton to General Burgoyne, and showed conclusively that the former had set out to join with the latter. But events had so shaped in the

north that poor Burgoyne was then past all aid, General Gates then having him at bay. Within a few days was fought the decisive battle that brought about Burgoyne's surrender, and when the news reached Sir Henry Clinton he immediately set about returning to New York, there being no longer any incentive for action in the Highlands. Putnam and Clinton, after blowing up their two vessels in the river, had effected their retreat to Fishkill, where they entrenched; but on learning of the British retreat they moved down to their former positions.

The saying that "troubles never come singly" proved true for General Putnam that month of October, 1777, for on the 14th he lost by death his faithful wife, who had been with him at headquarters. Washington wrote him, on being informed of the bereavement: "I am extremely sorry for the death of Mrs. Putnam, and sympathize with you upon the occasion. Remembering that all must die, and that she had lived to an honorable age, I hope you will bear the misfortune with that fortitude and complacency of mind that become a man and a Christian."

The surrender of Burgoyne left the north free from foes, and consequently with no use for great numbers of soldiers, so that Putnam was soon in command of more than nine thousand men, mainly drafts from Gates's army. He was then determined to carry out his twice-frustrated scheme of marching upon New York, and was pushing forward his plans with great confidence, when there appeared a marplot on the scene in the person of Colonel Alexander Hamilton, at that time aide-de-camp to General Washington, who peremptorily ordered Putnam to forward all the new arrivals to the Commander-in-Chief and fill their places with militia.

The order was a verbal one and delivered by a slender "snip of a boy" scarcely out of his teens, so it received scant attention from Old Put, who went on with his plans, while Colonel Hamilton mounted a fresh horse and posted off to Albany, where he had also great difficulty in impressing General Gates with the need of Washington for the best men in his command. But he succeeded in detaching a few regiments, and then hastened back to Peekskill, there to find, to his surprise and indignation, that Putnam still had all his men—and what was more, seemed inclined to keep them with him.

"I am pained beyond expression," wrote this precocious youth to Washington on the 10th of November, "to inform your Excellency that, on my arrival here, I find everything has been neglected and deranged by General Putnam.... Not the least attention has been paid to my order, in your name, for a detachment of one thousand men from the troops hitherto stationed at that post. Everything is sacrificed to the whim of taking New York.... By Governor Clinton's advice, I have sent an order, in the most emphatical terms, to General Putnam, immediately to despatch all the Continental troops under him to your assistance, and to detain the militia instead of them."

This order "in the most emphatical terms" finally moved the general to compliance; but it quite naturally excited his just resentment, and he sent it to the Commander-in-Chief, with his comments. It would have been a serious matter—detaching such a large body of troops on a mere verbal order from a hot-headed stripling; yet Washington in effect reprimanded the honest veteran by writing:

I can not but say, there has been more delay in the march of the troops than I think necessary; and I could wish that in future my orders may be immediately complied with, without arguing upon the propriety of them. If any accident ensues from obeying them, the fault will be upon me, not upon you.

Death, defeat, a reprimand—all within one short month—might have affected a stouter heart than Old Put's. But was there ever a stouter one?

CHAPTER XVII

LAST YEARS IN THE SERVICE

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Care sat lightly on Israel Putnam, who never went about looking for trouble, nor gave it more than a scant welcome as a guest. Possessed of sturdy common sense, an unblemished character, and a conscience "void of offence," Old Put did not long harbor the hasty words of Hamilton, nor dwell upon the tacit reprimand of his chief. He still sat astride his "hobby-horse," as Hamilton had contemptuously termed his desire for descending upon New York, and as soon as the latter had departed with the reenforcements for Washington, he resolved to take a look at the city, anyway. Taking some of his men down the east bank of the Hudson, he himself reconnoitered to a point within three miles of the enemy's outpost, and went to New Rochelle with the intention of invading Long Island. The British got wind of his intent, and hastily left their forts, having no relish for a brush with their dreaded enemy.

Although accused to Washington of being very lenient to Tories and other disaffected persons, Putnam knew how to be severe on occasion, and in reprisal for the repeated outrages committed by Governor Tryon's murderous marauders, he destroyed by fire several residences of noted loyalists, and fell upon Colonel DeLancey's infamous "Cowboys," taking seventy-five prisoners, including the Tory officer himself, who was drawn out from beneath a bed, where he had taken refuge at the approach of Putnam's scouts.

Washington himself had given Putnam the idea of descending upon New York, some time before; but circumstances had changed, and along with them the need for this diversion. Having satisfied himself with this reconnoitering expedition, however, Old Put went back very amiably to his post in the Highlands, and proceeded to carry out his commander's instructions respecting the selection of a new fort for the defense of the Hudson. In January, 1778, we find him at West Point, directing the men of Parson's brigade where to break ground—frozen ground, at that, with snow two feet deep above it—for the first fort at the picturesque post on the Hudson since become historic. It was subsequently named Fort Putnam, either after Old Put himself, or his cousin Rufus Putnam,

whose great natural talents as an engineer were subsequently availed of here, as they had been before Boston, at Dorchester Heights.

About mid-February, Putnam wrote to Washington, who had been constantly and urgently pressing him to complete the work without delay, that "the batteries near the water, and the fort to cover them, are laid out. The latter is, within walls, 600 yards around, 21 feet base, 14 feet high, the talus two inches to the foot. This I fear is too large to be completed by the time expected." Even his placid disposition was by this time slightly ruffled at the scarcely veiled distrust of his capabilities by his chief, who had veered about with the wind blowing from New York, and seemed to trust him no longer. His letter begins stiffly: "The state of affairs now at this post, you will please to observe, is as follows," and after this business has been stated, he goes on to give some of the reasons for delay. One of his regiments was at White Plains, "under inoculation with the smallpox. Dubois's regiment is unfit to be ordered on duty, there being not one blanket in the regiment. Very few have either a shoe or a shirt, and most of them have neither stockings, breeches, or overalls.... Several hundred men are rendered useless, merely for want of necessary apparel, as no clothing is permitted to be stopped at this post."

No complaint was made, but merely a statement of facts; for Putnam must have known that many of the soldiers under his commander were at that very time half starved and half naked at Valley Forge. The day after writing this letter to Washington, having secured permission for a brief furlough, General Putnam went home to attend to private affairs which demanded his attention. He had applied for this leave of absence two months previously, but before receiving it had attended to the exigent matter of fortifying West Point, like the good soldier that he was.

Since he last left home much had happened to distract and break him down, including the loss of his wife by death, and the loss of Washington's friendly support, through no fault of his own. He was deeply grieved over the change in the commander's attitude toward him, as well as puzzled to account for it, knowing full well that he had done nothing to incur his displeasure, now so plainly manifested, not alone to General Putnam but to others.

The change was probably due to their radical differences of temperament, habits of life and education. While Washington the soldier recognized the sterling qualities of Old Put, the veteran fighter, yet Washington the aristocratic planter shrank from contact with Putnam the blunt, and at times perhaps uncouth-

appearing, farmer. Writing about that time, a surgeon in the American army said: "This is my first interview with this celebrated hero, Putnam. In his person he is corpulent and clumsy, but carries a bold, undaunted front. He exhibits little of the refinements of a well-educated gentleman, but much of the character of the veteran soldier."

This was not the style of soldier that the Commander-in-Chief liked to have about him, and he allowed his personal prejudices to pervert his judgment.

"What shall I do with Putnam?" he breaks out in a letter to Gouverneur Morris. "If Congress mean to lay him aside *decently*, I wish they would devise the mode."

"It has not been an easy matter to find a just pretense for removing an officer from his command" (he writes to Chancellor Livingston on the 12th of March, 1778) "where his misconduct rather appears to result from want of *capacity* than from any real intention of doing wrong...." Livingston had written complaining of Putnam's "imprudent lenity to the disaffected, and too great intercourse with the enemy"—or, in other words, that he had not persecuted the people Livingston disliked, and had shown generosity to the foe when in distress. Yet he felt compelled to add: "For my own part, I respect his bravery and former services, and sincerely lament that his patriotism will not suffer him to take that repose, to which his advanced age and past services justly entitle him."

But Congress did not, fortunately, share the views of these white-fingered, thin-skinned gentlemen, to whom a man's personal appearance was vastly more than his distinguished services. They held, with the doughty hero of many battles himself, that, as a soldier's duty in war was to fight, it mattered not so much how he fought, nor in what garb, so long as he won the victories. As to lack of capacity, and being responsible for the loss of Forts Clinton and Montgomery, the court of inquiry, which sat in the spring of 1778, entirely vindicated him, holding that they fell, "not from any fault, misconduct, or negligence of the commanding officers, but solely through the want of an adequate force under their command to maintain and defend them."

Who was responsible for the lack of that "adequate force" none knew better than the Commander-in-Chief, who had withdrawn Old Put's veterans on six different occasions and compelled him to clothe the skeleton ranks with raw militia, so that it ill became him to write (in his letter to Livingston): "Proper measures are taking to carry on the inquiry into the loss of Fort Montgomery, agreeable to the

direction of Congress, and it is more than probable, from what I have heard, that the issue of that inquiry will afford just grounds for the removal of General Putnam."

But the "issue of that inquiry" was in favor of Putnam, who demanded not only a court of inquiry, but a trial by court-martial, "so that my character might stand in a clearer light in the world." For, as he justly observed in a letter to Congress, "to be posted here as a publick spectator for every ill-minded person to make remarks upon, I think is very poor encouragement for any persons to venture their lives and fortunes in the service."

General Putnam received notice of this court of inquiry and of his suspension from command pending its proceedings, as he was returning from Connecticut, in March; but the month of July had arrived, the battle of Monmouth fought, and General Lee's court-martial had been ordered, before he was reinstated. Then Washington rather grudgingly gave him command of the right wing of the grand army, at White Plains, near or on Chatterton Hill, where he had vainly tried to reenforce McDougall, in the fierce fight that took place there not quite two years before. The three armies were then collectively of "greater strength than any force that had been brought together during the war," consisting, says Major Humphreys, of sixty regular regiments of foot, four battalions of artillery, four regiments of horse, and several corps of State troops. "But, as the enemy kept close within their lines on York Island, nothing could be attempted."

Putnam was afterward sent across the Hudson, where, notwithstanding the prejudices alleged against him in that region, where he had formerly commanded, he was retained until the army was ordered into winter quarters. These quarters were finally located in his own State, and were admirably chosen for the purpose at that time, which was to hold the troops together until the spring campaign should open. "The site for the winter cantonment became an important question," writes Charles B. Todd, a talented son of Connecticut, and an authority on her history, "and was long and anxiously debated. Many of the general officers were for staying where they were in the Highlands. Putnam pronounced in favor of some central location in western Connecticut, where they could protect both the Sound and the Hudson, and especially Danbury, which was a supply station, and which had been taken and burned by the enemy the year previous. General Heath's brigade had been on guard in Danbury during this summer of 1778, and while visiting him Putnam had no doubt discovered the three sheltered valleys formed by the Saugatuck and its tributaries which lie along the border line of what was then Danbury (now Bethel) and Redding.

These valleys, open to the south, are warm, sunny, well watered, and in that day were well wooded, and so defended by dominating hills and crags, that a handful could hold them against an army. They were but three days' march from the Highlands."

Putnam himself superintended the laying out of the three camps, one for each valley, where, in log huts similar to those erected at Valley Forge the winter previous, the soldiers were quartered. Here the Army of the North, consisting of two brigades of Continental troops, two of Connecticut, one brigade from New Hampshire, with artillery and cavalry, wore away the long and weary winter of 1778-'79. There were two major-generals, including Putnam as commander-in-chief, and five brigadiers, so it will be seen that the cantonment was one of great importance.

"Putnam pilgrims" should by all means refresh their patriotism by a visit to the site of that winter camp in western Connecticut, for it has been carefully preserved by the State, which has laid out a magnificent park, erected a monument, restored some of the huts, and collected every relic available of that noble Army of the North. The house which Old Put occupied that winter, as headquarters, was on Umpawaug Hill and is still pointed out, while at a little distance stands the one-time residence of Joel Barlow, the Revolutionary poet, who, with Major Humphreys, Putnam's aide-de-camp and later his biographer, enlivened the camp that winter. From the summit of Gallows Hill, where General Putnam hung a spy, and had a deserter shot to death, one may see the sites of the original camps, the only visible remains of which are rude piles of stones, the ruins of the "chimney-backs."

In or near the camp preserved within the park, General Israel Putnam once performed a deed which some have called his greatest act. "Greatest if measured by results, and most typical of him. Who is not thrilled with the poem of Sheridan's ride—turning a panic-stricken army, and snatching victory from defeat; and here, near a century before, Putnam rode after a deserting army and brought them back to victory ... a victory over themselves."

These remarks refer to the defection of the Connecticut troops, that winter, who, half starved and half frozen in their narrow quarters, "badly fed, badly clothed, and worse paid," resolved to march to Hartford, lay their grievances before the General Assembly, and demand redress at the point of the bayonet.

"Word having been brought to General Putnam," says Major Humphreys, who

was present, "that the second brigade was under arms for this purpose, he mounted his horse, galloped to the cantonment, and thus addressed them: 'My brave lads, whither are you going? Do you intend to desert your officers, and to invite the enemy to follow you into the country? Whose cause have you been fighting and suffering so long in—is it not your own? Have you no property, no parents, wives or children? You have behaved like men so far—all the world is full of your praise—and posterity will stand astonished at your deeds; but not if you spoil all at last. Don't you consider how much the country is distressed by the war, and that your officers have not been any better paid than yourselves? But we all expect better times, and that the country will do us ample justice. Let us all stand together, then, and fight it out like brave soldiers. Think what a shame it would be for Connecticut men to run away from their officers!'"

The gallant general's rude eloquence prevailed, the men saw their error, were indeed ashamed of it; they listened with attention, presented arms, as their beloved commander rode along the line to the din of the drums, and about-faced for camp, which they did not desert again during the winter. "Thus was a great and mighty battle fought and won. A battle fought with the British far away. A battle fought with hunger, want, cold, and banishment from home. A battle fought in the wilderness, where most of the world's greatest battles are fought." [3]

> [3] From an historical address by Prof. George A. Parker, of Hartford, Conn., on the occasion of the visit of the famous Putnam Phalanx to Putnam Park and Camp, June 17, 1903.

This episode of the winter camp of 1778-'79 forms a fitting prelude to another feat performed by Old Put, this time a physical one, which, while not so worthy of renown, perhaps, as the great moral victory he achieved over his men, has brought him greater fame. Both taken together absolutely refute the insinuations of his enemies, to the effect that he had suffered a decline of mental, moral, or physical force. Washington wrote, commending him for his action in suppressing the mutiny; and as for the feat now to be mentioned, it may be said to speak for itself. In fact, it has been speaking, now, for a century and a quarter, since it is that famous ride down the stone steps of Horseneck Height to which reference is made.

It took place one morning in the last week of February, toward the close of the long winter's vigil at Redding. Putnam and his men were out as soon as the sap in the trees was flowing, and long before, in fact, keeping watch upon and trying to check the operations of the notorious Tryon and his crew. It chanced that he

met the British, fifteen hundred strong, when on a visit to his outpost at Horseneck, now "Putnam's Hill," in Greenwich, Conn. Having but one hundred and fifty men and two old iron guns, which latter he had posted "on the high ground by the meeting-house," he was obliged to retreat. Ordering his men to seek shelter in a near swamp, Old Put waited till the British dragoons were almost within sword's length of him, when he put spurs to his horse and dashed over the brow of the hill, zigzagging down a rude flight of seventy stone steps set into the precipitous declivity.

The dragoons dared not follow after this intrepid horseman, but they sent a flight of bullets, one of which passed through his hat. Arrived on level ground he made no halt until he had reached Stamford, where he collected a force of militia in short order, with which he turned upon Tryon, compelling him to retreat, and chasing him to his lair, capturing forty prisoners and retaking a large amount of plunder.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE DISABLED VETERAN

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General Putnam was sixty-one years old at the time of his famous exploit at Horseneck, and apparently in the full possession of his powers; but, as it eventuated, this was the beginning of his last campaign, which actually opened with the removal of the soldiers from Redding to the Hudson, about the last of May, where Putnam was appointed to the command of the right wing of the army, with headquarters on the west bank of the river. Previous to removal, he wrote the following interesting letter to a friend, Colonel Wadsworth, of Hartford, which the author of this memoir copied from the original in possession of the Connecticut Historical Society:

REDDING, *ye 11 of May, 1779*.

DEAR SIR: On my arrivol to this plas I could hear nothing of my hard mony and so must conclud it is gon to the dogs we have no nus hear from head Quarters not a lin senc I cam hear and what my destination is to be this summer cant even so much as geuss but shuld be much obbliged to you if you would be so good as to send me by the teems the Lym juice you was so good as to offer me and a par of Shoes I left under the chamber tabel. I begin to think the nues from the sutherd is tru of ginrol Lintons having a batel and comming of the leator it is said he killed 200 hundred and took 500 hundred what makes me creudit it is becaus the acounts in the New york papers peartly agree with ours

my beast Respeacts to your Lady and sistors and Litel soon.

I am dear sir with the greatest respects your most obed and humbel Sarvant

ISRAEL PUTNAM.

Old Put's anxiety as to his destination having been allayed, he established his military family at or near Buttermilk Falls, about two miles below West Point, where, says Major Humphreys, "he was happy in possessing the friendship of the officers of the line, and in living on terms of hospitality with them. Indeed,

there was no family in the army that lived better than his own. The General, his second son, Major Daniel Putnam, and the author of these memoirs, composed that family."

Putnam was probably at this point when, on that dark and stormy night of the fifteenth of July, "Mad Anthony" Wayne stormed and captured Stony Point, on the river not far below. This remarkable exploit was not only the most important event of the year, but, like the battle of Monmouth of the year previous, almost the only action worthy of note. It had the effect, probably, of causing the British to withdraw their troops from along the Sound, where they were engaged in ravaging the seaboard places of Connecticut; but the post was again taken by the enemy, who, like the Americans, did not find it worth the while to hold it.

The most important members of Putnam's military family, his son Daniel and Major Humphreys, accompanied him home on leave of absence, in November, whence, early in December, the General set out on his return to the army, which was to winter at Morristown. Soon after leaving Brooklyn, and while on the road to Hartford, he "felt an unusual torpor slowly pervading his right hand and foot. This heaviness crept gradually on until it had deprived him of the use of his limbs on that side, in a considerable degree, before he reached the house of his friend Colonel Wadsworth"—the gentleman to whom he had written the letter of the eleventh of May previous.

Having tried, though vainly, to shake off the terrible torpor and regain the use of his limbs by exercise, the stricken soldier was at last compelled to admit defeat and resign himself to the inevitable. He returned home after a short tarry with his friend, and passed the remainder of that winter at the farmhouse he had built in his younger days, surrounded with loving care and affection by his children. At first disposed to rebel against this stroke that had rendered him useless while his country still stood in need of his services, eventually he regained his cheerfulness and gave himself up to the enjoyment of the home comforts of which for so many years he had been deprived.

The partial paralysis from which he suffered was premonitory of the final stroke; but it was eleven years before it came and removed from earth this stout-hearted man who had given his best years and his best efforts to battling for his native land. There is no doubt that his mighty struggles in the several wars—his daylight marches and nighttime vigils; his tremendous exertions in emergencies like the fire at Fort Edward, the running of the rapids at Fort Miller; long hours without rest in the saddle, and in the trenches, with wet and frozen clothing

sometimes unchanged for days—all conduced toward the weakening of that mighty frame prematurely stricken with paralysis.

But he had regrets only for what he was prevented from doing; not for what he had done. Having recovered somewhat, he entertained hopes—vain hopes—of rejoining the army; but was finally convinced that his active career was ended. Major Humphreys having visited him in May, 1780, by his hand he sent a missive to Washington, informing him of his condition, and ending with this pathetic postscript: "I am making a great effort to use my hand to make the initials of my name for the first time. "I.P."—Israel Putnam."

Washington replied in July, congratulating him on his improved state of health, and four years later, after peace was declared between Great Britain and the United States, he wrote a long and cordial letter, which the old General regarded as one of his most precious treasures. The opening paragraph shows Washington's real and lasting estimate of his former comrade in adversity, and is as follows:

Your favor of the 20th of May I received with much pleasure. For I can assure you that among the many worthy and meritorious officers with whom I have had the happiness to be connected in service throughout this war, and from whom I have had cheerful assistance in the various and trying vicissitudes of a complicated contest, the name of a Putnam is not forgotten; nor will it be but with that stroke of time which shall obliterate from my mind the remembrance of all those toils and fatigues through which we have struggled for the preservation and establishment of the Rights, Liberties, and Independence of our Country.

It was not like Old Put to give up the fight so long as life held out, and by the exercise of his iron will he kept up and about for years. Within less than a twelvemonth from having been disqualified from service on account of his affliction, he paid a visit to his former command on the lower Hudson, where one of his old friends, General Greene, complains, in a letter, that he is "talking as usual, and telling his old stories."

It can not be denied that he was somewhat loquacious, especially in his later years, and those "old stories" were not alone his solace, but the delight of numerous audiences of admiring friends and neighbors. At Major Humphreys's request he retold them, two or three years before he died (1788) and they form the basis of his first biographical memoir. But they were doubtless very stale to those of his hearers who had listened to them again and again, as plainly

intimated by General Greene.

As they were mainly about himself and his exploits, and as many of them were of events that happened in the distant past, it is not unlikely that some of them were slightly exaggerated, to say the least. Some others told of Old Put and his doings are perhaps not entitled to credence. Among these latter may be the tales of his dueling days, as, for instance, the story of his challenge by an English officer on parole, who, when he came to the place appointed, found Old Put seated near what appeared to be a keg of powder, serenely smoking his pipe. As the officer reached the rendezvous, Putnam lighted a slow-match from his pipe and thrust it into a hole bored in the head of the keg, upon which were scattered a few grains of gunpowder. Viewing these sinister preparations for the "duel," the Englishman concluded that the best thing he could do was to run away, which he did very promptly. "O ho!" shouted Putnam after him, taking his pipe from his mouth. "You are just about as brave a man as I thought, to run away from a keg of onions! Ha, ha, ha!"

No date is given to this occurrence, nor to another account of the "duel" he didn't fight with a brother officer whom he drove from the field at the muzzle of a loaded musket. In fact, the "field of honor" was not much frequented by Putnam, who preferred the field of battle, where he always gave a good account of himself.

During his declining years he was cheered by the companionship of his children, most of whom were married and settled near him, and being in the enjoyment of a competence, he was vastly better off than the majority of the soldiers who had fought with and under him during the Revolution, for many of them were impoverished.

He preserved his strong will-power and great physical strength to the end of his days, notwithstanding the ravages of disease, and in 1786, four years before he died, performed a journey to his birthplace in Danvers, riding all the way on horseback, though with frequent stops by the way not only for rest, but on account of the people who flocked out to see him and desired to entertain the famous fighter in so many wars.

This was the last of his ventures afield, and henceforth he confined his excursions to visiting the homes of his sons and daughters, and to trips around his farm, though on Sundays and "prayer-meeting nights" he would always be found in the meeting-house at the Green, where he was a regular attendant. It is

related that at one of the evening meetings one of his fellow worshipers aroused him, by expressing his own conviction that any person who had ever used profane language could hardly be considered a model Christian. Old Put at once accepted the reproof as intended, for it was well known that in moments of excitement, when carried away by the furore of battle, he had often used words which he would not care to review in print. He detested a coward, and when he met one in retreat he did not hesitate to employ strong language in expressing his opinion. At Horseneck, declared the only witness of his reckless ride down the hill, "Old Put was cursing the British terribly." There was no evading his friend's pointed remarks, so the honest old man rose from his seat and "confessed the failing which he had finally overcome"; but he added, with a twinkle in his eye, "it was enough to make an angel swear at Bunker Hill to see the rascals run away from the British!"[4]

[4] Livingston's Life of Israel Putnam. An exhaustive work, by a conscientious and painstaking author.

In this respect he was no worse than his former Commander-in-Chief, though he may have been oftener culpable, being so much more excitable than the phlegmatic Washington.

The final summons came on Saturday, the twenty-ninth of May, 1790, when, in a lower room of the house he had built nearly fifty years before, the battle-scarred warrior, life's fitful fever ended, passed peacefully away to his rest.

Israel Putnam was well prepared to die, declared his pastor in his funeral sermon, and perfectly resigned to the will of God.

"He had been for years," says Major Humphreys, "in patient yet fearless expectation of the approach of the King of Terrors, whom he had full often faced on the field of blood."

On the first day of June the earthly remains of Israel Putnam, attended by a distinguished company of former comrades and sorrowing friends, were taken to the Brooklyn burying-ground, and placed in a brick tomb.

Upon the slab of the tomb was carved the lengthy epitaph, printed on the next page, as composed by Dr. Timothy Dwight, Putnam's former friend and chaplain in the army, who subsequently became President of Yale College.

Statue to General Putnam at Brooklyn, Connecticut.

Statue to General Putnam at Brooklyn, Connecticut.

To the memory
of
Israel Putnam, Esquire,
Senior Major-General in the Armies
of
The United States of America
Who
Was born at Salem
In the Province of Massachusetts
On the seventh day of January
AD. 1718,
And died
On the twenty-ninth day of May
AD. 1790.

PASSENGER
If thou art a Soldier
Drop a Tear over the dust of a Hero
Who
Ever attentive
To the lives and happiness of his Men
Dared to lead
Where any Dared to follow;
If a Patriot,
Remember the distinguished and gallant services
Rendered thy Country
By the Patriot who sleeps beneath this Monument;
If thou art Honest, generous & worthy
Render a cheerful tribute of respect
To a Man
Whose generosity was singular
Whose honesty was proverbial
Who
Raised himself to universal esteem
And offices of Eminent distinction
By personal worth
And a

With the passing of the years, Putnam's tomb in the pleasant little cemetery in Brooklyn became defaced through the ravages of time and heartless relic hunters, so the State resolved to erect a more enduring monument to "Connecticut's hero of the Revolution." This monument was dedicated June 14th, 1888, nearly a century after the death of the one it is intended to commemorate, and is in the shape of a beautiful bronze statue, representing Putnam on his war-horse, beneath the pedestal supporting which, embedded in the foundation, is a sarcophagus containing his ashes. It stands near the old church which Putnam helped to build, and not far distant from the field in which he was plowing when the call came from Lexington and Concord. Dr. Dwight's original epitaph is inscribed on the tablets, and a wolf's head in bronze ornaments the pedestal on each side.

Little now remains to be added, except to call attention to Putnam's character, eulogies upon which have been delivered by the ablest men of his time and of the generations after him. This sterling character has shone resplendent in his deeds, which we have noted; and we may almost say of him, as of Washington, his great commander, "Whatever good may at any time be said, it can never be an exaggeration!"

General Putnam, remarked his first biographer, "is universally acknowledged to have been as brave and honest a man as ever America produced.... He seems to have been formed on purpose for the age in which he lived. His native courage, unshaken integrity, and established reputation as a soldier, were necessary in the early stages of our opposition to Great Britain, and gave unbounded confidence to our troops in their first conflicts on the field of battle."

Over his open grave, on that day in June so long ago, were pronounced the following words, as true now as yesterday, as they will be henceforth, forever: "Born a hero, whom nature taught and cherished in the lap of innumerable toils and dangers, he was terrible in battle.... But from the amiableness of his heart, when carnage ceased, his humanity spread over the field like the refreshing zephyrs of a summer's evening. ... He pitied littleness, loved goodness, admired greatness, and ever aspired to its glorious summit."

The name of Putnam, as Washington declared, is not forgotten—nor will be, until time shall be no more.

"He dared to lead

Where any dared to follow. In their need
Men looked to him.
A tower of strength was Israel Putnam's name,
A rally-word for patriot acclaim;
It meant resolve, and hope, and bravery,
And steady cheerfulness and constancy.
And if, in years to come, men should forget
That only freedom makes a nation great;
If men grow less as wealth accumulates,
Till gold becomes the life-blood of our States;
Should all these heavy ills weigh down our heart,
We'll turn to him who acted well his part
In those old days, draw lessons from his fame,
And hope and strength from Israel Putnam's name."

THE END.

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